



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2005

PRACTICE OF SELLING

General Comments

Another good year for Practice of Selling students. Though there was no outstanding result, the overall performance was strong. Students continued to make good use of their own experience and observations in the answering of this paper, though cross-referencing of material from earlier subjects studied was not as prevalent as before. The main criticism the examiner would have this year is the failure by some candidates to adopt the scenario given in the question and apply it throughout their entire answer, this inevitably leads to a loss of marks. The essential text is being used consistently and intelligently. The reluctance of candidates to convince business graduates to consider a career in selling (as requested in Q.8) is slightly puzzling! Otherwise, a pleasing set of results and warmest congratulations to the lecturers and candidates involved.

Question 1

Whilst the essential text gives four commonly-encountered ethical issues (Bribery, deception, the hard sell and reciprocal buying) it was pleasing to see so many candidates going beyond this and including issues such as misuse of company property – physical and intellectual; sexual harassment; inflating figures and customer credit; non-national staff; smoking in company cars and other current areas. Some referred the new recruits to company and/or professional codes of ethics for further guidance.

Question 2

This required the candidate to adopt the role of a sales manager and think through the implications of TQM on their function. Answers generally included a definition of TQM, some historical context, the major elements involved, an explanation of the quality standards/systems, and the imperative of teamwork. Most candidates related well its likely impact on sales and in particular its impact on customers.

Question 3

A very popular question where candidates exhibited a thorough understanding of the Chapter 11.5. The better answers outlined coherently why some of the options were not suitable and gave sound justification for the choices given the product type and the proposed markets. Some proposed different approaches for the emerging EU members than to the Western European markets. All seemed highly supportive of the use of State agencies to guide the decision!

Question 4

The most popular question but some scored less well because they did not pay attention to the specifics of the question which required them to focus on the approach one might adopt and the specific skill set helpful in this type of selling. Overly long essays on the Relational Development Model at the expense of the main focus caused loss of marks.

Question 5

Without doubt this was the least popular question. The examiner assumes therefore that even though this is an essential article the candidates were not familiar with its content, particularly the end of the article where the author deals with the managerial implications.

Question 6

Most students were happy to adopt this scenario and wrote very persuasive pieces on the need to be fully automated given changing buying practices and the new technologies influencing business decisions. Some gave good examples of their own situations and even used reference selling to help convince potentially skeptical managers! Chapter 9 of the essential text was helpful in framing the answers.

Question 7

The biggest problem here was the candidates failing to “design a training session” and just dealing with the theory from Chapter 4. Some did adopt the scenario and produced quite plausible agendas for the session(s), giving very clear information on the variety of presenters and delivery techniques they were proposing to use.

Question 8

Whilst the nominated report was only to give a context to the question, surprisingly few candidates chose this question. The relevant material for answering it comes from the very first few pages of the essential text and those candidates who did attempt this incorporated their own views and experiences very persuasively as well.