UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE

CAMBRIDGE CAREER AWARD – ADVANCED LEVEL

BUSINESS   5172/1

Effective Business Communication
Core module

OCTOBER 2002

Additional materials:
    Answer paper

TIME   2 hours plus 15 minutes reading time

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the answer paper/booklet.

Attempt all tasks.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

If you use more than one sheet of paper, fasten the sheets together.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each task or part task.

You may use a calculator.

This question paper consists of 5 printed pages and 3 blank pages.

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You must read the case study below and attempt all the tasks which follow.
(The following case study is fictitious).

Case Study - Country Telecommunications Corporation (CTC)

The telecommunications sector in many African countries is characterised by a growing, unsatisfied demand for telecommunications services in both urban and rural areas and among businesses as well as households.

Country Telecommunications Corporation (CTC) is a state-owned enterprise incorporated under the CTC Act of 1980 to provide public telecommunications services in two African countries.   *5*
Currently it has over 500,000 customer telephone lines in service.

CTC has a telecommunications infrastructure that is one of the most modern in Africa. Its network provides a reasonable level of service.

During the past two years, the number of telephone lines to customers has increased by 19%. This has reduced the waiting period for services significantly. This increased penetration of the market   *10*
means that there are now 6.4 telephones for every 100 people in the population.

The Chairman, Raxy Kaboeamodimo, determined that CTC should offer world-class service to its customers and that customer communications will be of a good standard. Indeed, Raxy identified the main strategic challenges facing the company as follows:

- Large investment in networks and development of new services   *15*
- Introduction, development and support of new products and services
- Customer care and responsiveness at all levels within the organisation
- Streamlining of processes and work procedures to address customer concerns

However, there has been a vast number of customer complaints regarding a new bills payment system that the company introduced over twelve months ago. The new system was implemented   *20*
before a trial was undertaken, and consequently, 76% of both individual and corporate customers received incorrect bills (each with a number of errors). Table 1 illustrates the increase in the number of complaints.

Table 1 – Number of Customer Complaints

	2001 Quarter 1	2001 Quarter 2	2001 Quarter 3	2001 Quarter 4
Individual customers written complaints	3,500	4,560	5,060	10,030
Corporate customers written complaints	1,300	2,344	2,566	4,408
Individual customers telephone complaints	10,034	13,499	14,566	20,987
Corporate customers telephone complaints	256	1,456	2,010	2,001

[Turn over

This has resulted in a national crisis, which has been reported in all of the national newspapers. This has also had a very negative impact on the internal employees, resulting in low levels of morale and a number of staff resigning.

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Raxy Kaboeamodimo is very determined to respond positively to this problem. Apart from the immediate need to communicate to the customers, a press release for the national newspapers needs to be written to try to recover the situation, and communications with the employees need to be managed effectively.

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Therefore, the Chairman, Raxy, is currently looking to recruit a new Communications and Press Manager to manage both the internal and external communications.

You must attempt ALL of the following tasks.

1 The Chairman, 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]**

(b) Suggest **three** types of communication which should be undertaken with the employees to help the situation. Give reasons to explain your choice. **[12]**
[Total: 20]

2 The Chairman 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]**

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

   (i) internal databases **[2]**

  (ii) electronic notepads **[2]**

 (iii) spreadsheets **[2]**

 (iv) desk top publishing **[2]**

(c) List **four** characteristics of a press release. **[4]**
[Total: 20]

3 The Chairman is determined to communicate the situation to 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]**

(b) Explain the characteristics of effective groups within an organisation. **[10]**
[Total: 20]

4 The interviews for the appointment of a new Communications and Press Manager are about to take place.

(a) Explain how the interviewees should prepare for the interview. **[8]**

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

(c) Explain **three** types of questions which could be used at the interview by the interviewers.
[6]
[Total: 20]

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5 The Board of Directors has asked you to prepare some visual aids for 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]**

(b) Using the information in Table 1, which relates to the customer complaints, present this data using the most effective type of visual aid. **[8]**

[Total: 20]

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