



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2003

PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL SELLING

General Comments

Six students attempted this paper of which five failed it. That is an 83% failure rate. The average mark achieved was 20, the highest mark was 40, the lowest 7. The average mark on any question was below the pass mark.

There was limited evidence in any of the scripts of either *Selling* or *The Fundamentals of Selling* having been read. Likewise there was limited evidence of class material being used or of common sense being applied. It is the opinion of this examiner that a student using common sense to complement even a modicum of study could have made a decent attempt at this paper. None was apparent. This point is returned to several times in comments on individual questions.

Question 1

This question required students to explain how a salesperson in choosing a sales presentation method should consider such things as: the customer, the nature of the call, the product type, the situation, the time available, and so on, all common-sense stuff. It is amazing how many students attempted the question without any reference to the customer.

Question 2

In essence this question required the student to explain that the more effectively a salesperson manages his time the more time he has available for selling, therefore the more customers he gets to visit, so the more sales he makes, the more profit his company generates and the more money he earns. This explanation should have been followed up with an outline of time management techniques that the salesperson might employ and time management principles that might be usefully observed.

Question 3

This question asked the student to "... differentiate personal selling from other elements of the promotions mix". For example, advertising is another element of the promotions mix. At its most simple advertising is those messages presented during commercial breaks on TV while personal selling is the job of the person one meets in a retail outlet. Now, identify the differences between those two methods of promoting products. This question can be attempted by the application of common sense. Obviously a higher mark will be achieved if one has actually studied the subject but there can be no doubt that common sense alone will deliver significant marks for you on this one. Despite this, no student was in a position to attempt the question even though some failed to attempt the requisite five questions and all

but the one student who actually passed the paper were awarded a zero for their attempt to at least one question.

Question 4

The word *Discuss* required the student to look at both sides of the topic, to present the agreement perspective and the disagreement perspective. No one did. Students chose to agree with the topic because of the individuality of each customer. This is largely true but you must always consider that the product is the same, the problem to be solved is at least similar, the questions to be asked are the same, and so on. While the presentation should be tailored to the specific needs of the customer it will still often be largely the same and certainly not unique.

Question 5

The social forces of interest in this question included: culture, social class, family, reference groups, friends, and so on. The student should have examined these forces and explained how a salesperson might tailor his presentation to take account of the influence of each force on the customer. All students attempted this question. The highest mark achieved was 4 out of 20. Three students were awarded zero. The answers presented showed a lack of understanding of the word 'social'.

Question 6

Only two students attempted this question and both did so as their last question. That itself says a lot. Partnering, its value, or the criteria for building partnership arrangements don't seem to have been studied in any depth.

Question 7

Two students attempted this question. Unfortunately one examined *referrals* rather than *reference selling*. Reference selling involves invoking the independent testimonials of satisfied customers to close the sale or reduce the customer's perceived risk.

Question 8

Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of such techniques as: anticipating and forestalling, boomerang, compensation, direct denial, indirect denial, 'honest John', etc. etc. They then had to outline the main categories of objections which include: conditions, sincere objections, insincere objections, emotional objections, and requests for further information. The labels applied to both the techniques and the categories vary from text to text and probably from lecturer to lecturer. The explanation, however, remains similar. Unfortunately students weren't aware of these explanations.