UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October 2008 question paper

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS

5172   Effective Business Communication, maximum mark 100

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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.

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UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

1 (a) Explain *four* consequences to SCL of poor communications between the offices in Spain and Thailand. **[8]**

A breakdown in communications will result in the following:

- Lack of understanding of the message
- Relationships fail
- The slowing down of business and not meeting business targets
- It will be difficult to get decisions made
- Miscommunication may result in misinformation
- Customers may experience difficulties as a result of slow actions
- Barriers will be built up between the teams, making virtual teams impossible to work in, and relationships breakdown

Students should identify any four from the above, or any four valid alternative answers.

Only accept 'consequences NOT reasons – language and culture are reasons not consequences
Beware of repetition

2 marks per point = up to 8 marks

(b) Explain *three* methods of two-way communication that SCL could use to develop its business relationships with Golf World International. **[6]**

- Virtual group meetings
- Face to face group meetings
- Quality circles
- Seminars
- Briefings
- Telephone conferences
- Telephone calls

Students should identify and explain any three from the above methods.

2 marks for each point = 6 marks

(c) Non-verbal communication could be easily misunderstood between the two different cultures.

(i) Using appropriate examples, explain what is meant by Kinetics. **[3]**

Kinetics is a form of body language, such as facial expressions, body movements, body position, and use of hands, head and eyes during face to face communications.

(ii) Explain why it is important to use positive body language in non-verbal situations.

[3]

Business Importance

Students should be able to identify its importance in terms of positive non-verbal communication being beneficial to business, whilst negative non-verbal communication will have a negative impact on business. People's perception of negative non-verbal language will be important and influence their views and feelings about the person and the situation.

3 marks for explaining what Kinetics is using examples
3 marks for explaining its importance in business terms

[Total: 6]

2   You work for SCL. Write a letter to the Contracts Director at Golf World International notifying him of the arrangements for the forthcoming meeting between him and your Contracts Director at SCL. The Contracts Director will be travelling two weeks from now and will be accompanied by SCL's Managing Director. You can invent all other necessary details. **[10]**

The letter should conform to the following format:
- Logo or letter heading of the company
- Date
- Reference – title
- Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs (Personalised because he has made the contact)
- The content of the letter
- Inviting them to confirm that they can attend the meeting
- Appropriate closure
- Signature (in this instance – Yours sincerely)

Marks should be allocated on the basis of:
5 marks for layout i.e. logo/letterhead, date, reference, signature
5 marks for content

Salutation and complementary close must be on the left hand side and compatible.

(b) Intranet will be a very important communications tool for SCL in the future.

(i) Explain what is meant by the Intranet. **[2]**

- The Intranet is a form of internal communications or otherwise known as an internal Internet, only accessible by internal employees within the organisation and is password protected.
- It is used for posting announcements, project up date statements, a list of employees and employee information, job vacancies, management information, meeting minutes etc.

(ii) List *three* benefits of SCL of developing Intranet communications between Spain and Thailand. [3]

The benefits of the Intranet for SCL in Spain and Thailand are:
- Both countries will know what the other country is doing in terms of work, projects, information and opportunities
- It enables open and transparent communications
- It is a source for posting important information for all parties involved in working for SCL
- It can be used as a means of seeking information as well as sharing information
- It will provide equality for each of the countries involved

2 marks for defining the Intranet
3 marks for listing any of the above 3 or valid alternative points
Answers must be specific to *'Intranet'* not in general terms

[Total: 5]

(c) The Contracts Director has to present a report at the meeting which outlines the basis of contractual arrangements. He has asked for your help in preparing the report. List *five* of the nine headings for a formal business report, so that he can ensure he structures his report properly. [5]

- Title
- Author
- Date
- Terms of reference and objectives of the report
- Research and gathering information
- Main body of report findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Appendices

Students should provide any 5 points from the above.

(5 x 1 point)

Must have 'To: and 'From' for 1 mark
Only 1 mark for individual items in body of report

3   Initially business development, sales, contracting and operational processes will have virtual working groups.

(a)   Explain *four* key factors facing virtual working groups.   [8]

Students should be able to identify four points from the following:
- Lack of physical contact
- Lack of visual impact
- Different cultures
- Different languages
- Distance
- Difficulty in co-ordinating and integrating activities

Students should be able to expand on any four of the above points.

2 marks per point = 8 marks

Be careful of interpretation - answers must refer to 'virtual' groups NOT 'working groups' or 'groups in general'.
If listed points only, maximum 4 marks

(b)   The Managing Director SCL will be chairing the meeting between SCL and Golf World International. Explain *three* duties he will undertake as chair of this meeting.   [6]

The Chairperson should:
- Lead the meeting
- Keep the meeting to time
- Ensure no one person dominates the meeting and manage the dynamics of the meeting, maintaining order throughout
- Ensure the agenda is completed
- Organise the minutes of the meeting and ensure they are taken and signed-off as completed – i.e. appoint a minutes secretary
- Ensure actions are recorded and understood, including timelines
- Bring the meeting to a close, concluding and summarising key points

Students should be able to elaborate on a minimum of three from the above.

3 points x 2 marks = 6 marks
If there is a bullet point list only, then one mark per point.

(c)   It will be vitally important that minutes of this meeting are taken. Explain *three* reasons for taking the minutes of a meeting.   [6]

Minutes achieve the following:
- A record of the meeting and matters discussed
- A list of key action points and names for who is responsible for actions
- Timelines for actions
- A record of decisions made
- A record of points to discuss for the future

Students should be able to elaborate on any three points from above.
Any 3 points x 2 marks = 6 marks

4 **SCL will shortly be commencing a recruitment campaign for new contracts, sales and business development personnel, along with some operational staff.**

(a) Explain two purposes of recruitment interviews for SCL. **[4]**

The purpose of a recruitment interview is:
- Communication between two parties to understand each other and why they are of interest
- Enables both parties to speak
- Enables both parties to listen
- Enables both parties to exchange information
- Enables both parties to assess whether or not they could work together

Students should be able to explain any two from the above.

Should the student explain, 2 marks per point = 2 x 2
Should the student bullet point then 1 mark per point = 4 x 1

(b) Explain to the Human Resources staff how they should prepare for the employment interviews. **[12]**

- Plan for the interview
- Identify the aims and objectives of the interview – to recruit new staff
- Decide who should be present at the interview: managers, directors
- Decide on the types of questions, open, closed, scenario based etc
- Decide upon discussion points
- Determine how the two-way flow of information should take place
- Determine how the interviewer should set the tone for the interview
- How to chose the appropriate location and time and collect all of the necessary information
- The importance of listening carefully and recording relevant information
- How to make notes at critical times during the interview, and identify any forms that may need to be completed
- How to make follow up notes after the interview
- How to determine who to accept for the role, and how to write acceptance and rejection letters appropriately

Level 1: Demonstrates a limited knowledge and understanding [1–4]

Level 2: Demonstrates a clearer understanding of the planning stages [5–8]

If examples of types of question are given maximum 2 marks

Level 3: Demonstrates a full and detailed analysis of the stages [9–12]

(c) Describe *two* other types of interviews SCL should undertake in order to monitor the progress of its employees once they start their new roles. **[4]**

Students should be able to select from the following:
- A performance appraisal interview – something that happens at least once per year and provides an opportunity to discuss progression to date, issues, problems and development for the future (does not typically involve discussions on pay scales)
- Counselling interview – providing the employees with an opportunity to discuss issues of difficulty within their employment
- Discipline interview – should an employee have wronged the organisation, made a major mistake, misbehaved within work, breached their employment contract, then it may be appropriate for them to undergo a disciplinary interview, giving them an opportunity to explain themselves and then for next stages to be agreed
- Termination interview – should an employee have their employment terminated, or wish to leave the organisation they normally undergo an interview to explain the circumstances and what they feel
- Induction interview – this is for new recruits to the organisation giving them an opportunity to ask question about their new role and organisation, but also an opportunity to explain company policies

Students should elaborate on any two from the above, or other valid alternatives.

2 points x 2 marks for each point elaborated upon

5 (a) It is likely that SCL will be asking for quite complex financial data from the Thailand office in order to monitor its performance.

(i) Identify *two* appropriate graphical forms for presenting complex financial data. [2]

Students should select two from the following:
- Bar Chart
- Line Graph
- Table

Only the above three types are acceptable

(ii) Explain the advantages and disadvantages of using them to present complex financial information. [6]

Students should select two from the following (3 marks for each answer maximum to be applied)

Bar Chart:

Advantages: It is easy to identify the variances through the use of bars within the graph. The bars can be identified individual through name, time and quantities. It is possible to use three dimensions and colour to enhance the presentation.

Disadvantages: A bar chart has limited visual impact if results are very close in value, or there is limited number of bars to a chart.

1 mark for advantage and 1 mark for disadvantage
1 mark for identification   [3]

Line Graph:

Advantages: It is a grid of equal lines/squares, with two sets of information plotted in relation to one another. One set of data plotted vertically, the other horizontally. The lines show trends and movements in data over a period of time.

Disadvantages: It can be difficult to interpret too many plotted lines of information, again particularly if there is little difference in the data quantities.

1 marks for advantage and 1 mark for disadvantage
1 mark for identification   [3]

Table:

Advantages: Components: a clear title; A scale of interval – e.g. 12 months. The list of items can be compared and totalled; indication of the meaning of numbers can also be used i.e. (000's) for thousands.

Disadvantages: Limited immediate visual impact and can be difficult to interpret.

1 mark for advantage and 1 mark for disadvantage
1 mark for identification   [3]

(b) The Managing Director of SCL wants to present an organisation chart at the contracts meeting in Thailand so that Golf World International fully understands the structure of SCL.

Explain three purposes of SCL's organisation chart.   [6]

An organisation chart seeks to communicate the following:
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities of employees
- Span of control
- Self-managing work groups
- Types of structures – e.g. flat or hierarchical
- Size and scope of the organisation

Students should be able to elaborate on any three of the above points

2 marks for each point x 3 = 6 marks

(c) SCL is keen to explore how advances in technology could enhance the presentation of information.

Explain *three* forms of technology that SCL could use to aid the presentation of information.   [6]

- Video
- Computer graphics
- Power Point Software
- Graphics and animation
- Multi-media

2 marks per point x 3 points = 6 marks