



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2006

### SELLING SKILLS Certificate in Marketing Skills

#### General Comments

It should be noted that in general the answers presented were too short. Some students attempted to answer questions by means of a single paragraph, or indeed in some cases by means of a single sentence. Neither of course can ever be sufficient to gain marks in a professional exam. In addition, many students failed to explore the variety of possible issues presented in the examination questions.

#### Question 1

- (a) In general, from these answers, there seemed to be a lack of understanding of the term *closing techniques* as it applies to personal selling. The manual presents twenty-two alternative closing techniques, many of which were particularly appropriate in this case. However, several students seemed to interpret the word *closing* as simply meaning the ending of the sales presentation. In addition, some identified appropriate closing techniques but failed to “*Explain your choices*” as required by the question.
- (b) Many suggestions could have been made but it was most important that candidates identified the necessity for Duffy to incorporate the use of questioning in his presentation. Use of the appropriate question is probably the most important tool available to the salesperson.
- (c) In this case the student should have considered the apparent *win-lose* approach adopted by Ryan, and likewise her “*long pause approach*” as delineated in the case. Equally, her apparent desire to put unnecessary pressure on the salesperson might have been examined. Ideally it should be suggested by students that Ms. Ryan should seek a resolution with a *win-win* mentality as apparently desired by Duffy.

#### Question 2

Given the likelihood of a question from this area of the syllabus it was disappointing that the marks achieved were so poor. Only one student achieved full marks on the question. The answers to each of the five parts of the question were: 100%, 50%, €0, €0 and €100 respectively. The important thing in this case was to exclude VAT from both the buying price and the selling price. In the case of the buying price a student should calculate: to what do I add 20% to get €60. The answer being that the buying price excluding VAT was €50. A similar calculation will give us a selling price, excluding VAT of €100 - part (e). Once these calculations are made the other calculations become easy. For future years students are again invited to pay particular attention to this vital part of the syllabus.

**Question 3**

The student manual defined *merchandising* as “*The act of making goods available for sale*”. This brief definition incorporates many concepts. It wasn’t necessary to reproduce the exact definition, an alternative set of words conveying the same meaning would have sufficed. The manual lists several factors that a retailer should take account of in laying-out a store and managing the traffic flow. An important aspect in replying to this question was for the student to apply the advice offered to the clothes store specified in the question.

**Question 4**

Only one student attempted this question and performed particularly well. No practical application was required, just the reproduction of details in Unit 11.

**Question 5**

This question required the student to outline an industrial buying process. It wasn’t necessary to reproduce the process presented in the manual, though that would have got full marks. Any process that started with the recognition of a customer problem and concluded with the evaluation of a solution would have garnered full marks as long as the stages in between were relevant and logical, irrespective of their source. In part (b) students should have explained such roles as: initiator, user, influencer, decider, buyer, and gatekeeper, but the operative word in the sentence was *explain*, not *identify*, not *outline*, please *explain*.