



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Business and Communication Systems 413008

(Specification 4134)

Unit 8: ICT Systems in Business

Report on the Examination

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General

This is the third examination of the new specification. Responses were in line with expectations and questions enabled access to candidates across the ability range.

There was evidence that many candidates had been well prepared for the examination and candidates attempted most questions.

It would appear that some candidates do not fully understand the term 'explain'. They simply gave a suitable point with no expansion or gave additional points which failed to gain further marks.

Although more able candidates used the information in the Item well, the majority of candidates were unable to apply their answer in context. Reference to 'Louise' or 'Bowler's Biscuits' on their own were insufficient to lift them into the higher levels of marks. Many candidates made excellent points but they could have been related to any business.

In most cases, candidates made a recommendation but many remained unclear, with candidates discussing both options in length but not fully developing a conclusion. A minority of candidates gave a stronger argument against their recommendation.

Most candidates attempted to answer questions in full sentences, few responses gave a list of bullet points as in previous years. However, on the whole the quality of written communication was weak. Some candidates failed to apply basic grammar rules and weaker candidates used few, if any, technical terms in the nine mark questions.

Some candidates did not read the question carefully and consequently did not answer the question that was set but wrote on the topic generally. Some of these were good answers but were not relevant to the actual question.

Question 1

- (a)+(b)** Many candidates scored full marks on these opening questions. A few candidates did not follow the instructions and ticked more than one box for each task.
- (c)** The best answers were able to distinguish between Bowler's Biscuits and the shops, and develop their answers to explain the consequences for the business.
- (d)** A few candidates were able to analyse a reason for or against using a mailshot or trade magazine which was relevant to Bowler's Biscuits. Many answers were generic which could apply to any business, thus limiting their marks. The best answers supported their judgement with consideration of the need to reach new customers if growth was to be maintained. A few candidates misread the question and their answers considered sending the database to the customers. Some weaker responses went on to talk about both the mailshot and the trade magazine but did not make a choice or failed to recognise that the audience was trade and developed a line of argument for the general public.

Question 2

- (a)** Many candidates scored two marks on this question; some misread the question and mentioned features not in the picture.
- (b)** Some candidates were able to successfully identify two problems; few were able to support their answer with a consequence of the problem to gain the development mark. A large number simply repeated their answers for 2(a).

- (c) Very few candidates scored all five marks on this question as they were unable to fully develop their answer and explain how the layout affected communication to gain Level 2. One point needed to be developed and explained to gain five marks and many candidates simply listed responses. Candidates clearly understood what an open plan office was but their answers concentrated on the advantages and disadvantages rather than the effect on communication. The best answers focused on the layout and how it was different from a cellular office and then how this affected communication.
- (d) Very few candidates scored all four marks for analysis on this question as they were unable to answer in the context of the managers at Bowler's Biscuits. Whilst many were able to state the benefits of open plan and cellular offices, a large percentage were unable to develop their answer. Stronger candidates were able to identify the benefits of a cellular office allowing the two managers to share sales data. A minority of answers provided a balanced argument considering the role of managers, with some candidates referring to the issue of space raised in the Item. The majority made a judgement but often this went against their argument thus limiting their marks.

Question 3

- (a) Few candidates scored two marks on this question; a majority identified training for the job which is not part of induction.
- (b) In most cases candidates were able to identify a method of advertising but many candidates explained the method to advertise to the general public and not for the trade. Many responses included TV, radio and newspapers which are not suitable for trade customers. Stronger candidates were able to identify the audience and explain reasons why the method was suitable for Bowler's Biscuits.
- (c) Very few candidates scored all four marks for this question as they were unable to apply their answer to the ICT specialist role. One method of reward needed to be developed and explained in context to gain four marks and many candidates listed several. The best answers focused on using bonus payments and how this could be linked to the ICT specialist job of fixing PCs.
- (d) Few candidates answered this question in depth; many responses lacked knowledge of the benefits and drawbacks of working from home and focused too much on how the specialist might stay in bed all day; might take his children to the park, etc. There was a widespread belief that the specialist would not be getting paid for the hours he worked at home. Candidates tended to explain advantages and disadvantages with little analysis or connection to the scenario. The best answers supported their judgement with consideration of the need to be on site to fix computer problems or that the website could be maintained from home. Few candidates referred to the problem of recruiting for this type of job and did not consider that working from home may be an incentive. The majority of candidates were unable to support their judgement.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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