



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2003

MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

General Comments

Seventy-five percent of those sitting the examinations passed, while 11 of those not achieving 40% only failed to do so by less than four or five marks.

Generally students continued to reveal an important weakness in their knowledge - they are less able to apply the theory to practical situations, particularly in relation to the application of motivational theory.

Question 1

This question was the second most popular question. Most answers were good and covered the expected points. They covered the tasks of sales management; the different roles of sales supervisors, sales managers and sales directors; usually using the strategic, tactical and operational model to show the weighting of the different levels.

Question 2

This was the third most popular question. It was a very straight forward question. Most answers were pass or just above because students neglected or inadequately answered the final point on implications of key accounts on traditional structures. The other aspects, the explanation of what key accounts are, how they are organised and their importance to the company, were well covered by the answers.

Question 3

This was the third least popular question and it was generally answered well. The answer should have covered the external changes (competition, recession, technology, reduction in suppliers etc.); internal changes (organisational change, technology, teamwork, less management levels etc.); explanation of teams; implications for sales managers and for organisations.

Question 4

This was the most popular question, but the marks should have been higher. Most students explained what motivation was (but most need to learn a more detailed explanation); motivation theories for discussing the theoretical role of compensation in motivation could have been more pertinent (e.g. Hertzberg, Walker et al, and Doyle & Shapiro); and the Lambkin & De Burca Irish survey should have been used to discuss the practical implications. Many students did not actually answer the question asked, but discussed motivation in general.

Question 5

This was the second least popular question and the answers were mixed. Some answers were poor as they did not adequately address the question, provided few ways of retaining high flyers and focussed on the motivational theory. The answers should have discussed the motivation of high flyers, their reaction to declining sales and bonuses, and how to retain them (non-monetary rewards such as shares, holidays, recognition, courses, opportunities of trying different roles – management, research, new business exploration etc.). One solution offered was to fire the lower performing sales people.

Question 6

This was the least popular question and the answers were mixed. Some people did not know the answer; others did and answered it well. The answer should have included an explanation of sales performance evaluation, what inputs are relevant, how they can be measured and, finally, how the data collection can be organised.

Question 7

This was the fourth most popular question and it was not well answered. It was very straight forward. The weakest area was the normal tasks of a sales supervisor, most people answered on styles of supervision instead. And the impact on the salesperson was also weak.

Question 8

This was the fifth most popular question and it was well answered, and most answers gave pertinent practical examples. A small number of answers were poor, these students did not know the right information. The question was based on “*The Channel Advantage*” by Friedman and Furey, published by Butterworth & Heinemann, 1999.