



General Certificate of Education

Leisure Studies

8641/8643/8646/8649

LS02 A People Business

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - January series

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GENERAL

It is important that teachers understand that students need to have a basic good theoretical grounding in customer service in order to apply its principles to the organisations studied and deal with any scenario provided in the exam paper. The key to good exam marks is the application of customer service provision.

What was particularly good

Candidates are being more selective in what they write and showing confidence in their work which in turn appears to be a reflection of good teaching. There was far less evidence of five page answers in which the same thing is stated in four different ways.

What was not so good

The development between theory and practice was not naturally applied by some candidates and this aspect of customer service needs to be emphasized. Every time a customer service principle is learnt, students need to be able to exemplify it in real terms to properly understand both its application and why business organisations today consider customer service provision to be added value and a means of creating a competitive advantage over other organisations.

Question 1

In part (a), the great majority of candidates were able to describe various features of the organisation which included some aspect of the build, environment or human resources, and then to state that this would build a positive atmosphere. In the best answers each of these features was discussed as to how they affected, created or developed impressions, moods or feelings in the customers.

Part (b) was approached by the majority of candidates as an information range with details of each specific one. However, few candidates actually explained how this information led to a decision based on choice, value for money, incentives to buy or what to do.

Part (c) was well developed in terms of what security provisions were made at respective organisations. However, assessment that needed a subjective opinion by the candidates was absent in many cases or weakly developed in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

Question 2

In part (a)(i), the majority of answers were able to show how organisations try to motivate staff with various forms of incentives or rewards, but there was generally a clear failure to develop this information and to link it to how staff exemplify this motivation in their daily work routines.

In part (a)(ii), a great variety of suggestions as to what might create a good public image was the feature of the answers provided by many candidates and this saw them do reasonably well in this question. Few realised that public image is created over time as a result of consistency of delivering high standards of customer service creating an overall impression and needs to be a team effort involving all parts of the organisation.

It was clear that many candidates did not know what a competitive edge meant in part (b), as they were unable to illustrate this from their efforts to link it with customer service. What was needed were clearly defined added value customer service practices, and then to state with good examples how this creates an advantage over a similar organisation that does not employ these practices.

Question 3

Parts (a) and (b) were the best answered questions on the entire paper. Many candidates clearly enjoyed tackling the issues, with the majority understanding what solutions could be presented at a low cost. It followed that those who provided a good set of solutions and then justified them scored highly.

A good complaint reply should always state clearly what the details of the complaint are as a matter of routine, as this gives confidence to the recipient that the issues are at least understood; however, some candidates failed to mention many of the complaint factors. Open criticism together with patronising her over her generosity, were also examples of poor customer service skills.

Question 4

Again, parts (a) and (b) were well answered and developed by the majority of candidates. It generally followed that those who could present a clear and detailed checklist for part (a) would then go on to score well in part (b). It was rare that one question was answered far better than the other: both were either done well or not.

In part (b) there was a weakness by candidates in showing how customer loyalty and repeat business is again dependent upon consistent treatment by all staff, time and time again. A simple smile by the receptionist is not justification as some thought for maintaining membership or visiting every week. Teachers need to be aware that in business, customer service develops over time and is needed at a high standard throughout an organisation both internally and externally for it to be cost effective and a determinant of customer loyalty and repeat business. Examples throughout the organisation needed to be linked to show how this is effective. Equally if anywhere the customer service is poor this will have an adverse effect on customers' opinions and their impressions of the organisation and affect both their loyalty and repeat business.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

In selecting an organisation, teachers need to assure it is one that is capable of enabling candidates to match their theoretical learning of customer service practice and procedures with the reality of what is actually carried out in the business world of leisure. The bigger and more successful an organisation the greater the scope candidates have for their investigation. A small leisure organisation may not always reflect the customer service practices studied or be a poor example of customer service that makes it difficult for students to provide a range of findings, issues and developments in order to score well in the exam.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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