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Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development  
**Professional Development Scheme**  
**Specialist Personnel and Development**  
**Management Development**

**November 2007**

**6 November 2007      09:50 -12:00 hrs**

**Time allowed - Two hours and ten minutes**  
(including ten minutes' reading time).

**Answer Section A and SEVEN of the ten questions in Section B.**

**Please write clearly and legibly.**

**Questions may be answered in any order.**

**Equal marks are allocated to each section of the paper.**  
**Within Section B equal marks are allocated to each question.**

**If a question includes reference to 'your organisation', this may be interpreted as covering any organisation with which you are familiar.**

**The case study is not based on an actual company. Any similarities to known organisations are accidental.**

**You will fail the examination if:**

- **you fail to answer seven questions in Section B and/or**
- **you achieve less than 40 per cent in any section.**

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### SECTION A – Case Study

**Note: It is permissible to make assumptions by adding to the case study details given below provided the essence of the case study is neither changed nor undermined in any way by what is added.**

Samantha is the Management Development (MD) Manager at a large national company, Accessible Buy Ltd (ABL) that retails domestic goods advertised through the internet. It has grown rapidly over the last ten years to the position where it employs 220 managers and around 2,500 staff at one site, structured into operational business units. It has a Customer Contact Centre, Buying Department, Distribution Centre plus the usual corporate functions such as Human Resources, Finance and Information and Communication Technology. As a major industry player in e-commerce, ABL prides itself in recruiting the best talent in the industry and developing them into leaders of the future. It aims to be an employer of choice and has developed a cafeteria style of employee benefits that allow staff to choose their individual reward package based on their circumstance. ABL is considered an attractive place to work.

Five years ago, in response to double-digit growth, ABL established a graduate development scheme, which has proved successful in attracting a high calibre of staff straight from university. The structured MD strategy, modularised over three years, provides progressive challenges to give graduates a broad grounding in all areas of the business before agreeing an occupational area in which to specialise. Following the career decision, development is focused on professional development via bodies such as Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, Chartered Institute of Marketing, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and British Computer Society. Each year 15 graduates join, but there are growing concerns that an increasing number of the brightest prospects are leaving the company before fulfilling their potential.

Exit interviews and questionnaires have indicated that a lack of opportunities to join the Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for this group going elsewhere. While it is true that the senior management has a very low turnover, ABL has always regarded this as a strength. However, it seems that the up-and-coming generation view things differently and, disillusioned with what they see as career limiting options, are taking their knowledge and skills, developed at great expense, to competitors. Attrition is currently at 15%. Samantha wonders whether salary is also an issue as most graduates chose salary over other benefits in their reward package. The jobs market for managers in e-commerce is very buoyant and those with the relevant skills and experience can attract high salaries. The undercurrent from managers centres on talk about 'dead man's shoes' as future career paths are uncertain.

A recent situation only served to illustrate the managers' view. A vacant position at SMT level became available but was given to an external candidate. Samantha has reflected on this but as retirements or departures among directors and top managers can rarely be predicted, there is no indication of when the top cadre are intending to step aside. This results in a situation in which it is hard to persuade potential "stars" to hang around indefinitely, the consequences of which could affect future organisational growth. She needs to consider how to develop "executives in waiting"

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and keep the brightest talent within the organisation long enough to ensure smooth transitions at the top in preparation for a meeting next week.

**In the role of Samantha and using your knowledge of research and the practices of other organisations, write a short report in preparation for a SMT meeting in which you:**

- 1. Analyse the current situation relating to MD at ABL and evaluate the consequences of not making a timely response.**
- 2. Explore appropriate and workable MD options for ABL. Then make justified recommendations that should be expressed as an action plan for the next 12 months.**

*You should spend one third of your time on task 1 and two thirds on task 2.*

**PLEASE TURN OVER**

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### SECTION B

Answer **SEVEN** of the ten questions in this section. To communicate your answers more clearly you may use whatever methods you wish, for example diagrams, flowcharts, bullet points, so long as you provide an explanation of each.

1. An executive manager comments:  
  
"The more experience that some managers have of attending Development Centres, the easier it becomes for them to prepare for subsequent Centres. Surely this gives them an advantage over less experienced colleagues."  
  
Provide a reasoned response to the manager.
2. Using your knowledge of research, justify the methods you could use to develop the leadership competences of senior managers.
3. A line manager sends you an email:  
  
"I am considering asking the staff in my department to work longer hours than required by their contract of employment, because I believe it will help me to identify those who are truly committed to our work."  
  
As a Management Development (MD) specialist, draw on your knowledge of ethical issues to provide informed advice.
4. A senior manager comments:  
  
"The Executive management in our organisation do not seem to have the time to conduct performance reviews of the senior managers. This sets a bad example for the rest of the staff. How can I persuade them to put performance reviews higher up their list of priorities?"  
  
Provide an informed response.
5. Learning to learn can be considered a key management competence. How would you encourage the development of this competence in your organisation?
6. A local authority has established a joint venture partnership with a private limited company to improve the delivery of services.  
  
Explain, with reasons, the cultural issues that might emerge in developing a common MD strategy.
7. Identify and justify **at least three** ways in which your organisation could encourage collective learning and knowledge development.
8. As an MD specialist use your knowledge of research to suggest ways that your continuing professional development needs can be met by learning on the job, giving reasons why.

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9. A colleague in a large organisation asks;
- “I am not convinced that we need to develop all levels of manager in leadership. Surely we would have greater consistency in our practices if we focused more on developing management capability.”
- Draw on research to justify **EITHER** support for **OR** a rejection of this view.
10. You have been asked to run a one hour session for your local CIPD branch about how to prepare managers for international secondments.
- Outline and justify the key points you will make.

**END OF EXAMINATION**

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### Introduction

Sixty five candidates from twelve centres took this specialist PDS elective at the November 2007 diet. The results subject to moderation are as follows:

November 2007		
Grade	Number	Percentage of total (to 1 decimal point)
Distinction	0	0
Merit	2	3.1
Pass	39	60
Marginal fail	15	23.1
Fail	9	13.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

*The figures shown are simply calculations based on the number of candidates sitting the examination in November 2007, whether for the first or a subsequent time, and are for interest only. They are not to be confused with the statistics produced by CIPD headquarters, which are based on the performance of candidates sitting the examination for the first time. It is from these figures that the national average pass rates are calculated.*

The overall pass rate is 63.1% which is an improvement from the May 2007 result of 52.5%. Although this represents an improvement in the pass rate, there were only two merits and no distinctions. As in the May 2007 diet, there is a lack of consistent depth of knowledge of this specialist subject, and the knowledge demonstrated is not always well applied. In Section A, forty one candidates achieved at least a pass standard (no distinctions, five merits, and thirty six passes). There were nineteen marginal fails and five fails. Twenty four candidates (36.9%) therefore, did not achieve a pass grade in Section A. No candidates achieved less than 40%

In Section B, thirty one candidates achieved at least a pass standard (no distinctions, two merits, and twenty nine passes). There were twenty one marginal fails and thirteen fails. Thirty four candidates (52.3%) therefore did not achieve a pass grade in Section B. Three candidates achieved less than 40%. Two candidates failed to complete seven questions and therefore failed the paper.

Questions which required some analysis and practical solutions to problems were more frequently chosen and better answered than those questions which required a specific reference to research which, as was noted in the May 2007 report, may indicate a lack of application to study. Candidates achieving merit or distinctions on individual questions used research and/or wider organisational practice to inform their analysis and proposed solutions.

Fifteen candidates passed only Section A, five candidates passed only Section B and twenty six candidates passed both Section A and Section B. Five candidates failed only Section A, fifteen candidates failed only Section B and nineteen candidates failed Section A and Section B. Section A was answered with more consistency than Section B but there were some excellent answers and some extremely poor answers

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to individual questions in Section B.

There was evidence of poor time management with a number of incomplete answers to Section A and cursory answers to final questions chosen in Section B.

I am most grateful to Peter Cureton who wrote the examination paper and marking guidelines and to Dr Laura Hall for her moderation of the final marks. Any guidelines offered here do not claim to offer specimen or model answers. Instead they indicate the flavour of acceptable answers.

### Section A

The case study is substantially derived from a "*trouble-shooter*" article in People Management 26/10/06, and has links across most of the standard.

#### Task 1

Most candidates were able to analyse the current situation at ABL making reference to the company's market position, the impact of the graduate scheme, the implications of a flatter management structure and the recent need to recruit an external candidate to a post at SMT level. Stronger answers examined the size and focus of the graduate scheme and some considered whether the company was over-selling the promotion opportunities in the organisation. A number of candidates questioned whether the graduates' expectations of achieving a senior management position within 3-5 years was realistic.

The use of research was limited. Many successful candidates used Purcell et al's (2003) Black Box research, examining the link between HR practices and discretionary behaviour. The work of Guest and Conway was considered when a number of candidates examined the implications for the psychological contract. Candidates also considered various motivational theories including McGregor, Maslow, McLelland and Vroom.

Some successful candidates used a SWOT analysis and a few included a limited PEST analysis to examine the external environment. Some candidates used examples of other graduate schemes; for example, IBM. Stronger answers examined the graduate scheme in terms of return on investment, and a number of candidates considered the impact of the graduate scheme on the development of the whole staff, in particular the non-graduate talent pool.

Candidates who failed made no reference to published research or organisational practice beyond generalised statements such as "research shows that" or "many people think" or "it has been stated that". The most common reasons for failure were answers which listed points without explanation and/or did not answer the second part of the question, making no "evaluation of the consequences of not making a timely response". This was a challenge for candidates, as doing nothing is always an option for managers but the consequences in terms of damage to reputation, failure to attract future talent, wasting resources, restricting the flow of ideas and loss of tacit knowledge need to be considered.

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Successful candidates identified the financial costs of losing graduates, the opportunity costs of a static management structure and the contribution costs in terms of knowledge workers with a decreasing commitment. The effect on future development and innovation was discussed.

Some candidates failed to produce their answer in the form of a report and thus lost points against the Back-Up Competences.

### Task 2

Possible options for ABL could have included more systematic succession planning, project work, job rotation, job enlargement, introducing development centres, developing community initiatives such as charity work for junior managers to broaden their experience, more effective knowledge management process, a review of reward management strategy, a review of the nature and size of the current graduate scheme and the involvement of non-graduate population in development initiatives.

Successful candidates discussed a range of options. Purcell's work was used again to inform recommendations. Revan's work on Action Learning was also used by a number of candidates to inform a pro-active, problem solving approach for graduate involvement. Many candidates considered involving graduates and existing members of SMT in mentoring relationships, although some were sceptical of the time commitment involved. Work shadowing, coaching and placements were all considered. Some candidates confused succession planning with talent management and used the terms interchangeably.

Unsuccessful answers failed to analyse or justify their recommendations. Better answers developed clear, sequenced action plans with a realistic attempt to identify costs and responsibilities.

Candidates who were unable to produce an action plan and simply listed a series of intentions were unsuccessful.

In general, the action plans were the weakest part of the answers to this question and future candidates should consider the key attributes of an effective action plan.

Those candidates who did not show the application of any research or wider organisational practice, did not pass Section A.

## Section B

### Question 1

Forty candidates attempted this question. Seventeen candidates passed including seven at the merit and distinction levels. This represents a pass rate of 42.5%.

The main reason for failure was not providing the reasoned response required by the question. Some candidates simply wrote about development centres in general terms. A significant number of candidates did not distinguish between assessment



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centres and development centres.

Better answers focussed on using a range of exercises, rotating and changing activities to achieve greater objectivity. Successful answers stressed an individual development perspective and focussed on the relevance of the specific centre. Answers achieving a Merit or Distinction discussed new approaches to development centres (for example, real time simulation etc.) to accommodate the changing business environment, and drew on examples of effective practice. They also identified the importance of the training of assessors and effective feedback.

### Question 2

Forty candidates attempted this question. Twenty candidates passed including five at merit and distinction levels. This represents a pass rate of 50%. The response to this question was disappointing, in that a number of candidates failed to notice that the question focussed on senior managers, and simply wrote about developing leadership across the full range of management levels. Some even specifically focussed on leadership at team leader and supervisor level. The other main reason for failure was lack of reference to any form of research, despite the specific requirement of the question.

Successful candidates utilised a range of research on work based learning, with reference to Revans and Action Learning being most frequent. Merit and Distinction level answers referred to the 2007 CIPD survey and examples of wider organisational practice to suggest innovative and flexible methods of developing leadership competence, addressing the challenge of limited time and availability common to Senior Managers. Surprisingly, very little reference was made to coaching.

### Question 3

Forty six candidates attempted this question. Thirty candidates passed including eight merits. This represents a pass rate of 65.2%. In general this question was well answered, with most candidates identifying key ethical issues relating to potential discrimination against workers unable to work extra hours because of childcare responsibilities, elderly relatives etc. Many candidates identified a variety of groups who might be disadvantaged by the line manager's plans, including those wishing to undertake religious practices etc.

Successful answers identified Health & Safety issues, potential transport problems, additional stress and the need to retain a work life balance. Better answers also considered the ethics of asking workers to breach contractual and legislative requirements, and the potential damage to the psychological contract by the manipulation implied in the manager's email.

Unsuccessful answers tended to focus on commitment rather than addressing the ethical issues involved.

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### Question 4

Fifty nine candidates attempted this question. Thirty seven candidates passed including nine at distinction or merit level. This represents a pass rate of 62.7%.

This question was well answered with most candidates showing clear understanding of the value of effective Performance Review.

Answers which failed did not address the issues raised in the question. Some answers gave a simplified explanation of performance review and made no attempt to relate this explanation to the question.

Successful responses included the role of the Performance Review in identifying individual and organisational capability to meet strategic targets, deployment of resources and planning knowledge and skills development to build future capacity. Better answers discussed the impact of Performance Review on motivation, benchmarking with other organisations, the development of succession planning for senior managers and were alive to the importance of senior managers modelling good practice for the whole organisation.

### Question 5

Thirty nine candidates attempted this question. Twenty one candidates passed including five at merit level. This represents a pass rate of 53.8%.

Although the pass rate was only average a number of answers displayed critical reflection and innovative thinking. Wider organisational examples were used but few candidates considered strategies for embedding learning, and developing a culture which rewards learning. Some effective answers discussed reinforcing learning to learn at organisational, team and individual level, examining key motivators and rewards with a focus on problem solving and recognition of learning. Ford's EDAP scheme was cited by a number of candidates. Apart from references to Kolb and Honey & Mumford, few candidates cited published research to inform their responses.

Answers which failed did not focus on learning to learn, but wrote about learning in general terms.

### Question 6

Thirty candidates attempted this question. Twenty candidates passed including five at distinction and merit levels. This represents a pass rate of 66.6%.

This question was well answered by most candidates who attempted it. Successful answers clearly identified the different purposes of the two organisations, one devoted to public service and the other to the achievement of acceptable profit margins, and the potential implications for culture. Better answers considered possible areas of conflict and potentially different perspectives of managers involved, including attitudes to structures, progression, power and authority, communication, innovation, confidentiality, role etc. Some candidates were also sensitive to changing

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pressures in local government including issues of outsourcing and budgetary restrictions. Successful candidates identified areas of potential difference but were careful not to over generalise and to substantiate their arguments.

Answers which failed did not address the question; for example, answers which focussed entirely on pay differentials between public and private sector or used sweeping generalisation. Worryingly, some candidates seemed to imply that equality and diversity issues were not relevant in the public sector. Better answers addressed similar issues, but explained the specific relevance for local authorities (for example, the workforce reflecting the ethnic and cultural constituency) without implying that equality legislation does not also apply to commercial organisations. Thinking performer values were evident where answers avoided stereotypes and examined issues emerging from developing a common MD strategy.

### Question 7

Fifty Eight candidates attempted this question. Forty five candidates passed including nineteen at merit and distinction levels. This represents a pass rate of 77.6%.

This question was very well answered. A variety of approaches were suggested including Action Learning sets, Kaizen groups, communities of practice, knowledge sharing forums, proactive problem solving team meetings, cascade training, more effective use of intranet sites, presentations, etc.

Candidates who failed either did not identify three ways or failed to justify their suggestions. A small number of candidates failed to address the issue of collective learning at all, simply writing about developing knowledge in general terms.

### Question 8

Forty five candidates attempted this question. Fourteen candidates passed including three at merit and distinction levels. This represents a pass rate of 31.1%.

The response to this question was extremely disappointing. The reason for the low pass rate was the failure of candidates to read the question. This question clearly requires the candidate to write about their own CPD needs and how they can be met on the job. Many candidates did not write about their own CPD needs as an MD specialist but wrote about CPD in general. The question also requires the answer to "give reasons why". Therefore answers which simply listed CPD opportunities without explanation, failed.

Finally, the question also requires the candidate to "use your knowledge of research" to answer the question. Therefore, answers which made no reference to published research or practitioner research in the candidates' own or other organisations also failed.

Successful answers referred to reflective diaries, communities of practice, shadowing, learning by acting as coach or mentor, observation, using feedback constructively, and project work etc. The work of Kolb, Lewin, Lave & Wenger and

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Revan was referred to, amongst others. A number of candidates referred to the findings of the CIPD 2007 survey.

### Question 9

Thirty nine candidates attempted this question. Eighteen candidates passed including three merits. This represents a pass rate of 46.2%.

This question gave candidates the opportunity to tackle opposing views about Leadership and Management and examine the current focus on leadership training. It was surprising to find that most candidates were able to refer to only one view of Leadership and Management (the most common being Kotter's), and many did not recognise that there were any differing views. It is disappointing at this level to find research described as fact rather than critically analysed. A number of candidates made no attempt to justify their arguments or to refer to any form of research.

Arguably, all organisations face continuing change and therefore need leadership at all levels and many successful candidates argued this case convincingly. However, better answers also explained the stability which can flow from established management practices and the better answers included a case for developing both leadership and managerial capability.

### Question 10

Fifty six candidates attempted this question. Thirty nine candidates passed including eleven distinctions and merits. This represents a pass rate of 69.6%.

This question was well answered, with most candidates highlighting key points in preparing managers for international secondments.

Successful answers identified the need to address preparation for secondment and re-integration into the home organisation in addition to issues whilst on secondment. The better answers gave due attention to domestic issues and demonstrated an awareness of the consequences of failed secondments. As the cost of relocating is so high, it is important that the domestic issues are handled well. Merit and Distinction level answers also referred in more detail to cultural awareness issues citing the work of Hofstede and occasionally Trompenaars.

Answers which failed this question listed the key points but made no attempt to justify or explain their importance.

### Conclusion

The overall pass rate represents an improvement on the May diet which is encouraging. The pass rate could have been even higher, with more of the candidates achieving Merits or Distinctions, if candidates paid more careful attention to examination technique: in particular, to time management and reading the questions carefully.

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The failure of candidates to answer the question asked continues to depress the results. Too often, candidates interpreted questions as "write all you can about" (for example CPD), without concentrating on the exact question asked and giving an informed response.

Knowledge of research and wider organisational practice in management development continues to be weak and should be used to inform the answer to the question.

It is encouraging to see positive and innovative responses to questions on performance review, international secondment and collective learning in particular. Some reflective and analytical responses to the case study demonstrated thinking performer and business partner values.

I wish future candidates well in preparing for the Managerial Development Elective.

**Sandra M D Beneicke**

Examiner