



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2005

### MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

#### General Comments

The standard of the answers was high, similar to previous years but lower than last year. Students used the text well to answer the questions, but were less sure about applying or discussing the theory. The number of work-related examples could have been increased. Some students did not answer the questions fully, forgetting the actual point asked in the question.

Overall the results were:

<b>PASS:</b>	<b>73.4%</b>	<b>A: 0%</b>	<b>B: 11.9%</b>	<b>C: 26.6%</b>	<b>D: 34.9%</b>
<b>FAIL:</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>E: 9.2%</b>	<b>F: 17.4%</b>		

The overall pass rate decreased from 76% last year to 73% this year. There were no 'A' grades and 9% failed by a few marks; some of these could pass by compensation.

#### Question 1

This question was the most popular question (with question 3). Most students answered it well but failed to secure all the marks they could. The answer should have included:

- The role of the salesperson and how the role changes with different sales tasks (order taker, creative salesperson, missionary etc.);
- Physical characteristics (age, height, appearance, etc);
- Personality variables (empathy, ego, dominance, endurance, social recognition; etc)
- Skills required (communications, matching, persuasive).

It was important to identify at least two and not more than four key attributes that could be used in selecting new 'successful' sales people.

#### Question 2

This was the least popular question and it was poorly answered. Students could not explain what the buyer-seller dyad was (organisation selling model with a focus on structures, see page 94, Dondaldson) and even less had any idea how to apply it to a sub-supply engineering company salesforce, particularly the process for selling into organisations with a decision making unit (DMU) and how and when to relate to the individual DMU members.

#### Question 3

This was the most popular question (with question 1) and it was answered well, particularly the theory aspects, but the application of the theory was generally not convincing. Most students explained what motivation was; described three motivation theories (mainly

Maslow, Herzberg and Vroom); some students added Walker et al, and Doyle & Shapiro. The main weakness was in the discussion of the application of motivation theory.

The application of the theory should have included a general diagram of individual motivation and the de Burca & Lambkin Irish survey results, areas where the multinational would be strong (remuneration, and work conditions), need to consider individual motivation (age, background and personality), and suggested individual motivators (recognition, involvement, teamwork, etc.).

#### **Question 4**

This was the second least popular question and there was quite a range of answers. Few were well argued. A number of students attempted this question by focusing on the role of the sales manager. This was incorrect. The answer should have elaborated on the elements of a sales strategy (target markets, account management policies, salesforce organisation, sales planning and territory design). The implementation of the strategy should have covered selection, training, motivation, evaluation and monitoring.

#### **Question 5**

This was the third most popular question and it was answered well with quotes from both Feargal Quinn's and Veronica Canning's books. Some answers focused too much on broader issues such as customer strategy, moments of truth and 'wow' factors, and did not adequately address the actual question asked. The answer should have defined customer needs in the hospitality industry and how to identify them using techniques such as surveys, focus groups, use of services by analysing databases, generic market research, and measuring response to targeted promotions. Techniques for measuring customer satisfaction should have included receptionists asking every customer if their stay was satisfactory, questionnaires (in each room), logged complaints, active listening to all customers and reporting, loyalty card usage, promotion responses and reviews on the website.

#### **Question 6**

This was the fourth most popular question and it was answered well generally, but some answers were incomplete, i.e., missing the last point. It should have included what a business partner is, why one could be advantageous (to access new markets, use the partner's technical or market expertise, inadequate funds to set up a direct salesforce etc), and what 'best practice' is (covering scope, choice of partners, channel decisions and support, strong base and measurement and control).

#### **Question 7**

This question was generally answered well. The output answer should have included the following: sales by volume or value, expenses to sales ratio, gross margin on orders, market share, call frequency ratio, order size, etc. A broad interpretation of inputs was used including areas such as goal setting, job and territory planning, management development performance appraisal and leadership.

#### **Question 8**

This was the third least popular question and it was not answered well. Students had difficulty in framing a coherent answer. It was primarily about the role of the sales manager as a leader (what is leadership, leadership theories such as trait, power, behavioural and situational/contingency theories); leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, consultative, paternalistic and laissez-faire); as a manager (the differences between leadership and

management in sales); motivator and recruiter and their respective contributions to winning. Practical examples from business or sport were necessary to support arguments.