



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2009

### SELLING SKILLS Certificate in Marketing Skills

#### General Comments

The average mark achieved was 55%, a significant improvement on previous years. This improvement however masks the reality that some students still did not achieve the required pass mark.

#### Question 1

- (a) Several students incorporated the Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act and the Consumer Information Act in their answer. These acts, particularly the latter, had some relevance but concentration should have been on contract law. In the case study the retailer was not obliged to sell the item at the price mistakenly put on the tag. A price-tag is an invitation to a prospective customer to offer the retailer the price on the tag. The retailer is then in a position to accept or reject that offer.
- (b) Students should have discussed the tendency of people to talk to others of bad experiences but not to talk of good experiences and the possibility of the dissatisfied customer getting access to the media. Obviously the issue in question would not have the significance of the Aer Lingus incident but might have some interest for local media. The relative costs of acquiring and retaining customers, lifetime value versus transaction value, goodwill and store reputation should also have been assessed.
- (c) Everybody readily identified that the salesperson didn't handle the situation well. S/he was aggressive and offensive, she put the customer down, and s/he tried to be inappropriately smart. In addition, students might have considered how such an unsuitable person is employed on the shop floor. Is it a recruitment/selection problem, a training problem or a corporate culture issue?
- (d) The important issue here is what price the store should sell the jacket for. There is no legal obligation to sell it for €19.99 but what about goodwill? If the error was small it would be very reasonable to sell it for the mistaken price but in this case the difference is significant at €180. No student did the maths on that however – it is always a good idea to use any numbers given. Students might also have considered that maybe the potential loss is not €180 but the difference between the cost price and the mistaken price.

### **Question 2**

This is a perennial question on this exam paper and it is gratifying that this year's students were better prepared for it. Most students got full marks or missed out on one part only.

The answers to each of the four parts of the question were: €75, 50%, €150, €75.

### **Question 3**

It was important in part (a) that the student *explained* rather than *defined* as the question required. In most cases however students had difficulty doing either. *Store Position* refers to the place of the store in the perception of the customer relative to all competing stores. The answer to part (b) should have come directly from page 181 of the manual but it was essential that it was applied to a supermarket situation. If the student was not in a position to answer part (a) then it would have been impossible to answer p (c). This question lent itself to the incorporation of practical examples. Students could usefully have compared the layout of Tesco vis-à-vis that of Dunnes Stores or Lidl for example.

### **Question 4**

This question required a description of the retail selling process; pre-approach, approach, presentation/demonstration, overcome objections, close the sale, and follow-up. The main differences between retail and non-retail selling are; the customer is usually interested, the customer comes to you, knowledge of a greater range of goods is required, alternative salespeople are available, and the salesperson never knows who the next customer will be.

### **Question 5**

Few students attempted this question. Students were expected to demonstrate their knowledge of each of the five sections though an in-depth description was not required.