OCR
RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

ADVANCED GCE
BUSINESS STUDIES
People in Organisations

F295/RB

RESOURCE BOOKLET

**To be given to candidates at the start
of the examination.**

**Friday 11 June 2010
Afternoon**

Duration: 2 hours
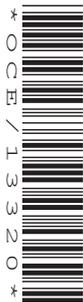
INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

*   The information required to answer questions 1–6 is contained within this Resource Booklet.
*   Do **not** hand this Resource Booklet in at the end of the examination. It is not needed by the Examiner.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

*   This document consists of **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR

*   Do not send this Resource Booklet for marking; it should be retained in the centre or destroyed.

SoonGo (Travel Agents) Ltd (SG)

SoonGo (Travel Agents) Ltd (SG) operates as a specialist travel agent for adventure holidays for the over 50s market and it has over 40 branches nationwide. The holidays range from a safari in Kenya to hot air ballooning over the Grand Canyon in the USA. SG's consumers prefer to book at a travel agent where there is 'an attention to detail' and an opportunity to talk things through. Some consumers worry about giving out credit card details online. Also, many of them have little *5* faith in booking online and prefer to see the details of their chosen holiday on hard copy at the agents.

SG has managed to beat the trend that has seen a dramatic decline in the number of travel agents on the high street. The number of travel agencies has fallen by over 25% since 1997. Booking online through organisations such as Expedia, Opodo and Travelocity has changed the *10* way many people book their holidays.

SG has emphasised to its staff, through training, the need to offer a high-class service to its customers. Stephen Fielding, the Human Resources Director of SG, who is responsible for staff recruitment and training introduced a training programme where all new employees would learn about the various countries where the adventure holidays are located. This knowledge was *15* seen as being a vital part of the service to its customers. However, with new employees being regularly recruited and in larger numbers, organising the training is becoming more difficult and very expensive. It is important in the service sector that employees are well trained and so SG keeps detailed records on a database of the training which each member of its staff has completed. Table 1 (see below) is an extract from that database which shows the training which *20* the staff at one SG branch (Tettwood) have completed.

Table 1

SG's database (Tettwood staff)

Name of member of staff	Date of birth	Bank account details	Religion	Marital status	Training Pass (P) / Fail (F)			
					1	2	3	4
Jenny	14/02/75	B – 20-09-33	C of E	Married	P	P	P	P
Stephanie	13/10/71	TSB – 11-20-60	C of E	Married	P	F	P	P
Liz	09/09/91	H – 02-88-39	None	Single	P	P	F	F
George	12/03/85	L – 02-14-55	Unknown	Single	F	F	P	P

SG's Marketing Director, Emma Bowler, has invested heavily in technology by, for example, installing plasma screens in all of the branches. These enable customers to view DVDs of the locations and type of adventure activities that would be on offer at the various destinations. Sitting on comfortable sofas and being served with soft drinks makes for a relaxed atmosphere *25* and one in which the customer is more likely to purchase a holiday.

Emma has also encouraged the branch managers of SG to build up a database of customers to enable the company to target offers and new holidays more effectively. Such a database would allow SG to match specific holidays with the right customers. At a recent training programme for all branch managers, Emma encouraged the branch managers to collect as much information *30* on customers as possible, stating that any piece of information may help SG sell its holidays.

Emma has also tried to encourage Stephen, the Human Resources Director, to change his usual training programme which he insists on running himself. She has tried suggesting to him

that, although it might be more expensive to use external trainers, there was an opportunity to use people with new ideas and a better delivery style. He did not, however, appreciate her suggestion! *35*

The employees in all of the branches are appraised on the number of holidays each one of them manages to sell (see Table 2). On average, each monthly appraisal takes about 15 minutes. However, some employees have expressed concern about both their pay and how they are appraised. Several have argued that performance depends upon the location of the particular *40* branch, as in some areas there are more affluent customers, which affects the potential level of sales. In the Tettwood branch, Liz Roberts, the youngest member of staff, and George Langer 'failed' to reach their individual target number of sales in April and May 2009. They were subsequently summoned to attend a meeting with the area manager, having already met with the branch manager. Although George had been ill and had been off work for two weeks during *45* May 2009, he had, nevertheless, still managed to sell more holidays that month than Liz.

Table 2

Sales by each member of staff (Tettwood branch)

Name of member of staff	Number of holidays sold – May 2009	Value of holidays sold – May 2009 (£)	Value of holidays sold – May 2008 (£)
Jenny (Branch Manager)	27	64,800	64,000
Stephanie	42	84,000	88,000
Liz	18	50,400	25,600
George	33	54,800	56,000
	Total –	**Total –**	**Total – £233,600**

Harpreet Sangera, the Sales Director, and Stephen Fielding have been busy working on a new system for analysing the performance of all the branches of SG. They ran into difficulties when they realised that each of the branches measured their own performance in different ways, making comparisons difficult. To enable them to make easier comparisons between the *50* branches, Harpreet and Stephen wanted to have just one system that all the branches should use. They intend to explain their ideas at the next training session.