



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2006

MANAGEMENT OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

General Comments

The standard of the answers was medium to high. Students used the text well to answer the questions, but were less sure about applying the theory or discussing practical examples. The number of work related examples could have been increased. In some cases students did not answer the questions fully, neglecting to cover all the points asked.

Overall the results were:

PASS:	72.5%	A: 0%	B: 10%	C: 25%	D: 37.5%
FAIL:	27.5%	E: 15%	F: 12.5%		

The overall pass rate was similar to last year. There were no 'A' grades and 15% failed by a few marks; some of these could pass by compensation.

Question 1

This was the fourth most popular question. Most students answered it well but failed to secure all the marks they could. The answer should have included: the role of the salesperson, the role of the sales manger and the role of senior management. It should then have discussed the focus/objectives of sales managers and senior management and the differences between them, particularly departmental and personal objectives versus corporate objectives.

Question 2

This was the third most popular question and it was answered well. Students explained the differences between home sales and overseas sales - mentioning the need for market research, sales channel options (agents, distributors, own sales force), language, regulations, cultural differences, and higher costs. Many students also mentioned the difficulties in translating product names into other languages, giving examples.

Question 3

Question 3 was the second least popular question and the answers were mixed, some good and some poor. The answer should have covered: what is sales structure, descriptions of different sales structures, what key accounts are, why they are important and how KAM progresses over time. Finally, the answer should compare the different structures and give practical examples.

Question 4

This question was the most popular question. 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 included Walker et al, and Doyle & Shapiro. The answer should then have explained how sales managers identify individual sales peoples' motivations.

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, and the need to consider individual motivation (age, background and personality), and suggest individual motivators (recognition, involvement, teamwork, etc.).

Question 5

This was the least popular question and it was not answered well. The answer should have covered the concept of 'span of control'. What it is, how wide it should be and the implications for management. Next the wider span of control mention in the question should have been discussed and the implications for the sales manager and the company explored, and how such impacts could be minimised. Key areas for discussion should have included: less contact with individual sales people, less time to monitor, to understand and influence motivations, more difficult to plan meaningfully etc.

Question 6

Question 6 was the third least popular. It was not answered well. It should have covered the following steps in making channel decisions:

- Popularity of the channel options for selected market segments
- Estimated revenue contribution for each channel choice
- Expected cost per channel
- Channel resources required and how available they are
- Build a 'go to market' cost model

See: The Channel Advantage, Chapter 11.

Question 7

This was the second most popular question. This question was generally answered well. The answer should have included why training is important; how the sales manager identifies training needs (individual assessment, skills needs questionnaires, independent evaluation); a diagram of the training process including evaluation; and the training necessary because of changes in today's environment (internet, new SMIS software, new communications equipment, relationship building etc)

Question 8

Question 8 was the fifth most popular question. Generally, it was either answered well or poorly. The answer should have included: a definition/explanation of what leadership is; leadership theories such as trait, power, behavioural and situational/contingency theories; and leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, consultative, paternalistic and laissez-faire); and the differences between leadership and management in sales.