



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2000

### MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

#### **General Comments**

The answers this year were generally better than last year and many students clearly understood the subject matter well. This is evident by the higher than usual proportion of 'C' grade. Many answers were more comprehensive and interesting. The pass rate was 75%.

This year's students continued to reveal two important weaknesses in their knowledge. Firstly, an inability to apply the theory to practical situations, particularly in relation to the application of motivational theory. Secondly, many students failed to use practical examples to support the theory discussed, e.g., in question 2 on a Sales Management Information System.

Finally, I would again appeal to the many students who wrote a continuous essay type answer. I would prefer to see the question divided into sections with headings and points used where ever possible. This generally seems to improve the logic flow of an answer and usually results in higher scores.

#### **Question 1**

This was the most popular question answered. Most answers were good – covering recent changes in selling techniques and the business environment (JIT, quality etc.); the role of the sales manager, discussing the importance of the customer, the relationship ladder and/or the stages of KAM, and their impacts on sales management. A few students focused on customer care only, but were given a reasonable mark if the answer was good enough.

#### **Question 2**

This was the second least popular question, but the answers were generally of a high quality. They described the input sources of a typical system, discussed its objectives and benefits, and how to assess its success in achieving its objectives. The common problems discussed included information overload, inaccurate input data, language barrier, changing management requirements, the need to sell the system, the difficulties in assessing its costs and benefits. Finally students gave some very interesting examples of systems they were familiar with.

#### **Question 3**

This proved to be the least popular question in the exam, but nearly all those answering it knew the relevant material. McMurray and Arnold's nine classifications of selling types were: inside order taker, delivery salesperson, outside order taker, missionary salesperson, technical salesperson, creative salesperson, political or indirect salesperson and multiple

salesperson. The second half of the question was to specify the type of person one would recruit for these nine jobs.

#### **Question 4**

This was the second most popular question and most students achieved high marks. A good answer included: how to identify the problem, a definition/explanation of motivation, a description of a number of theories, what is likely to work in today's environment and what specific advice should management give.

#### **Question 5**

This was a popular question. It was a discussion question and the marks were based on logical argument as it is very difficult to foresee even the short term future. Most students fully appreciated the recent growth of the internet and had examples of how many companies are using it. Some believed that sales management as a profession was finished while others believed that it would change radically. Typically the answer should have addressed the differences between internet and personal selling, the impacts of B2B on sales management (benefits, new support structures – web sites, order systems, follow-up etc. - role of salespeople, credit for sales, reduced call frequency, more customer care, target marketing, market research etc., lower volumes in traditional sales/less staff, difficult role of customer care). It should also have included some discussion on the impacts on retail sales management, such as, the benefits – reduced costs, new support structures (web, order, follow-up etc.) lower volumes in traditional sales/less staff, more knowledgeable customers, quick delivery time and more difficult customer care.

#### **Question 6**

This was a popular question and the answers were generally good. The answer should have included an analysis and options for future structures (product, market, geographic, mixed), the advantages and disadvantages, best option, diagram and why, support structures – direct mail, telesales and web.

#### **Question 7**

This was the third least popular question and it was well answered, except some students neglected to address the last parts of the question. The answer should have included: the definition of an agent and a distributor, how to identify agents to supplement sales effort, what criteria to use to select agents, how would you motivate agents and how to assess agents' performance.

#### **Question 8**

This was a the third most popular question. Students really knew the overall list of activities involved in manpower planning and recruitment, but they were less sure of the factors that make up a job analysis and only a few knew how to go about undertaking a job analysis. Again most students knew the first half of a job description, but only a few got it fully right.