



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2001

MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

General Comments

The results were good. Generally students understood the questions and responded with good answers. The questions relating to salespeople (motivation, recruitment and the attributes of salespeople) were answered well and stronger on theory than practice. Where students were asked about salesforce structures or sales territory their answers were less sure. Students must remember that this is a management subject and this means that students are expected to be able to apply what they learn in 'real' situations, e.g., all new start-ups face decisions in the area of sales organisation and structures.

The most popular questions were: Motivation (Q6), Salespeople (Q1), Customer Care (Q8), and Relationship management (Q4). Q2 and Q3 were least popular and generally answered poorly. Too many questions were written as essays, with no headings, no sections and no numbering or bullet points. Answers should be laid out clearly and logically with a number of sub-headings, diagrams and bullet points. Diagrams should be accompanied with explanations. The overall results by grade were:

Pass:	81.1%	A: 2.2%	B: 6.7%	C: 32.4%	D: 39.7%
Fail:	18.9%			E: 12.8%	F: 6.1%

This showed a significant increase in the pass rate from 75% in 2000 and 64.5% in 1999 to 81.1% this year. The majority of students who failed, only marginally failed and may pass by compensation.

Question 1

This was the second most popular question, but the answers were fairly mixed, some good, some poor. The main failing was lack of completeness of the answer. The answer should have included: the personality characteristics, the personal characteristics and the job knowledge of 'ideal' salespeople. This discussion should have drawn on relevant research. The need to match salespeople with the sales job should also have been discussed. Finally the quotation should have been discussed. Few students covered all these aspects of the question, but all aspects were covered by someone.

Question 2

This question was the least popular question. It was answered poorly. Few students were able to use different theories and different sales situations to answer the question. The answer should have included: the main sales theories (stimulus response theory, SPIN, selling

formula-buying formula, etc.), the importance of the sales presentation and detailed discussion of one or more sales theories in practice.

Question 3

This question was the second least popular question and generally it was answered poorly. Students simply had not read all the relevant sections of the text. The answer should have included: types of sales organisation (most answered this part well), the principles of salesforce organisation (few knew this), and the main steps in establishing a sales organisation (only one or two knew this part).

Question 4

Students knew this question and answered it well. Their answers rightly included: the changes that give rise to relationship management with buyers, key accounts and how they develop and operate, and their implications for sales management (recruitment, motivation, structure, etc.).

Question 5

Students displayed a good overview of recruiting salespeople, but some were considerably less sure on going into detail. Good answers included a tree diagram of the whole recruitment process; with explanations; the main selection tools (CVs, references, interviews, medical examinations, psychological testing) and their relative costs and efficiencies.

Question 6

This was the most popular question. Most students provided some parts of the answer, but few could put together a thorough reasoned answer. The answer should have included: a definition of motivation; how does it work – main theories (at least 3); what are comfort seekers, spotlight seekers and developers and which motivational theories and individual motivators would increase their performance. Mention of Irish research (de Burca & Lambkin) also gained marks.

Question 7

This was the third least popular question and it was answered poorly. Students did not know how to analyse a sales territory. They could say how to improve travel within sales territories but not go much further. Most answers were very poor. The answer should have addressed the following: how to analyse sales territory performance (trends in sales, profits, no. and size of customers, costs/call, calls/day, etc.) – diagram and discussion - compared to market potential and other territories.

Question 8

This was the third most popular question. Some students gave excellent answers and most were good. Good answers included: why customer care is important, how can one listen to one's customers, how to develop a customer care strategy - listen to your customers, determine their expectations, determine your niche, classify and segment your customers, position your service relative to your customers, set new service standards and put in place the other elements of your service. Implementing the strategy involves leadership; train staff; design; infrastructure and regular monitoring.