



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2001

MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

General Comments

In general, the successful students answered at least four questions reasonably well, while those who failed simply did not know the answers. The most popular questions were Q6 (motivation), Q2 (role of the sales manager) and Q5 (training). The least popular were Q7 (sales productivity), Q3 (negotiation & personal selling) and Q4 (sales targets). The pass rate was 60%.

Question 1

This was the second most popular question. Most students answered it well, although few got high marks because they did not adequately address all the issues. The answer should have included: discussion of the role of the sales manager, his/her strategic, tactical and operational tasks, differences between the sales person's role and the sales manager's role, and the diversity of approaches/cultures in different companies.

Question 2

In general this question was answered well, good answers discussed the general approach to determining sales force size, then they usually explained three methods in some detail but only a few worked out actual values to show their full understanding of how they worked. Also many students neglected to critically evaluate the three methods as requested in the question.

Question 3

This question was answered well. Answers included a description of both processes and a discussion of the similarities and differences. Students identified a number of common features of the selling process and the negotiation process, such as, preparation time and effort, the presentation, watching for reactions, closing the sale. While the differences mentioned included: level of preparation, guided sales process vs more balanced discussion, and bargaining vs selling techniques.

Question 4

Few answers included any mention of corporate, marketing and sales objectives. Quantitative targets were reasonably well discussed such as: return on investment (ROI), increase in sales, increase in profitability, increase in new customers, and reduction in selling costs. Qualitative targets were not discussed adequately, such as, improvement in selling techniques and improvement in customer care. Students did not understand sales objectives and their link to specific targets and few discussed this issue as requested in the question.

Question 5

This question was not answered well. Students were not familiar enough with sales training courses and could not either elaborate or discuss their content. The answer should have covered the traditional training content: sales techniques, role playing, product knowledge, company policies and procedures, market information and customer information. The focus on customers implies a greater emphasis on identifying and understanding different customer types, how to relate the products/services to the different types of customers, behaviour towards customers (e.g., keeping them informed, dealing with complaints) and developing and implementing a good customer care plan.

Question 6

Most students answered the motivational theories part of this question well. But few applied the theories to the situation described in the question. The discussion should have covered the ineffectiveness of money to provide long term motivation, what other choices are available, e.g., recognition, promotion, other non-financial inducements, and how they could be implemented.

Question 7

In general this question was answered very poorly. It was the least popular question. The answer should have included: a description of what computers can do for sales productivity covering e-mail, information searching on the Internet, routing, order processing and monitoring, sales reporting, time management, etc. While self-analysis should have covered: improving the sales process, analysing total effort, understanding customers better, etc.

Question 8

This question was generally answered poorly. Most people answered in terms of customer care analysis and training. Some students understood the concept of the learning organisation, but few could suggest how it could be implemented. The answer should have included discussion of a number of organisational attributes and tools, such as never be complacent, learn from both the best and the worst, use comparison tools (e.g., benchmarking techniques), learn from your customers and how to involve your staff fully in the learning and the implementation.