

Examiners' Report
June 2015

GCSE Business Studies 5BS04 01

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June 2015

Publications Code UG041040

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Introduction

The structure of the paper this year was consistent with previous examination papers. Questions were a mixture of multiple choice, short and extended answers.

Candidate responses continued to show positive signs of improvement particularly when answering levelled questions worth 6, 8 or 10 marks. The quality of evaluative comment in answers indicated that centres have acted upon previous feedback in examiner reports. The structure of candidate answers for levelled questions was a positive feature. Answering questions using a consistent structure allows the development of analysis and detail required to access the higher mark bands. However, one weakness in this type of question that is still commonplace is the inability of candidates to write meaningful conclusions to their answers. Conclusions should add value to answers rather than repeat points already made. Centres should use the advice contained in this report as a way to make further improvements in future series.

Sections B and C were based on given scenarios using EA Games and a traditional shoe-making business called Crockett and Jones. The aim of these scenarios was to provide information for candidates to use when applying their answers. A large number of candidates failed to recognise this and therefore struggled to answer in context. However, candidates are still losing marks on 2 and 3 mark questions by not writing their answers in the correct context of the business that the question was based upon. This was particularly evident in 'outline' questions where candidates clearly had the knowledge to access the question but did not apply the knowledge to the business in the question. Centres are urged to build this into their preparation as it does have a significant impact on candidate performance.

Centres should be aware that the full range of the specification is used to base questions on. This includes questions requiring a definition of a key term. Questions 5a, 6a and 7 all required a knowledge-based definition of terms taken directly from the specification. There was an improvement from last year in answering this type of question but candidates often struggled to give perfect definitions of the terms and were restricted to one mark.

Again, specific examples have been included within the report to highlight this issue. The aim of this report is to help address some of these issues and to highlight some particular issues experienced on this paper. Exemplar answers are provided to help model technique in future papers.

Question 1 (b)

The aim of this first question was to provide an introduction to the paper with a general question about the advantages of communicating using email. This is a familiar topic to candidates with the aim being to 'ease' candidates into the paper. However many candidates were guilty of repeating mistakes highlighted in previous series. 'Quick', 'fast' and 'easy' will not be accepted as advantages unless they are given in relative terms to other forms of communication. This was a common mistake in this question.

(b) Identify **one** advantage for a business of using email.

(1)

It's quick and easy.



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Examiner Comments

This type of answer must be avoided by candidates. Simply saying that any type of communication is 'quick' or 'easy' will not be accepted. There must be some specific content within the answer that shows it is quicker than other forms of communication e.g. letter.



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Examiner Tip

Never use 'quick', 'fast' or 'cheap' as an answer unless it is relative to another form of communication e.g. 'faster than posting a letter'.

(b) Identify **one** advantage for a business of using email.

(1)

You can attach images/files.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gives a specific advantage that is clearly linked to email and was therefore given one mark.

Question 1 (c)

This was the first 'explain' question on the paper and it should be noted that it has not been asked in the context of a particular business. Therefore no context was required in the answer to score full marks. Candidates were required to give one impact of using the wrong method of communication and then develop this with two linked strands of explanation. Most candidates did successfully identify an impact but struggled in applying a structure to their answer. This can often lead to repetitive answers that also waste valuable time. Candidates that applied a structure to their answers used key connective words such as 'this leads to' and 'because'.

(c) Explain **one** impact on a business of using the wrong method of communication.

(3)

If you use a poor method of communication the receiver may not get the information correctly and therefore may be confused. If a customer is confused by a business, they are less likely to do repeat business, leading to less sales being made.



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Examiner Comments

This is a good example of a well structured answer that scores all three marks. The first sentence contains a valid impact - 'may not get the information correctly'. The rest of the answer develops this well but it is the use of connectives such as 'therefore' and 'leading to' that allows the development to be linked to the original impact.

Question 1 (d)

Question 1d was also an 'explain' question worth three marks. Again no application of knowledge was required as no business scenarios are used in Q1. There was a good understanding of why 'the tone of the letter' is important. Most candidates scored two or three marks with the main issue being that as described in the comments for question 1c.

(d) Explain **one** reason why the tone of a letter is important in business communication.

(3)

One reason why the tone of a letter is important is so that the receiver knows if they will be angry with them or if they're praising them.



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Examiner Comments

ate clearly has the knowledge to answer the question but does not understand how to develop an answer to gain more marks. Using the mark scheme as a guide is a useful tool in understanding how much to write. Three marks are available so the level of detail in answers must reflect this.

(d) Explain **one** reason why the tone of a letter is important in business communication.

(3)

The tone of a letter is important for the image of a business. If an outside party receives a letter from the business that is too informal it may make the business look unprofessional and worsen the company image, this can lead to loss of potential customers.



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Examiner Comments

This answer has three clear strands to it which allows, presuming the content is accurate, three marks to be awarded. Here a reason is given and then developed in two linked ways - 'make business look unprofessional' and 'loss of potential customers'.



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Examiner Tip

The level of detail in answer must be sufficient to score the marks allocated to a question. Candidates must realise that it is highly unlikely that three marks can be achieved in an explain question if the answer is only one sentence in length.

Question 2 (b)

As in previous series, from Question 2 onwards each question was based on a business scenario. Therefore the majority of answers required candidates to apply their knowledge to the business scenario.

Question 2(b) was an excellent example of this. It was an 'outline' question worth 2 marks. 1 mark for identifying a suitable reason for maintaining strong relationships with suppliers and the second mark for some form of suitable development. However the question this year was based on a delicatessen named Juniper's Pantry and therefore required the knowledge to be applied to the business. There was an improvement in application of knowledge for this particular question but it still remains a significant problem that candidates are not writing answers to outline questions in context.

Application/context comes from relating the answer specifically to the business in the scenario. In this case the business was Juniper's Pantry so the context should have made reference to food, high quality ingredients, local suppliers etc.

(b) Outline **one** reason why strong relationships with suppliers are important to the success of Juniper's Pantry.

(2)

When Juniper's Pantry has a strong relationship with the suppliers it can lead to the suppliers giving huge discounts so it and this is good for Juniper's Pantry because it decreases cost and increases profit levels.



This clearly demonstrates the issue of failing to apply knowledge. This is an excellent answer and demonstrates that the candidate understands the question. The answer is also developed with a second point meaning it is possible to award two marks. However this cannot be done as the answer is not in the context of Juniper's Pantry - it could be equally applied to any business. This therefore restricts the mark to one.

(b) Outline **one** reason why strong relationships with suppliers are important to the success of *Juniper's Pantry*.

(2)

Juniper's Pantry having a strong relationship with suppliers allows them to get the best ingredients available, which allows them to produce better quality food.



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Examiner Comments

This answer is similar in structure and gives a developed reason. However the inclusion of the words 'ingredients' and 'food' applies the answer to the specific business. This context allows two marks to be awarded.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates must show application of their knowledge. If a question is based on a specific business then the answer must make some form of specific reference to this business. Please note the actual name of the business is not enough to contextualise an answer.

Question 2 (c)

Question 2c was generally well answered. Candidates showed a good understanding of the advantages of providing information to customers and could develop this by explaining what benefits the business would receive as a result. This was also well applied to the business. Candidates' application of knowledge for explain questions tended to be better than on outline questions. This indicates that centres are focusing on this particular technique but neglecting when it is required for shorter answers such as the two mark outline questions.

(c) Explain **one** advantage to *Juniper's Pantry* of providing information about its products to customers.

(3)

They know exactly how they cook it and what's in their food. This means that the customers are confident in what they buy and this means that they might return to the shop and if they can manage to keep returning customers, this means that more revenue could be made.



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Examiner Comments

This was a typical answer to this question. It is well structured with two developed points of explanation following the identification of a valid advantage. By simply including the word 'food' the candidate has applied the answer to the business in the question. This allows three marks to be awarded.

Question 2 (d)

There are certain areas of the specification that are common to most exam papers. Candidates therefore, become familiar with this type of question and feel more confident when they answer the question. However, there will always be areas of the specification that may be covered where there are gaps in candidate knowledge. This often indicates that centres have not covered the full specification in their teaching or they focus primarily on the tried and tested areas.

The focus of this question was 'silent communication' which is a distinct method of communication. It was clear that many candidates did not understand the specific nature of silent communication and simply referred to communication methods where no sound was involved. The methods of communication are categorized within the specification, which is then used as the basis of the mark scheme. Centres must develop candidates' knowledge in all areas to avoid the issues that were seen on this question.

'Describe' questions allowed candidates to achieve marks in a number of different ways. This could be done through including different possible methods or giving a method and developing the answer further. The key issue in this question was to describe how data could be protected and not describing why.

(d) Describe how silent communication could be used at *Juniper's Pantry*.

(4)

Silent communication could be used at Juniper's Pantry through the use of advertising posters. The posters would enable Juniper's Pantry to easily give key information to customer that customer can read and understand at their own rate. This would increase brand knowledge and awareness and could potentially increase sales.



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Examiner Comments

This answer demonstrates a common problem seen with candidates' responses to this question. The method selected is 'poster' which, although uses no sound, is a written form of communication. This can therefore not be credited with any marks. The answer then also starts to explain why this would be a successful way to communicate (through the reference to brand awareness) rather than HOW it is used.

Question 3 (b)

Question 3(b) was relatively straight forward and was well accessed by candidates. The one issue of note was that candidates must read the question carefully. The question asked for three INTERNAL stakeholders however a small number of candidates simply listed three stakeholders, including external stakeholders in the answer.

(b) Identify **three** internal stakeholders in *npower*. (3)

1 Employees

2 Share holders

3 suppliers



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate includes 'suppliers' as an answer, which is an external stakeholder and therefore cannot be awarded.

Question 3 (c)

Question 3c was not very well answered. This was due to candidates not reading the question carefully and thinking the question was about letters rather than 'standard' business letters. This is a distinct term within the specification. A large number of answers explained the advantage of using a letter to communicate but did not refer to any specific feature of a standard business letter. Unless there was evidence of candidates discussing the advantages of producing a standard letter then no marks could be awarded.

(c) Explain **one** advantage to *npower* of using standard business letters to communicate with its customers. (3)

An advantage of *npower* communicating to customers using letters ~~has communicate~~ ~~use~~ is that it is formal, which ~~shows respect~~ shows ~~g~~ could improve the reputation of the business and increase sales as being formal shows respect and understanding of who they are communicating to.



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of where a candidate has provided an answer explaining the advantage of using letters. There is no reference to the features of standard business letters which means no marks were awarded.

- (c) Explain **one** advantage to *npower* of using standard business letters to communicate with its customers.

(3)

Using standard business letters to communicate to customers is an advantage to *npower* because it means they only ~~need~~ have to make one letter ~~and~~ master copy of the letter and change addresses and name for each customer, this save *npower* time and money.



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Examiner Comments

In comparison this answer does refer to a distinct feature of producing standard letters. It is also developed to explain why this is an advantage to *npower*. However only two marks could be awarded as the candidate has not answered in the context of the business. Hardly any candidates scored full marks on this question as they either did not have the required knowledge of standard business letters. When they did they then failed to apply the answer to *npower* therefore restricting their mark to two.

Question 3 (d)

Question 3d was accessed well by candidates. They demonstrated good knowledge of how the internet can improve business communication. Any issues that did occur resulted from candidates explaining an advantage from the point of view of the business instead of the customer, as the question asks.

This question also demonstrated an interesting point on what information can be used as evidence of context in an answer. The term 'energy bills' appears in the wording of the question. This means that it was not accepted as context in the answer. Centres must develop technique in candidates where they recognise that wording in the question is not allowed as context. Alternative wording or phrases must be used instead. In this case this could be as subtle as using 'electricity' rather than 'energy'.

(d) Explain **one** advantage to the customers of *npower* of being able to view their energy bills via the internet.

(3)

It means less has to be spent on the paper and postage, while an internet resource is remarkably cheap, both in payment and carbon neutrality. This would overall aid to lower costs and improve profits.



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Examiner Comments

This answer refers to the advantages that the business would receive from using the internet to communicate. There is no reference to any benefits that the customer would experience. No marks can be awarded as the candidate has not answered the question.

(d) Explain **one** advantage to the customers of *npower* of being able to view their energy bills via the internet.

(3)

It can be accessed on the internet at any time when you have a suitable appliance to do so. Since the internet is a major feature and is accessible almost anywhere, this gives the customer the freedom to check their bill wherever they are without having to search or keep the letter with them. As this feature is ~~is~~ more ~~is~~ convenient and easy, in which customers may prefer. As a result, they may appreciate this aspect and continue to use this business and recommend it to others.

(Total for Question 3 = 10 marks)



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Examiner Comments

Good answer which is linked to the advantages for the customer. However no context has been included in the answer so only two marks can be awarded.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Context cannot be achieved by using the wording of the question. If, as in this question, this makes it more difficult to apply knowledge then candidates must be adaptable in how they can apply their answer to the business.

Question 4 (b)

As mentioned earlier marks continue to be dropped in outline questions because candidates do not apply their answers and fail to include context in answers. Question 4b was no exception to this. The vast majority of answers demonstrated good knowledge of how a monthly newsletter could help the business but then failed to include any context to link the answer to ODFC Fitness.

ODFC Fitness produces a monthly newsletter for customers.

(b) Outline **one** possible benefit to *ODFC Fitness* of producing a monthly newsletter.

(2)

A benefit of producing a monthly newsletter is that customers can read what's happened in the past month. This may lead to them going to the business, and increase in customers.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This response is typical of how many candidates approach this type of question. They feel comfortable in answering the question and have all of the necessary knowledge to do well. However a weakness in their technique results in individual marks being dropped as they do not include context in the answer. There is no reference in this answer to anything to do with ODFC Fitness which only allows one mark to be awarded.

ODFC Fitness produces a monthly newsletter for customers.

(b) Outline **one** possible benefit to ODFC Fitness of producing a monthly newsletter.

(2)

ODFC producing a monthly news letter for customers allows customer to see what is happening or any changes. Like new classes or fees. This will increase the number of participants as there will be more people aware.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This answer displays a similar level of knowledge as the first example. However, the exam technique of this candidate is much better as they recognise the importance of applying their knowledge. References to 'classes' and 'fees' link the answer to ODFC Fitness and allow two marks to be awarded.



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Examiner Tip

Always re-read answers to check if a phrase or word has been used that puts context into an answer. Full marks cannot be awarded to an answer without this - no matter how accurate the answer is.

Question 4 (c)

There was a definite improvement in the structure to answers of explain questions in this series. Candidates are now well practiced in how to build an effective answer and the amount of detail required. This is clear in questions such as 4c where the focus of the question (in this case feedback from customers) is accessible to candidates. Both examples provided here display this and are well written. The only difference is the use of context allowing one answer to be awarded three marks and the other two.

(c) Explain **one** reason why feedback from customers is important to *ODFC Fitness*.

(3)

one reason feedback is important to ODFC fitness is so they can recognise what they need to improve. As a result of this they can change routines or session times depending on the feedback they get. This will lead to greater customer satisfaction and repeat customers.



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Examiner Comments

Context included = 3 marks.

(c) Explain **one** reason why feedback from customers is important to *ODFC Fitness*.

(3)

It allows ODFC fitness to improve on what customers think could be improved. This could mean the business will provide a better service which would lead to an increase in customers and repeat purchase which would increase the sales and profit of ODFC fitness.



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Examiner Comments

No context = 2 marks.

Question 4 (d)

Question 4d was the first question on the paper to be assessed using levels. In these questions, marks were awarded based on assessing which level the answer is in, ranging from Level 1 up to Level 3. As mentioned in the introduction candidates were responding much better to these levelled questions resulting in far more answers showing sound structure and detail. Centres are clearly helping to develop candidate technique, in particular the quality of evaluative content in answers, and as a result far more responses were being assessed in Level 3.

In order to get into Level 3 both evaluation and context were needed. Evaluation could be seen where a candidate offered balance in their answer and considered both the positive and negative aspects of their opinion or judgement. Context had already been explained within the paper but also needed to be present in order to be judged a Level 3 answer.

One area that could be developed further in this question is when answers move between the two options provided. There is no problem in considering both options within an answer but candidates must be aware that explaining the benefits of one option and then the drawbacks of the other is not good practice of evaluation. This only reinforces the original choice and results in a one sided answer.

ODFC Fitness wants to expand and attract new customers to the business.

(d) In order to attract new customers, ODFC Fitness is considering **two** options:

Option 1: Handing out leaflets at major sporting events.

Option 2: Placing an advert in the local newspaper.

Which of these **two** methods do you think would be more effective in allowing ODFC Fitness to attract new customers? Justify your answer.

(6)

I think that handing out leaflets at major sporting events will attract more customers. I think this because there will be many people at these major sporting events so loads of people would take a leaflet. Also there will be many people who enjoy sports and fitness here as it is a sporting event, therefore these people would be interested in the business.

However many people will take a leaflet and throw it away as it would have no use to them. An advert in the local newspaper would be good as loads of people buy newspapers everyday.

Overall I think handing out leaflets at a major sporting event is the best way to attract more customers. When you hand them out you can be more enthusiastic and persuasive as in a newspaper you can't do this as its just writing.



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Examiner Comments

This is a well structured answer that contains all the elements required to get to the top of level 3. A choice has been made and reasoned judgements are given to support this. Balance/evaluation is also present as the answer also considers the drawbacks of the selected option. All of this has been done in context through reference to 'sports and fitness'. Finally, the answer ends with an effective conclusion. This is because the conclusion adds value to the answer and does not simply repeat points that have been made earlier in the answer. Full marks awarded.

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Option 2: Placing an advert in the local newspaper.

Which of these **two** methods do you think would be more effective in allowing ODFC Fitness to attract new customers? Justify your answer.

(6)

Option 1 would be more effective in the company attracting new customers as there would be many people already interested in health and fitness.

This means they have the ~~potential~~ opportunity to reach out to potential customers if they are looking for a new gym to go to or are interested by a certain service the gym has to offer.

Finally, it is a good way to get the gym's name spread and is a way of advertising the business which could result in new customers.



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Examiner Comments

This answer is restricted to level 2 because there is no balance in the answer. It is a one-sided answer that only considers the positives of the choice made. This restricts the answer to 4 marks.



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Examiner Tip

Have a checklist in your mind of what is required to move an answer from level 2 to level 3: balance, context and a conclusion.

Question 5 (a)

There were improved responses to the three questions that required definitions this year. This type of question appeared on all papers and the terms used in the question were taken straight from the specification. However despite many candidates displaying knowledge of the term, very few had the necessary technique to extend their answer to two marks.

To achieve both marks the definition should have been perfect, often requiring two distinct points within the definition. Answers that showed some understanding of the term but were not written in a totally accurate way were awarded 1 mark. Question 5a required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the term 'pressure group'. Most candidates scored at least 1 mark by knowing that it referred to a group of people that tried to influence a business but there still remains a number of candidates that have very little idea of key definitions and therefore fabricate answers.

SECTION B

Answer **ALL** questions.

You should spend 30 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer questions 5 and 6.



Electronic Arts (EA) is a leading global entertainment software company. *EA* creates games for games consoles, personal computers, mobile phones and tablets. Since it was founded in California in 1982 it has been responsible for many of the largest selling computer games of all time such as FIFA Soccer, The Sims and Battlefield.

The creative process of producing such popular games at *EA* is very important. Development teams are formed to work on a particular game. These teams hold regular meetings in order to constantly come up with new ideas for each game. *EA* has numerous games design studios located around the world that turn the ideas from the development team into actual games. This needs to be done quickly in order to stay ahead of the competition.

Pressure groups have criticised *EA* for the long hours employees are required to work to meet tight deadlines.

(Source: adapted from <http://www.ea.com/about/> and <http://vgboxart.com/resource/3741/ea-logo/> accessed on 15/10/14)

5 (a) What is meant by the term **pressure group**?

(2)

someone that keeps the company
going and someone that has
an full control of an company.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This answer is typical of a candidate that has not developed the necessary knowledge to tackle definition style questions. As a result the answer is a general statement that has been fabricated and contains no indication of relevant knowledge. Zero marks awarded.

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5 (a) What is meant by the term **pressure group**?

(2)

external stakeholders who attempt to pressure a business into making a certain ~~less~~ decision. They can do this by campaigning outside the building of the business etc.



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Examiner Comments

A good example of a candidate with full knowledge of the term but also includes enough detail to extend the answer into two marks. In this response this has actually been achieved in the first example - regardless of the extra information in the second sentence. This is achieved as there are two distinct points in the definition - 'external stakeholders' and 'making a certain decision'.



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Examiner Tip

Revision of key terms within the specification is a very useful way to prepare for the exam. Create a list of the key words and create a glossary of the definitions.

Question 5 (b)

This question was well answered with the only issue being that some candidates getting confused between presentation techniques and presentation content.

Another point to note is that identify questions do not require candidates to write in full sentences. That can often be answered with one word answers. Candidates that write in full sentences are not penalised and are still awarded marks but it does waste time that could be better used elsewhere on the paper.

Members of the development teams often give presentations to show new ideas they have for the games.

(b) Identify **one** presentation technique that could be used to show new ideas.

(1)

A power point presentation or other form of processor e.g. slide show



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Examiner Comments

This answer is correct but shows poor technique in that there is no need to write so much. The mark would have been awarded by simply writing 'slideshow'.

Members of the development teams often give presentations to show new ideas they have for the games.

(b) Identify **one** presentation technique that could be used to show new ideas.

(1)

Slide shows



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Examiner Comments

Same answer as first example but only contains two words. A much more efficient way of working.



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Examiner Tip

Try to save time wherever possible - it may save the need to rush answers later in the paper.

Question 5 (c)

There was a distinct pattern of improving technique with explain questions and use of context in answers. Most candidates accessed the requirements of 5c well but failed to put context into their answer. This was despite the context being based around a scenario (computer games) they would be familiar with. The case study was also contained quite a bit of information they could have referred to yet this was not built upon in the majority of answers.

(c) Explain **one** issue that staff needs to consider when giving presentations at EA.

(3)

Staff need to consider how interesting the presentation is. This is because if a presentation is not interesting the audience will get bored and stop listening. This leads to the idea being overlooked even if it is a brilliant idea which could potentially ^{earn} ~~lose~~ the business ^{lots of} money.



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Examiner Comments

This answer shows a common issue with this question. It is a good answer, identifying an issue and then including two developed strands of explanation. However, there is no context in the answer linking it to why the presentation would be necessary in EA. Note that the term 'ideas' is too vague to contextualise the answer.

(c) Explain **one** issue that staff needs to consider when giving presentations at EA.

(3)

One issue staff need to consider when giving a presentation at EA is that their ideas are clear and understandable so that the team focused on the game can make a quick decision to agree with it or not. This is due to their time limits in which was identified in the case study due to "in order to stay ahead of competition"



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Examiner Comments

Excellent use of context in this answer as a contrast to the first example. Not only does the candidate refer to 'the game' but they also make a reference back to the case study by using the phrase 'in order to stay ahead of the competition'. Either would have been sufficient to help elevate the answer to the full three marks.



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Examiner Tip

Use the case study scenario to help gather information that can be used to place answers into context.

Question 5 (d)

This question required candidates to 'state' an advantage/disadvantage and then explain it. The stated advantage scored 1 mark and the subsequent explanation a further 3 marks. The explanation must have a strand of development that was in context and no further credit was awarded in the explanation section if the candidate re-stated their chosen 'advantage'. This method of awarding marks was repeated for the 'disadvantage' part of the question.

This question was accessible to most candidates with the average mark being close to 5/8. The stumbling block tended to be either insufficient strands of development and/or lack of contextualisation in one of the strands of explanation.

The development teams at EA use videoconferencing to receive progress updates from the games design studios.

(d) State **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage to EA of using videoconferencing to receive these progress updates. For each, explain the likely effect on EA.

(8)

Advantage

Visuals can be used.

Explanation

Visuals are very important, especially in a development meeting because it helps people to get a better understanding of the idea. Visuals prevent lengthy description or long reels of numbers which can cause an overload of information and be a serious barrier to communication. This could therefore improve the understanding, pace and efficiency of the meeting so more can be done in a short space of time.

Disadvantage

It requires specialist equipment.

Explanation

Web conferencing requires expensive specialist equipment and someone to set up and manage the working of this equipment. This can be very costly and sometime kempimental because with any technology signal failure could ~~disrupt~~ disrupt the meeting. Therefore the process can be a great cost to the business and can by doing so ~~red~~ reduce profits.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

Good answer with the right amount of detail in the response. One missing ingredient - context!

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(d) State **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage to EA of using videoconferencing to receive these progress updates. For each, explain the likely effect on EA.

(8)

Advantage

They don't have to travel ~~to~~.

Explanation

If EA use videoconferencing, they are able to receive progress updates from anywhere in the world with a wi-fi connection, this means less money is spent on travel costs for all the developers to meet in one place. EA has numerous design studios worldwide therefore videoconferencing is much economically easier for the managers to arrange, therefore more money to invest further into the business.

Disadvantage

Signal of video could be bad quality.

Explanation

If the signal is bad, the audio and visual quality of the videoconference will be bad to. This is unprofessional and difficult for the developers to understand each others progress updates therefore this could delay how quickly something is created which leads to 'less revenue being made' and people less likely to repeat purchase if game dates are pushed back.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A model answer with all of the specified requirements to gain full marks.

Question 6 (a)

Question 6a was also well accessed as one of the three definition questions. Most candidates knew that an agenda was a list of items that would be covered in a meeting but fewer candidates also said that it was issued in advance of the meeting. As a result more candidates scored one mark rather than one. Less able candidates simply gave a vague answer often saying a list of things to do'. This type of answer scored 0 marks.'

6 The development teams at EA hold meetings once a week. Agendas and minutes are written for each meeting.

(a) What is meant by the term **agenda**?

(2)

An outline of the points that will be covered at a meeting handed out to members ~~to~~ that will be present at the meeting before it begins.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A very good definition is provided in this answer which includes that an agenda is a list of points carried out at meeting AND indicates that the agenda is distributed before the meeting takes place. Two marks awarded.

6 The development teams at EA hold meetings once a week. Agendas and minutes are written for each meeting.

(a) What is meant by the term **agenda**?

(2)

An agenda highlights all the topics that will be discussed in the meeting.



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Examiner Comments

Good knowledge shown in this response but the definition only includes one point of detail. It does not indicate that it is distributed in advance of the meeting. One mark.

Question 6 (b) (i)

Question 6bi provided a familiar topic for candidates and as a result it was well answered in terms of the knowledge displayed. However, the ongoing issue of context within outline style questions meant that marks were often confined to one rather than two. In terms of technique outline questions were the weakest on the paper.

(b) (i) Outline **one** benefit to the development teams of holding meetings once a week.

(2)

A benefit is that people will always know about any changes ~~was~~ happening to the games meaning the staff will work harder as they are always informed with what is going on in the business.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Good technique. Benefit = 'always know about changes'. Development = 'staff work harder as always informed'. Context = 'to the games'. Two marks.

(b) (i) Outline **one** benefit to the development teams of holding meetings once a week.

(2)

Everyone can be kept up to date with ~~any~~ anything that they might need to know for the week coming up or the past week. This lowers the chance of problems being caused by poor communication.



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Examiner Comments

Benefit = 'everyone can be kept up to date'. Development = 'lowers the chance of problems being caused by poor communication'. However, no context therefore one mark awarded.

Question 6 (b) (ii)

Question 6bii was the second describe question on the paper and was not answered well at all. There was poor lack of knowledge of what minutes actually were and that they were an actual written document resulting from a meeting. Many candidates became confused and thought they were used as a timing mechanism for allocating work to employees. A second weakness was that candidates made the mistake of explaining why a business produced minutes rather than describing HOW the minutes could be used within the business. Centres need to focus on the difference between explaining why and describing how. It is a mistake that is often repeated.

(ii) Describe how the minutes of these meetings could be used by the development teams.

(4)

Minutes of meetings are written in the meeting, ~~they~~ they contain what was talked about in the meeting. This is good and can be used by the development teams, as they could be passed on to people who were not able to attend the meeting, this would then inform them of any changes to games that are being made. People that were there could look back at them if they forget what was said in the meeting.



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Examiner Comments

This is good answer that was awarded full marks and indicates how marks are allocated in describe questions. It is possible to award one mark for a definition of the term - which this candidate does in the first sentence. They then make three valid points of HOW the minutes are used: 'passed on to people who were not able to attend', 'inform them of any changes to games being made' and 'could look back at them if they forgot'. By referring to 'games' then the answer is in context. The answer is entirely about how minutes are used rather than why they need to be recorded.

Question 6 (c)

This was the second question in the examination paper to use a 'levels of response' mark scheme. It proved to be a very difficult question for candidates who struggled with the knowledge of what matrix organisation structures are and what the benefits/drawbacks they bring to a business. Many candidates talked about organisation structures in general and displayed no specific knowledge of matrix structures. Those that did have the knowledge tended to do very well because they were able to talk about both the positive and negative points of this type of organisation chart.

To enter Level 3, candidates had to have sufficient development in their response and then also provide evidence of balance and contextualisation. Once the response was placed into Level 3, the quality of the evaluation and the conclusion determined whether it was awarded 6, 7 or 8 marks. Since this question was asterisked, the Quality of Written Communication (QWC) was also considered by examiners. However, the response was placed in a mark scheme level according to whether the correct blend of written skills had been provided. If QWC was poor an adjustment may then be made within that level.

Software companies, such as EA, often organise themselves into matrix organisational structures.

*(c) Assess the impact a matrix organisational structure would have on a software company such as EA.

(8)

Matrix structure is where you have a hierarchy of who is in charge of who. For example EA may have the producer at the top, then managers, then development team and on. There is a few impacts this structure ~~could~~ could have on EA, good and bad. Firstly this structure will mean EA is very organised and everyone knows their place. Also it means everyone will have someone to go to about them. Secondly it can have a negative impact on EA as some people ~~may~~ may do receive information if they're lower down as it has to go through such a large chain of people, this could result in things not being done straight away or even at all.



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Examiner Comments

This was the most common mistake with this question. The candidate gives a detailed answer assessing how EA are organised. However, none of the answer talks about any specific features of how matrix structures operate. The candidate has seen the term 'organisational structure' in the question and decided to write about what they know rather than what the question asks. This was something a large number of candidates were guilty of.

As the candidate has not actually answered the question then, even though there is a lot of detail in the answer, zero marks were awarded. This was therefore a very low scoring question.



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Examiner Tip

If you have gaps in your knowledge then it can be very difficult to answer any type of question within which that topic appears. If it is in an 8 mark question such as this then that can have a significant effect on the final mark.

Question 7

This was the final definition question on the paper and followed a similar trend to the other two questions. It is clear that most candidates have the knowledge to answer these questions but have not practiced enough at writing answers that will generate two marks. It can be difficult to provide a perfect definition and many candidates struggle with the levels of literacy to express their ideas into words. As a result there is often enough content in the answer to demonstrate the candidate understands the term but it is not written well enough to gain both of the marks available.

This question required the definition of the term 'fax'. The one aspect of the definition that most candidates missed was that this type of communication is sent via phone lines.

SECTION C

Answer ALL questions. You should spend 20 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer questions 7 to 10.



Crockett and Jones has been making high quality shoes in Northampton, England since 1879. Northampton is England's most famous shoe-making town and has long had a tradition for high level craftsmanship. Despite many of the old shoe-making businesses closing down, *Crockett and Jones* has maintained this high level of craftsmanship. Each pair of shoes takes eight weeks to make and involves more than 200 processes from start to finish. The methods used to make the shoes have remained unchanged for centuries. This high level of quality leads to high prices with shoes costing between £300 and £500 a pair.

Recently the business has modernised some of the communication methods it uses. Raw materials such as leather are now ordered from suppliers via the internet rather than using a fax. A website was also developed to allow customers to view and get more information about the shoes. However, *Crockett and Jones* does not have an e-commerce section on its website as the business feels 'a more personal touch is needed when buying shoes'.

(Source: adapted from <http://www.crockettandjones.com/aboutcandj> accessed on 17/10/14)

7 What is meant by the term **fax**?

An electronic way of communication where a message is sent from one fax machine to another.



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Examiner Comments

The answer shows that the candidate understands the term and that a fax is an electronic form of communication where a fax machine is used to transfer a message. One mark can therefore be awarded as relevant knowledge is demonstrated but the definition does not refer to how this is done.

SECTION C

Answer ALL questions. You should spend 20 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer questions 7 to 10.



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Recently the business has modernised some of the communication methods it uses. Raw materials such as leather are now ordered from suppliers via the internet rather than using a fax. A website was also developed to allow customers to view and get more information about the shoes. However, *Crockett and Jones* does not have an e-commerce section on its website as the business feels 'a more personal touch is needed when buying shoes'.

(Source: adapted from <http://www.crockettandjones.com/aboutcandj> accessed on 17/10/14)

7 What is meant by the term **fax**?

Fax is where you send an identical copy of a document down the phone lines by scanning it into one machine and another printing it out.



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Examiner Comments

This answer is developed further to include how the communication takes place. This is done by saying 'down the phone line'. Two marks are awarded as it builds on the quality of the first example.

Question 8

The final outline question on the paper concerned factors that need to be considered when choosing a domain name for a business. Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of these factors but, as in other questions, struggled to apply this factor to how it would actually be implemented at Crockett and Jones.

8 Outline **one** factor Crockett and Jones should have considered when choosing a domain name for its website.

One factor Crockett and Jones should have considered when choosing a domain name for its website is to keep it simple and relevant to the business because it is easier for customers to remember as they will associate it with the business. (Total for Question 8 = 2 marks)



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Examiner Comments

In this first example the candidate shows clear understanding of the factors to consider when choosing a domain name. To get the second mark it is necessary to show how this would actually happen at Crockett and Jones. This has not been done so only one mark is awarded.

8 Outline **one** factor Crockett and Jones should have considered when choosing a domain name for its website.

If it's an appropriate name and if it's short enough for people to remember it as it will allow easier access for its customers meaning a better experience for them buying shoes.



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Examiner Comments

The second example shows how easy it is to relate the answer to the business. The factor given is that a domain name must be easy to remember. This is then applied to Crockett and Jones because it is developed by saying 'better experience for them buying shoes'. This moves the answer from one to two marks.

Question 9

A major issue with question 9 was that candidates did not respond to the command word in the question. This was a 'discuss' style question which required candidates to consider both sides of an issue in the answer. The question asked for candidates to discuss the benefits of modernising communication methods. The majority of candidates therefore only described the positive aspects of modernising communication methods for a traditional business such as Crockett and Jones.

In order to access Level 3 they should have also considered possible negative aspects in order to make a judgement as to how much of a modern communication methods would be to a business such as Crockett and Jones. This could be done through considering the cost of changing its communication methods or the loss of tradition it would bring to a business that was established in 1879.

Where candidates only considered the positives of modernising communication methods then they could score no higher than 4 marks.

*9 Discuss the benefits to *Crockett and Jones* of modernising its communication methods.

one benefit to ~~the~~ Crockett and Jones modernising its communication methods is so they are up to date with customers needs. As they have set up a website, more people will be able to ~~see~~ notice the business. This therefore may lead to an increase in sales which may also lead to the business growing. If customers decide to leave a good review - making the business look good.

Another benefit of modernising communication methods is so it is easier to communicate with customers if they have any queries. If they're able to help the customers needs, this may lead to them promoting the business if they tell friends and family. Moreover, this may then lead to an increase in sales.



This candidate has only focused on the benefits of modernising communication methods. The answer talks about two benefits - 'up to date with customer needs' and that it is easier to deal with customer queries. Both of these are valid benefits but the answer is not balanced and therefore cannot be placed into Level 3. 4 marks are awarded.

*9 Discuss the benefits to *Crockett and Jones* of modernising its communication methods.

One benefit to Crockett and Jones of modernising its communication methods is that the communication will be quicker. One reason why this is beneficial is that the business can communicate with suppliers quicker so they can receive their raw materials like leather faster so they can complete more orders. This will cause a faster production time as they do not have to wait for supplies so increased customer satisfaction as the shoes will be ready on time. However the suppliers may not have upgraded their communication methods so Crockett and Jones cannot use their modernised communication methods with suppliers.

Another benefit is quicker communication of information with customers. One reason why this is beneficial is that the orders can be put through quickly and any changes that need to be made can be received quickly and the shoes can be altered. ~~This then~~ Consequently customer satisfaction will rise so ~~well~~ along with sales because customers will recommend the business to their friends. **(Total for Question 9 = 6 marks)**

However some customers may not understand the modern communication methods especially elderly people.

To conclude, modernising communication methods is beneficial as it makes communication between suppliers and customers quicker and easier. However some people may not know how to use it which could be a waste of modernising the communication methods.

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Examiner Comments

This example not only discusses the benefits of modernising communication methods but also considers the other side of the argument by recognising that elderly people may not require up to date communication methods. This shows the candidate has responded to the command word and has moved into Level 3. The candidate also writes the answer in the context of Crockett and Jones meaning the answer is awarded full marks. Please note that there is no requirement for a conclusion for this question in order to achieve full marks.



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Examiner Tip

Always respond to the command word. Candidates should make sure they understand what each command word requires them to do and then include this in the answer. Mark schemes remain constant in the expectations from each command word and could be used to help gain further understanding.

Question 10

Despite this question being worth 10 marks the principles of answering it are the same as explained earlier in question 4d and question 6d. The command word is 'assess' so a balanced answer is expected which is written in the context of Crockett and Jones.

Question 10 also allows us to look at the requirements of what makes an effective conclusion - a skill most candidates struggle with.

*10 Using your knowledge of business communications, assess the impact on Crockett and Jones of not having an e-commerce section on its website.

(10)

A positive would be, it saves money on software as it would take a lot further to set up the e-commerce part of the site.

Secondly, it means people have to go into the store meaning they can make sure people are getting the right size for them - especially when they are paying hundreds of pounds.

Additionally, they wouldn't have to pay for the maintenance of the site saving on expenses of the business.

Also, it means they aren't responsible for keeping their customers data secure via the internet making it easier for the business to protect themselves legally.

A negative would be they aren't ~~even~~ meeting all of the customer's needs due to them not providing every service they could. This could give them a bad reputation.

Next, they could be losing customers as some

people may not be able or want to go into the store. This means they could lose money from this.

Thirdly, it doesn't give people full 24/7 ~~and~~ access to the business selling their products which could also result in less revenue.

Lastly, it is a missed opportunity to create a stronger brand image because they aren't selling to everyone.

(Total for Question 10 = 10 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This answer displays a balanced assessment. The candidate considers both sides to the argument before arriving at a conclusion. This is what examiners are looking for when assessing evaluation. 8 marks are awarded as there is also context present in the answer. If the answer is not applied to the business then no more than 7 marks can be awarded. It is not given more than 8 marks because of a lack of a conclusion. The quality of the conclusion would be the deciding factor in awarding either 9 or 10 marks,

*10 Using your knowledge of business communications, assess the impact on Crockett and Jones of not having an e-commerce section on its website.

(10)

~~E-commerce~~ A website having an e-commerce section gives customers the ability to buy goods and services online. The advantages of on the business Crockett and Jones of not having an e-commerce section on their website is that setting it up is very expensive. This means that if not many goods or services are bought ~~online~~ on the Crockett and Jones website, ~~therefore~~ As a result of this, the business will have made a loss because they spent so much money setting up e-commerce. Another advantage of the business Crockett and Jones not having e-commerce on their website is that their customers will not be worried about their personal details getting hacked on the website. This is because they do not have to buy from Crockett and Jones online, so none of their information is stored on the website. As a result, customers will feel more comfortable from buying at the store.

The disadvantages of Crockett and Jones not having an e-commerce is that some customers may not easily be able to get to the store. So in this case, buying the product online will be much

easier for them. This means that Crockett and Jones could gain more customers due to more people buying online. As a result, this will lead to an increase in sales for the business. Another disadvantage would be that all their products might not sell on the Crockett and Jones store. If they had e-commerce on their website, ^{customers} ~~people~~ would be able to browse around and look in more detail. This will mean that they will have more of a chance of selling

(Total for Question 10 = 10 marks)

something to buy.

As a result the sales of Crockett and Jones will increase.

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 20 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 90 MARKS

In ~~conclude~~ conclusion, Crockett and Jones should have an e-commerce section on their website. This is because sales for them will increase and it could potentially make the business more successful. However, this depends on the business being able to protect all customer details online, so they do not get hacked. They need to build customer trust.



This is an excellent example to help demonstrate what is expected from an effective conclusion. A conclusion should draw on the most important influences of the answer. It should also add value in that it should not simply repeat points made earlier in the answer. The best type of conclusion, as in this example, are often simple and focus on one key point. Using the 'it depends' rule is very effective in helping to achieve this.

In this example the candidate points out that the main factor on the impact of e-commerce depends on if the business can keep customer data safe. This in itself is a debatable point but it shows that the candidate is evaluating all the evidence before reaching a conclusion and that there is a defining point on whether it is a good idea or not.

However, despite this very good conclusion the candidate makes a big mistake by not applying the answer to Crockett and Jones. They refer to the business by name but do not make any reference to the specific nature of what the business does. As a result, and despite the excellent conclusion, the answer can only be given 7.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- do not give definitions of key terms in questions where they are not needed.
- develop your knowledge of specific areas within the specification.
- if a describe questions asks HOW something takes place in a business then do not explain WHY it happens.
- always give balance to judgements in "evaluation" or "justify" questions which involves including disadvantages of the method chosen as well as reasons to support the judgement
- write a conclusion for levelled questions as this helps to summarise the key points used in making judgements or giving opinions.
- question 2 onwards are based on a business scenario. Therefore the majority of answers will require you to apply your knowledge to the business scenario. This is known as answering the question in context.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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