



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2006

### SELLING SKILLS Certificate in Marketing Skills

#### General Comments

The average mark achieved in this examination was 47%. A small percentage of candidates achieved an 'A' or 'B' grade but unfortunately some also achieved an 'F' grade.

#### Section A: Case Study – A Customer Complaint

This section provided an opportunity for candidates to garner high marks, particularly Part B which was quite open-ended. In examining the situation candidates should have attempted to put a value on Ms. Murphy as a customer of Celtic Dairy Products to assess the size of the current problem, assessed the implications of bad publicity, examined the contractual obligations and the implications of the Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act, and considered the likely outcome of any possible legal action. In preparing the response candidates should have noted the requirement of an immediate response, though it didn't have to be in writing. The response should have been careful in the use of words (e.g. Ms. Murphy is not a complainer, she has brought a problem to your attention), accepted responsibility for solving the problem without accepting liability, shown clearly that you trust the letter-writer, offered a 'gift', and informed Ms. Murphy exactly what you intend to do now.

A priority of the Marketing Manager should be to get the faulty product back: you need it to undertake a scientific analysis, it is an example of a faulty product under your brand in the public arena, and you should be in control of the evidence in any legal case. In most cases you shouldn't inconvenience the customer further by suggesting they send back the product, you should collect it. This is essential in this case given the perishable nature of the product.

In responding to Part C candidates should have noted such issues as the requirement to check the manufacturing process, to analyse the ingredients and suppliers used when this specific item was produced, to assess the retailer's facilities, and to advise the public relations department of the need to be prepared lest the case goes public.

#### Question 2

This question was very popular and most students scored particularly well on it, many getting full marks. However, it should be noted that it was a relatively easy question presented in the most straightforward way. The appropriate answers were (a) €20, (b) 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %, (c) €20, (d) €60, (4) €72.60.

**Question 3**

The manual points out seven elements of a valid contract: offer, acceptance, reality of assent, intention to form a legal agreement, legality of contract, and contractual capacity. Other sources would have merged the first two as agreement, or omitted the last as it refers to the contractor rather than the contract. Any approach was acceptable as long as it included the core elements. In summary, The Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act specifies that: goods must be of merchantable quality, as described, fit for intended use, and conform to sample. It also specifies that the seller must have the right to sell the goods and that the buyer has a right to quiet enjoyment of them.

**Question 4**

This was the least popular question on the paper. Core merchandise is the 'bread and butter' items in the store. They are a relatively narrow range and typically account for up to 80% of a store's revenue. Secondary merchandise is a wider range, accounting for 20% of revenue and supports the core range.

In Part B lots of advice could be offered based on the list in the manual or from personal experience. The latter would be particularly welcome but tends to be scarce.

**Question 5**

The retail selling process is usually a six stage process (though variation was acceptable): pre-approach, approach, presentation and demonstration, overcome objections, close the sale, and follow up. The qualities that customers look for in salespeople are: product knowledge, personal impression, customer understanding, appreciation of buyer's time, personality, and follow-up. If that's what the customer wants then that's what the retailer should look for.