



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied  
January 2011**

**Applied Business**

**BS12**

**(Specification  
8611/8613/8616/8617/8619)**

**Unit 12: Managing People (External Test)**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General Comments

The paper performed well with a full range of marks awarded, and candidates clearly engaged with the case studies set out in the items. Bearing in mind the age of the candidates, the depth of analysis and understanding of the real world and how people behave is very good.

A few candidates and centres still need to make sure that they cover all the areas of this unit. In this paper two areas caused problems, with several candidates unable to identify management functions or to explain what a matrix structure is.

In general, candidates are improving their ability to apply their answers to the context set out in the item although, where they fail to do this, it inevitably affects the marks that they achieve. Weaker candidates also need to keep focused on the need to explain **why**, in addition to simply stating **what** should happen, because AO3 and AO4 marks depend on the ability to analyse and make a clear judgement.

Some candidates exceeded the line limit of many questions, with this a particular issue on the 12 mark questions. In some cases, these very long answers did not score any better than much shorter answers as they were repetitive or unfocused.

## Question One

- (a) Most candidates did understand what is meant by a flat structure and explained it in context or by reference to wide spans of control.
- (b) This was a popular question and very few candidates failed to identify why Bill had initially found it easy to recruit. For full marks, candidates did, however, need to explain why it had been easy by reference to context, eg paying more than other potential employers.
- (c) Most candidates clearly have a good understanding of leadership styles and were able to identify quickly and accurately the style Bill used. Weaker candidates need to focus more on the question asked and to develop their answers so that they go beyond a basic identification and description of Bill's style to explain why his style would affect staff retention.
- (d) Candidates seemed to enjoy the Branson quote and developed a range of views on whether Branson's views were applicable to the business. Weaker candidates need, however, to go further in explaining how Branson's ideas could be applied to *SET*, or indeed whether there are potential problems or constraints in applying them, eg because it would require a complete change of approach by Bill.

## Question Two

- (a) This question was well answered by over half the candidates. A significant number, however, did not appear to understand the basic terms to describe the functions of management. This was disappointing as these functions are clearly laid out in the specification.

- (b) This question was well answered by most candidates, who were clearly able to identify why staff would be demotivated. It was pleasing that many candidates produced quite sophisticated answers showing how the actions either Bill or the new managers took would have contributed to the problem. Many also recognised that the impact on all staff would not be the same, and explored which staff in particular would be most affected. The number of candidates getting Level 3 / AO3 marks was very encouraging.
- (c) Most candidates were able to identify a range of ways in which the new managers could potentially address the problems identified. To get higher marks, however, candidates must resist the temptation to list a whole series of potential actions none of which they then fully develop. To score higher marks, it is essential that candidates go beyond identification and clearly explain how the action proposed would help to address motivation, and make a judgement about which methods would produce the best results and why they believe this. Unfortunately, although several candidates wrote lengthy responses they still failed to score more than AO2 and E1 (AO4) marks because they did not develop any of the suggestions that they made.

### Question Three

- (a) This question divided candidates into three: those who did not appear to know what a matrix was; those who explained what a matrix was in theory; and those who not only explained what it was but also showed how it could relate to the business in the item. It was disappointing that too many candidates either failed to know what a matrix was or failed to explain it in context as asked for in the question.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify and describe some of the problems which statistical process control had led to in the business. For higher marks they needed to relate this to *Cranley Foods Ltd* and be more explicit about why relying on statistics was not sufficient to help the business to meet its targets.
- (c) This question was answered competently by most candidates. As with earlier questions, the feature of better answers, was the ability to apply the theory of how a matrix may help address the situation set out in the item. Some very good answers were seen which focused on issues such as solving problems between different job functions, improving internal communications and similar issues.
- (d) Candidates approached this question in several different ways and whilst a majority favoured Lucy's suggested solution, others made a good case for using Barry's suggestion. Both were given full credit. As with the other longer questions, the feature of better answers was the ability to make a judgement, and to explain the impact that acting on either suggestion would have on the business.

### Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.