CAMBRIDGE
INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

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Cambridge Career Awards

MARK SCHEME FOR the October 2002 question paper

CAREER AWARD IN BUSINESS

ADVANCED LEVEL

5172 Effective Business Communication

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were initially instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The mark scheme must be read in conjunction with the question paper.

- CIE will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with this mark scheme.

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
Local Examinations Syndicate

MARKING SCHEME

The following are not model answers, but are nevertheless to be regarded as persuasive. Candidates may offer other relevant and appropriate material and arguments.

Question 1

1   *Raxy is worried about the level of morale within the CTC organisation, and he is concerned that this may have occurred because of poor communication.*

(a)   *Identify four potential causes of poor communication with the employees*

[8 marks]

Causes could include:

➤ No clear aim or purpose of communication
➤ Use of inappropriate language such as 'management' speak
➤ Staff unable to understand the message due to education/experience levels
➤ Use of inappropriate medium such as informal chats or slips in wage packages
➤ Lack of regular communication

[2 mark per point up to 8 marks]

(b)   *Suggest and justify three types of communication which should be undertaken with the employees to help the situation.*

[12 marks]

Any of the three types of communication which could be undertaken with employees, but these must be justified in relation to the case situation:

➤ Staff meetings – two way communications, immediate and transparent
➤ Team meetings – two way communications, smaller groups allowing further discussion
➤ Seminars – two way communications, immediate information, etc
➤ Written confirmation in the form of briefing papers, company report, employee news letters, one way, but permanent and can be read at leisure

[2 marks per communication type and 2 marks for justification up to 12 marks]

Question 2

2   *The Chairman, Raxy, has requested a formal report and a press release about the current situation within the CTC company and has asked the Board of Directors to write these.*

(a)   *Identify the key stages that the Directors will have to go through to compile this report and state what they will need to do at each stage.*

[8 marks]

The key stages of a formal report are as follows:

> Deciding on the terms of reference, e.g. to report on the key issues which the organisation are facing and the improvements for customer service and communication

> Researching/assembling the materials
E.g. gathering further information and evidence about the problem of wrong bills being sent out, research into the reasons

> Organising the material
E.g. compiling the material by analysis methods and allocating it to the appropriate sections of the report

> Writing the draft - E.g. draft report

> Editing the materials - E.g. ensuring that the final report makes sense and is readable

> Stating findings

> Reaching conclusions
E.g. stating reasons for problems and why these occurred

> Making recommendations
E.g. what might be suggested as possible strategies to combat these problems

Level 1	Identifying some stages of the report with limited understanding of the issues	[1-3 marks]
Level 2	Identifying most stages of report but not applying them fully	[3-5 marks]
Level 3	Identifying all stages of the report and making realistic judgements on what each stage will entail	[6-8 marks]

(b) *The directors are using the following computer applications to assist them when writing the report. Explain and evaluate each of the following:*

I	*internal databases*	*[2 marks]*
Ii	*electronic notepads*	*[2 marks]*
Iii	*spreadsheets*	*[2 marks]*
Iv	*desk top publishing*	*[2 marks]*

Answer to include a section on each:

I   Databases, used to collate information on customer information, could be used to identify the customer behaviour etc

Ii   Electronic notepads – used as a mobile form of communication, for members of staff travelling to connect into the main Intranet or Internet.

lii   Spreadsheets – used to analyse data, complex formulae can be used to statistically interrogate information, used for charting data.

lv   Desk top publishing – used to present the report in a professional manner, use of clipart etc
[Explanation and evaluation of each computer application up to 2 marks each = 8 marks]

(c)   *List four characteristics of a press release*
[4 marks]

Press release characteristics to include:
➤ Written for publication to different audiences – journalist and target audience
➤ Content - information needs to be newsworthy, credible, true, etc
➤ Structure & style - needs to include headline, include facts, quotations, embargo date, needs to be double line spaced, include photos etc
➤ Needs to be checked internally before release, etc
[1 mark per point up to 4 marks]

Question 3

3   *The Chairman is determined to communicate the situation with the employees within the organisation and has decided to call a general meeting for all members of staff.*

(a)   *Identify and explain five characteristics of an effective and successful meeting with the employees*
[10 marks]

Characteristics of an effective meeting should include:
➤ Aims and objectives outlined
➤ Action points highlighted
➤ Time constraints adhered to leadership provided
➤ Preparation and use of an agenda
➤ The use of minutes
➤ The role of key participants – chairperson, secretary, treasurer

[2 marks per characteristic and explanation – up to 10 marks]

(b)   *Explain the characteristics of effective groups within an organisation*
[10 marks]

Explanation of characteristics of effective groups to include:
➤ Structure of group
➤ Culture within group and organisation
➤ Development of trust within the group
➤ Level of support within the group
➤ Consultation and communication
➤ Involvement in decision-making

- ➤ Respect for members of the group
- ➤ Norming, forming, storming, performing

Level 1: some understanding of group dynamics   **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2: further understanding and fuller consideration   **[3-5 marks]**
Level 3: analysis of successful groups related to case   **[6-8 marks]**
Level 4: further analysis of issues and key points
             understood   **[9-10 marks]**

Question 4

4   *The interviews for appointment of a new Communications and Press manager are about to take place.*
      (a)   *Explain how the interviewees should prepare for the interview*
                                                         [8 marks]

Answer to include points for interviewees:
- ➤ Prepare and review own strengths and weaknesses
- ➤ Review past performance
- ➤ Consider future ambitions
- ➤ Present good personal image
- ➤ Do background research on the organisation
- ➤ Prepare and bring a portfolio of previous work as evidence
- ➤ Personal grooming

Level 1   **Identifying some issues**   **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2   **Identifying further issues which are explained** **[3-5 marks]**
Level 3   **Explain and justify wide range of issues**   **[6-8 marks]**

      (b)   *Identify how the interviewers should plan for these interviews*
                                                        [6 marks]

Answer should include point for the interviewer:
- ➤ Plan the interview
- ➤ Consider the purpose of interview
- ➤ Liase with other members of the interview panel – i.e. HR
- ➤ Consider location, timing and structure of interview
- ➤ Prepare questions

Level 1   **Identifying some issues**   **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2   **Identifying further issues which are explained**
                                                 [3-5 marks]
Level 3   **Identify and fully explain further issues**   **[6 marks]**

      (c)   *Explain three types of questions which could be used at the interview by the interviewers*
                                                        [6 marks]

Answer should include 3 of the following:

> Closed question – offer a choice of answers only i.e. How long have you worked for your previous organisation? 0-1 years, 2-5 years, over 5 years.
> Leading question – lead the interviewee into speaking about specific issues i.e. Why do you think that this company has a poor reputation?
> Open question – a question which allows the interviewee the opportunity to give open, frank and in-depth information i.e. What do you think you could bring to this company?
> Hypothetical question – gives a scenario to allow the interviewee to answer in role, i.e. If you were in post and had to manage a press call for the main national newspapers, how would you ensure that they came to the press call?

[2 marks per explanation up to 6 marks]

Question 5

5   *The Board of Directors has asked you to prepare the visual aids for the employee briefings.*

(a)   *Explain each of the following, giving one advantage and one disadvantage of using each visual aid to communicate information in an oral presentation:*

   i   tables
   ii   line graphs
   *iii   bar charts*
   iv   pie charts

[12 marks]

Answers should be related specifically to oral presentations and include:

I   Explanation of tables – good for tabulating complex information, limited immediate visual impact and difficult to interpret readily

Ii   Explanation of line graphs – good for showing trends, cannot readily or clearly be interpreted is too many plotted lines of information, therefore not helpful for complex information

Iii   Explanation of bar charts – again good for showing trends, different types such as 3D etc can be used, limited visual impact if results are very close in value

Iv   Explanation of pie charts – total value of items must be known, use of colours to enhance impact, limited to the amount of in-depth information that can be conveyed using a pie chart, need to work out in terms of 360%

[1 mark per explanation, 1 mark per disadvantage and 1 mark per advantage for each = 12 marks]

(b)   *Using the information in Table 1 which relates to the customer complaints, select the most effective visual aid and present this data*
[8 marks]

Number of Customer Complaints

Year 2000
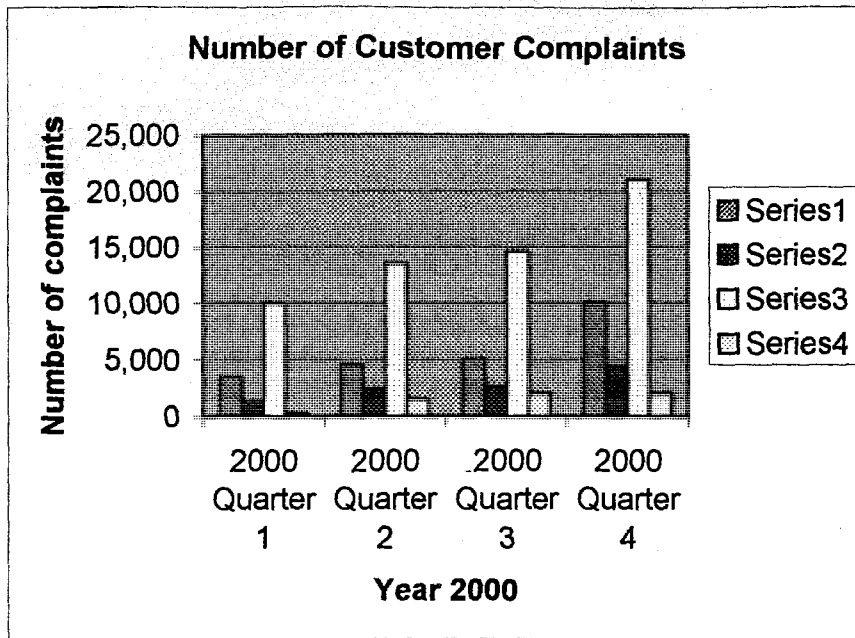
Appropriate method identified and used
Correct & accurate graph used   [2 marks]
Correct values plotted   [2 mark]
Correct shaded areas to illustrate key   [1 mark]
Clarity of chart and correct labelling   [3 marks]
                                                            [up to 8 marks]