



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2005

PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL SELLING

General Comments

The number of students taking the subject was down considerably this year but it appears that the quality of student was greatly increased, or at least the amount of work that those students did was greatly increased. This year, for the first time in the existence of the subject, there was a 100% pass rate. The highest grade achieved was B while the average mark achieved was 49%.

Question 1

This question asked the student to 'Discuss' a statement not merely to agree or disagree with it. Several did the latter despite particular attention being drawn to the word *discuss* in so many previous reports. This misinterpretation of the instruction largely explains the difference in marks that were allocated to answers. A further poor examination technique was also evident in these answers. Having seen the term *to close* in the question many students opted to write all they knew about closing techniques. This however didn't earn them any marks and only served to waste their time.

Question 2

Parts A of this question sought advice on the qualities a sales manager should look for in selecting salespeople. No definitive list is available. Students could have used suggestions from a textbook, from their lecturer, or their own ideas, as long as they were logical. Similarly Part B required a list to which no single definitive answer is available. Again logic was the key word. This question received the highest marks on the paper.

Question 3

This was one of the most popular questions on the paper; all but one student attempted it. The specific differentiating characteristics sought in Part A were: need, authority, means and eligibility. Part B asked for five prospecting methods that might be used by a salesperson of the *full range of John Deere tractors*. Many students didn't seem to think about this and presumed that only farmers use tractors thus excluding from consideration agricultural contractors, landscapers, construction companies, local authorities, sports clubs with grass pitches, and so on. Many suggested prospecting sources were not described. How is the Farmer's Journal a prospecting source? It might be if it is used as a medium for a direct response advertisement that elicits replies from farmers. To get marks however this needed to be pointed out. The Golden Pages was a popular suggestion, though it doesn't include a 'farmer' classification.

Question 4

This was the other most popular question. In Part A students needed to explain that people don't object if they are not interested in the product. When they raise an objection they are looking for further information, they want to be convinced, they want to be able to explain the decision themselves, they are negotiating. This explanation would take more than one paragraph though in many cases that is all it was afforded. In the second part of the question it was important to outline objection categories rather than objection types. Objection handling methods wasn't relevant to either part.

Question 5

Many students outlined the consultative method or SPIN but failed to explain the importance of the questioning technique or of having the prospect identify problems and solutions for himself. Others wrote about the sales presentation in general without explaining any particular method that might be used.

Question 6

This required an examination of such issues as goal setting, time management, territory management, self-motivation, handling rejection, record management, and so on. It was not a very popular question.

Question 7

Part A required students to describe the four categories of perceived risk that consumers experience: social, financial, physical and technical. Part B required an explanation of the different selves that determine buying, their impact on buying behaviour, the role of the reference group, and so on. Nobody attempted this question however.

Question 8

This was not a particularly popular question but was subject to good answers from those who attempted it. Part A required an examination of such issues as: the importance of the sale, the importance of the customer and the value and complexity of the product. Any eight from a wide variety of possible functions could have been offered in Part B. Ensuring the customer's satisfaction and getting referrals were two particularly important ones.