



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2004

MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

General Comments

The standard was good this year. Some students gave too short an answer to some of the questions, particularly those that required discussion and conclusions. These questions require up to 3 pages to cover the subject matter adequately. Other more precise questions could be answered in two pages. Less than two pages is, generally, too short for a discussion answer. More students are laying out their answers better, with headings, points and explanations in a logical manner. A small few are still writing their answers in one continuous paragraph. The number of work-related examples could have been increased. Again many students did not answer the questions fully, forgetting the final point asked in the question.

The overall pass rate declined from 81% in 2001 to 73.5% in 2002 and 75% in 2003. It increased to 76% this year. There were 4 'A' grades this year and 8% E grades; some of these could pass by compensation.

Question 1

This was the third most popular question. Most students did not answer the question well, they did not cover all the points adequately. The answer should have included: an explanation of what sales strategy is (sales plan, target market, organisation structure, and territory and visit management); how the plan should be implemented; and consideration of which customers to focus on, frequency of calls, range of products purchased, special offers, special promotions; cost of servicing customers, and KAM.

Question 2

This was the second most popular question. Most students answered this question well. The key elements expected in the answer were: what training covers (skills, attitude and behaviour); the concept of a training gap and how to assess it; typical training for new employees (selling skills, product knowledge, customer care and company processes); duration of the training (greater than 3 weeks); location of the training and type of training (lectures, role-playing etc.). Finally, it should have included the benefits of training to both the individual sales person and the company.

Question 3

This was the most popular question. It was well answered. The answer should have included a definition of motivation; a description of at least three theories of motivation and their implications; the difference between individual sales people and how to understand their motivation; and practical examples of motivation factors.

Question 4

This was the fifth most popular question and it was fairly well answered. The answer should have included: a comparison of the traditional model compared to the leveraged model; the differences between both approaches and the advantages and disadvantages (particularly low touch and high touch); and the five principles of the leveraged model. This question was based on "*The Channel Advantage*" by Friedman and Furey, published by Butterworth & Heinemann, 1999.

Question 5

This was the least popular question and it was not answered well. The answer should have included: an explanation of the cost of sales, an actual calculation of the cost of sales in a company with main headings and typical costs (including administration costs, telesales and support, sales management costs); costs of sales person (remuneration, pension, VHI, car and other expenses); description of a typical compensation package (salary, bonus, VHI etc.)

Question 6

This was the second least popular question and it was not answered well. It was a straight forward question, based primarily on the textbook covering leadership theories (trait, power, behavioural, situational/contingency theory); what the attributes of an effective leader are, and leadership styles in sales management.

Question 7

This was the fourth most popular question and was answered well generally. Students knew what ecommerce was, they knew about the Internet, extranets and intranets; how they operated, and the popularity of the Internet. They were able to give examples of successful ecommerce companies and their impact on previous traditional channels. They were less sure of how one could plan a change from the traditional to an ecommerce approach and how to minimise the impact on dealers and retailers.

Question 8

This was the third least popular question and it was not answered well. Students should have defined what a high quality service was (and any metrics that could be used to set standards and measure performance); how it could be implemented (research, employee selection, training, communications) and how to audit quality (customer panels, questionnaires, complaints etc).