



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2001

PRACTICE OF SELLING

General Comments

This year's general comments do not vary too much from those of previous years. Knowledge of the syllabus material, both text and readings, is vital but it can also be enhanced by students bringing their own experiences to it. Cross-referenced material from other subjects where appropriate is always welcome as indeed is material sourced from other academic and trade publications. This type of input evidences a student who has a lively interest in the subject and does not confine learning to lectures.

Examination technique needs to be attended to by many. This includes reading the question carefully to see what the examiner is actually looking for, not what the student wishes was being looked for! Answers should have a start, a middle, and an end which ties back to the question asked. Take all opportunities given to physically illustrate an answer. Jobber and Lancaster have some very clear visuals to explain areas of theory.

In summary, this is not a difficult subject to score highly in once the requisite work has been done and thought has gone in to the answers.

Question 1

This was a highly popular question which is clearly dealt with both in the core text and in the essential articles. Many students used the opportunity to draw the model. Remember to label axes precisely, otherwise the subsequent discussion does not relate to the illustration. High scores were achieved here, with the exception of those who dealt with the concept of key accounts in general but failed to adequately address the model as requested.

Question 2

Another popular question. Some students chose at the outset particular organisational options and set their answers in that context. Others assessed the advantages and disadvantages of the available options and then came down on the side of one or more as being suitable for this particular scenario. Some included consideration of structures such as the Internet, home shopping channels and mail order – all worthy of consideration. The answer had to be placed in the context stated; no generalisations were welcomed.

Question 3

By and large students liked this question. The good answers opened with discussion of how important evaluation is given the high cost of personal selling and how evaluation results impact on other areas such as motivation, training and remuneration. The commonest weakness in the poor

answers was the tendency to write about qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation and fail to address the implications. Jobber and Lancaster have a very clear illustration of a salesperson evaluation matrix and many wise students faithfully reproduced this as a framework to structure their answer.

Question 4

Retail selling is a hot topic with students this year and many excellent answers were given. The more comprehensive ones outlined the retail selling process and the role of atmospherics in retail sales. Very good issues regarding the future of retailing industry were raised including the challenges posed by the internet, the euro, centralised distribution, demassification of markets and more knowledgeable consumers (Anderson), a 24/7 world, changing regulatory environment, spiralling property prices and the like.

Question 5

The students who opted for this question generally scored well. Intelligent use of the essential articles helped support their suggestions for integration, such as Anderson's analysis and Moncrief's work on telemarketing. TQM was mooted as a means of achieving the required customer focus and many drew organisation charts to illustrate their proposals for alternative structures. Dual mandate managers, job rotation, joint teamwork, training and shadowing, and shared information databases were the most frequently mentioned proposals.

Question 6

Not a particularly popular question, however some scored highly on it. Basically, the issues can arise under three broad headings: dealings with customers, dealings with colleagues and dealings with the employing company. Some answers relied too exclusively on the regulatory framework for selling and did not highlight the importance of Codes of Conduct or an ethical culture in a company which encourages whistle-blowing.

Question 7

This was a classic example of a situation where students do not read the question properly and head off on the wrong tack. The actual sentence was taken verbatim from p.53 of the essential text and clearly deals with three factors namely, the buy class, the product type, and the importance of the purchase to the buying organisation. Almost half the students who attempted this question dealt specifically with the DMU, the decision-making process and the evaluative criteria instead of the factors that Cardozo identified as **impacting** on these.

Question 8

A relatively poorly answered question though the material comes straight from pages 96-99 of the essential text. Too many students wrote long answers about preparation for general sales as opposed to a sales negotiation, which is quite different in nature and content. Indeed, some students took the opportunity to write at length about the entire sales process, which had even less to do with the question asked. However, the less hasty students wrote comprehensive answers which dealt with the necessity to assess the balance of power, to determine negotiation objectives, do a concession or "tradables" analysis, and then prepare a proposal analysis.