

English for Business

LEVEL 3

Past Papers 2006

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Contents

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Past Papers 2006

Series 2	3 - 8
Series 3	9 - 16
Series 4	17 – 24

There was no Series 1 in 2006

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SERIES 2 EXAMINATION 2006
ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

LEVEL 3

(Code No: 3041)

MONDAY 10 APRIL

Instructions to Candidates

- (a) *The time allowed for this examination is 3 hours.*
 - (b) *Answer **all 4** questions.*
 - (c) *All questions carry equal marks.*
 - (d) *All answers must be clearly and correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.*
 - (e) *While formal accuracy is expected, adequate and appropriate communication is essential and candidates must judge the length of their answers in this light.*
 - (f) *When you finish, check your work carefully.*
 - (g) *The use of standard English dictionaries and cordless non-programmable calculators is permitted. Candidates whose first language is not English may use a bilingual dictionary.*
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QUESTION 1

Situation

You are employed by Maric Products, a small manufacturing company. You work as an assistant to the Operations Director, Mr David Hodik.

Mr Hodik is aware that the company does not make as much of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as it could, and is hoping to extend the use of computerised systems in the future, when staff have received further training. This morning, Mr Hodik shows you a letter he has received from a company called *ICT Services* (ICTS). Part of the letter is shown below.

For many companies setting up and maintaining ICT systems is a costly and time consuming matter. Technology is changing fast and the system you set up today could be outdated tomorrow. Our company offers the quickest and best way for you to improve your flexibility, improve your service or quality of goods and lower operational and support costs. You do this by letting us take care of your ICT services; you **outsource** these to us.

Mr Hodik says this to you:

“I must admit this sounds appealing, but, quite frankly, I don’t understand a lot of what the company goes on to say.

“For example, we are told we can outsource as many of our services as we require, and they talk about ‘key technical migrations, operating systems maintenance, and infrastructure operations’. I just don’t understand this.

“I see that the company offers a free service where they will visit organisations like ours to offer advice and guidance on how they could help. Could you please write to the Regional Manager to arrange for him to visit us? I suspect that most companies they visit will be much more advanced in these matters. You had better not admit just how little we know or they could sell us anything, but please try to make it clear that we certainly won’t have specific proposals for them. Also, it could be a little embarrassing for them to visit our offices as they might wish to examine our existing systems – and we don’t have any! Please arrange for them to visit us over the next couple of weeks, if possible, and we’ll book a conference room at the *Hotel Splendide*. I’m sure you can think of a good excuse for this!

“When you draft the letter to ICTS stress that I’m particularly interested in using ICT for stock control and ordering as I’m sure we could economise here and our Finance Director is certainly hoping to make use of ICT in her area. Please try to make the letter sound as if we are really interested, but for goodness sake don’t promise them anything. We need to give the matter a lot of consideration before we commit ourselves.”

The company’s details are:

ICT Services, Darlington Boulevard, Hopetown and the Regional Manager is Mr Laurens Fontaine.

Task

Write the letter as requested. You can assume that your company’s headed notepaper is used and you have a leaflet for the Hotel Splendide giving its location and facilities.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Situation

You work for a company, KEA Services, with a large office employing many administrative and clerical staff. The Office manager, Ms Ludmila Kurpa is concerned that many of these staff are not making best use of their time at work. Often tasks are not completed on time and staff regularly request that they should work overtime.

Ms Kurpa, whom you assist with various tasks, knows that you have an interest in the subject of time management and has asked you to carry out some investigations before producing a report on the topic. She says this to you:

“I know we can call in specialists to sort out our time management problems, and this might happen eventually, but I’d like you to look into it first. It would be helpful if you could investigate the problems we have. What has worked in the past is that if you ask staff what the problems are and what works well for them we can get some good ideas.

“When you’ve done your research, let me have a report, please. But I don’t just want a summary of what people say – let me have a clear account of what the problems are and what the staff think could help matters.”

The main results of your interviews are as follows.

- Mr G: “In fact, I think I manage my time quite well. I always start the day by making a ‘to do’ list. That is, I write down what I must accomplish in order of priority so I know exactly what to do”
- Miss K: “One problem lies with some of our equipment and our systems. I use the Internet a lot and it takes me ages to go on-line sometimes. Some of our printers don’t seem to be very efficient and we waste a lot of time (and paper) when items don’t print out properly. A bit of investment here would save a great deal of time.”
- Mrs P: “I know I spend too much time on the phone. It’s difficult to be curt when you speak to customers as they often want to chat. I must say, I use emails when I can and this saves a lot of time.”
- Mr J: “We seem to spend a lot of time in meetings. I know these are important, and we can’t do without many of them, but I’m not sure that people who chair these fully recognise how to focus the meeting and cut down on unnecessary discussion. With respect, I would say that training in how to chair meetings would be valuable.”
- Miss L: “Well, this certainly works for me. I always start the day with the most difficult and urgent tasks, when I’m fresh. If I do these when I’m tired, they seem to take longer.”
- Mr R: “I think a problem with many of the staff is that their desks or workshops are a mess. You can waste a great deal of time looking for documents or equipment if you don’t keep everything in order. The time you invest in keeping your work area tidy (in particular, keeping up with filing) pays huge dividends.”

There were other responses but they dealt with similar points.

Task

Write the report as requested. You can use any style with which you are familiar, which suits the purpose of the report.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 3

Situation

You are employed by a company that is investigating its marketing and sales policies. In recent years, the company has attempted to use the most up to date marketing methods, particularly the Internet, but staff in the marketing department (where you are employed) are now considering if it is worth re-considering introducing a method abandoned some time ago – direct marketing.

You have visited various web-sites concerned with this form of marketing and the notes you have made appear below. You will lead a discussion on this topic at a forthcoming meeting of the Marketing and Sales Department

Notes on direct marketing

This is sometimes referred to as “door to door marketing” and it involves delivering leaflets to private houses and businesses. The advent of the Internet was seen as a death knell of many forms of advertising including direct marketing, but, in fact, there has been year on year growth of this form of marketing. Last year, the volume of materials used in direct marketing grew by 17% in this country, a level of growth that is mirrored across the world.

There is also a common perception that materials used are viewed as junk mail, that is, unsolicited and unrequired rubbish that is binned without any consideration. However, again the evidence does not support this. A recent census, which ranked the 14 major marketing methods, listed direct marketing in fifth place in terms of revenue generated – just ahead of radio.

The main advantage of delivering leaflets door to door is that the advertiser’s message goes direct to potential purchasers in their own homes. Of course, the quality of the materials is of crucial importance. A well designed leaflet grabs the attention of the reader who then becomes a potential customer. The leaflet can be passed around the various members of the household but in all cases the message can be put right under the nose of the potential customer.

Another misconception is that door to door leaflet distribution is indiscriminate; it is seen as being used in an area where only a small number of households have a potential interest in a product. There is some truth in this; its strength is that it is simple to apply in that leaflets are pushed through every letterbox in an area. However, it can be focused on the right kind of customer by the careful planning of postcode or zip code area. With sophisticated mapping and planning, areas that contain a high proportion of potential customers can be targeted and other areas ignored. Already a large amount of information on the profile of an area exists, whether an area has, for example, a high proportion of students or retired people.

Direct marketing provides increasingly good value. With the latest printing technology, leaflets can be produced for a very modest cost, and it is not expensive to combine direct marketing with other forms of distribution, eg postal services or newspaper delivery.

Such is direct marketing’s versatility that it can be combined with other forms of sales and marketing. Catalogues delivered through the door can enable customers to choose between making purchases by mail, the Internet or by visiting the stores.

This form of marketing is not only useful to businesses, but it can be used by any organisation with a “message” to deliver, such as government departments, educational institutions and community organisations in order to get their messages across.

Task

Using this information, answer the following questions, **in your own words**, as far as possible, to show your understanding of direct marketing.

- a. What is meant by the sentence “the advent of the Internet was seen as the death knell of many forms of advertising including direct marketing”? (first paragraph)
(4 marks)
- b. What evidence is there that direct marketing materials are not seen as “junk mail” and binned without being read?
(3 marks)
- c. Why is the quality of the material used in direct marketing so important?
(2 marks)
- d. What is meant by the word “indiscriminate” and how can leaflet distribution not be considered as indiscriminate?
(3 marks)
- e. Why is direct marketing considered good value for money?
(3 marks)
- f. Why is direct marketing described as “versatile”?
(3 marks)
- g. Is direct marketing only appropriate for use by businesses or commercial organisations?
(3 marks)
- h. From what you have read in the passage and any experience you might have, estimate the main strengths and weaknesses of direct marketing in your own country.
(4 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 4

You are employed by a scientific company in your area. The company has been asked to carry out some research and develop some products for the government of your country. Representatives from the Department of Health will visit the company on Wednesday of next week.

The Manager of the company, Mr Patrick Chireya, says this to you:

“I’d like you to make the final arrangements for this visit, but it is still a very sensitive issue and it is vital that no-one outside the company knows anything about this until the contracts are signed. Even then the government will make an announcement rather than our company.

“One problem we face is that we’ll have to ask Mrs Pena (the Facilities Manager) to make the arrangements. You might remember that there was a strong suspicion that she was the person who notified the newspapers about that problem we had with building regulations last year. We couldn’t prove anything, of course, and so we must take great care not to make any accusations.

“Mrs Pena always expects any requests to be in writing, so could you please send her a memo to confirm the details? I know you’ve made some notes about what we need. The only thing I should add is that you can assure Mrs Pena that she doesn’t have to stick to the normal entertainment budget.

“But don’t forget – this is a “need to know” situation so make sure Mrs Pena is told only what she needs to know. There’s no need for her to know the names of the government representatives, for example”.

Your notes about the government representatives are as follows:

Notes from Correspondence

Two representatives: Mr Martin Buschman
Miss Laura Kier

Will arrive at local airport at 9.30am – company car needed to collect from airport (driver must identify himself at airport)

Will meet all 7 members of Board of Directors at 10.30am – Conference Room to be set up – notepads, stand with flipchart needed.

Lunch 1.00pm – buffet needed for all attending (Directors, Mr Chireya, two representatives)

Depart for airport 5.00pm.

Message on telephone answerphone this morning:

“Hello, this is Mr Buschman’s personal assistant. I’m afraid there’s a couple of changes to our arrangement for next week. Miss Kier, who was to accompany Mr Buschman is ill. Her replacement is Mr Tobias Asch. This shouldn’t make much difference to you, except Mr Asch will require a special diabetic lunch. Most catering managers should be able to supply this, but if you can’t, please let me know. The other change is that they will now fly to your airport on Tuesday evening. They’ll be staying at the Airport Hotel, so could they be collected from there, please? I think that’s all – everything else remains the same. I’m sure I don’t have to remind you that nothing should be made public about this at the moment. If all goes well, we’ll do the press release and announcement when the contracts are signed.

Many thanks

Task

Write a memo to Mrs Pena to confirm the arrangements for the meeting.

(Total 25 marks)

SERIES 3 EXAMINATION 2006

ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

LEVEL 3

(Code No: 3041)

MONDAY 12 JUNE

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-

QUESTION 1

Situation

You are employed by *Maxi Building Services*, a small company that provides construction services to individuals and other companies. You work as an Administrative Assistant to the Manager of the company, Mr Nils Lindahl.

This morning, Mr Lindahl said this to you:

“I’ve just had a phone call from Valerie Vanhoof, the Head Teacher of Park View School. She told me how pleased she was with the work we did for her when we built the extension to the school’s science block. It’s always nice when we are praised for our work. It’s good to know that we have a satisfied customer as they’re likely to come back to us if they have any more work to do.

“I’m pleased to say that we get a lot of this type of feedback these days as it shows that we’re doing our jobs properly. But we seem to receive most of these comments verbally. If people wrote to us we could use the letters in our publicity material. I think this is called ‘endorsement’.

“I have to say, however, Mrs Vanhoof has been very helpful. She has agreed to write to us but she also said that she would include anything we wished to suggest in her letter – she was so pleased with what we did for the school.

“I’d like you to write to Mrs Vanhoof to thank her for her offer, and make a few suggestions on what she could include in the letter. Ask Paulo Marques, who deals with our publicity, what Mrs Vanhoof should say. Please make it very clear just how grateful we are”.

You seek the advice of Paulo Marques, the company’s Marketing Manager, who says this to you:

“I like the sound of this. As Nils knows, we do receive some letters from grateful customers and we can use these in our advertising, providing we get the agreement of the person who wrote the letter, of course. That is crucial.

“Most of the letters praise the quality of the work we do. We do employ a lot of experienced staff, so maybe we should expect this. But it would be helpful to us if the Head Teacher could say that we provide good value for money. Maybe she could mention how friendly our staff were, or something like that. I’m not sure if we finished the work at the school earlier than expected, but if we did she could mention that. Could you check on this, please.

“She could say how much she appreciates our 5 year guarantee and anything else she wants to add that would be useful. I wouldn’t like to restrict her to our suggestions.”

You check the company records and this is an extract from these.

Park View School, Eastern Avenue, Metrovia (telephone number: 00731 842967). Head Teacher Mrs V Vanhoof. Work carried out to school buildings – extension to Block J (Science Block) including new roof. Estimated completion date – 4th April. Actual completion date – 5th April. One day lost due to bad weather in late March.

Task

Write the letter to Mrs Vanhoof as requested. You can assume that your company’s headed paper is used.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Situation

You are employed in the offices of *Makalele Stores*, a large department store in your area. The store sells a large range of products and attracts customers from a wide area. The store has invested in creating a substantial website which has proved popular with customers and has increased the store's turnover.

The Sales and Marketing Department carries out regular and substantial research on who is visiting the website and how the best service can be provided for new and existing customers. However, the Human Resources Manager, Mr Claude Chaumont, is concerned that staff do not appear to visit the website, and in some cases seem unaware that it exists.

Mr Chaumont says this to you:

"It does seem a shame that we have a wonderful website which has been such a success for customers, but staff don't seem to visit it. At least, we don't think they do – that's what I'd like you find out. Please do a bit of research for us to see if our feeling is true and that staff tend not to visit the website. It would be helpful if you could find out any reasons for this and you could also have a word with Miss Meyer, the Marketing Manager, who is responsible for managing the website. She might have some ideas about staff usage.

"I would like you then to write a report on staff usage of the website. Please feel free to offer any conclusions or make recommendations."

The results of your research are as follows:

Percentage of staff who have visited the website in the last six months

	<u>Number of visits in last 6 months</u>				
	<u>None</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>5-10</u>	<u>10-20</u>	<u>More than 20</u>
Staff under 30 years of age	4	27	13	16	40
Staff over 30 years of age	35	24	17	14	10
All staff	25	26	16	15	18

Typical comments from staff

"Website? What website?" (Mrs G)

"Oh yes. It's a great way of keeping up to do date with what the store is offering. It helps me do my job." (Mr P)

"No. I wouldn't dream of visiting the website. When I get home I just want to forget all about Makalele Stores until the next day." (Miss J)

"Don't forget, staff are also customers. I buy many items from the store, so it's very useful to visit the website outside the store's opening hours." (Ms F)

"I often visit it. I like to look at the pictures of the department so I can try to spot my friends from the staff." (Mr K)

"I would visit more if there was something especially for staff. We do get a printed staff newspaper but it's pretty tedious – just lists of who's retired etc. It would be much better if this was posted on the website. The information could be changed more regularly." (Mrs T)

From an Interview with Miss Meyer, Marketing Manager

“You must remember that the website was created for customers. It wasn’t really intended for staff, so the fact that any staff members visit it is very encouraging.

“If there is a need for a staff section of the website we could certainly produce one, although we would need to liaise with the people in Human Resources. I know only too well that the staff newsletter is very dreary – the format hasn’t changed for about 20 years! We could create a dedicated part of the website for staff. We could even give a password for staff only if there’s anything we don’t want customers to see.

“It’s not up to me to talk about staff development – that’s your job in Human Resources, but I would certainly hope staff visit the website simply to find out more about us and our products. It might reduce the need for staff training events, which could save us a bit of money.”

Task

Write the report as requested. You can use any appropriate style.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 3

Situation

You are employed by a small manufacturing company which is hoping to increase the sales of its product. You recently attended a conference on Sales and Marketing where you heard a presentation on the topic of “add-ons” given by a prominent business expert, Mr Martin Cheeseman. The draft of Mr Cheeseman’s talk appears below.

You believe that this concept is relevant to your organisation and you are about to promote the ideas to your staff. Read the draft and answer the questions that follow to show that you have fully understood the ideas given.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

You have come here today to hear me tell you something about “add-ons”. Let me explain to you very simply what I mean by this. Think of the time you want to have something to eat. You go into a café and ask for a basic item, say a sandwich. The person serving you then asks “Would you like anything with that? A salad or French fries perhaps?” You realise this would add to your meal and you are then asked, “and would you like anything to drink?” You say “No thanks” but you are told “we have tea, coffee, fruit juice, coke or just water”, so you say “all right, I’ll have an orange juice.” Isn’t this wonderful? You’ve enjoyed your meal and the shop or café has increased its sales. Everyone’s happy.

You return to work to find that a customer has given your company a large order for your products. You are very grateful for this and process the order immediately. Now, I’m sure you have grasped my point. In the shop or café, you were happy to accept “add-ons” but you did not take the opportunity to offer your customer the same service. Why not? Sales are the lifeblood of any business so you must always take the opportunity to maximise these. Your customers will appreciate the service, just as you did in the café. They will gain a superior outcome of the purchase and trust you in future to offer further advice and guidance. If they genuinely do not want anything other than this basic product (which, I have to say, is rare) they will tell you and you should then not alienate them by pursuing further sales. If you did they could find this irritating and you risk losing your basic sale.

I heard you say that it’s not as simple as I’m making out. It’s easy to “add-on” a drink to a meal, but less easy to “add-on” to a sophisticated product. Are you sure? Most purchases have the scope for “add-ons”. When I bought shoes I was asked if I needed polish. When I purchased my video camera I was asked if I needed a case, an instruction book or tapes. When I bought kitchen equipment I was asked if I wanted to buy an insurance policy on the products.

It need not be a totally different product. If your customer shows interest in a basic standard product, why not offer the more modern sophisticated version?

Of course, we should not confuse this with selling your customers a totally different product. If in your café experience, you had been asked “Would you like a television, a car or a pair of trousers?”, you would have found this very strange and almost certainly refused.

Basically you should keep in mind that every time someone makes a purchase from your organisation you have the opportunity to increase the size of the purchase. Your aim is to secure the optimum benefit of the purchase for both yourself and your customer.

In fact, this is more than an aim; it is your responsibility to introduce your customer to all the alternatives they have when making a purchase. In most cases they will not have recognised these as alternatives and will be pleased to cooperate. Always keep in the front of your mind that if your customers do not make these purchases from you, where will they go to do this? To another company, of course. So by accepting the policy of “add-ons” you are increasing your own company’s business and depriving your rivals of custom. Isn’t that a splendid idea?

Thank you.

Task

Using the information answer **in your own words as far as possible** the questions that follow.

- a. Describe what is meant by the term “add-on”. (3 marks)
- b. What does Mr Cheeseman mean when he describes sales as “the lifeblood of a business”? (3 marks)
- c. Why is it likely that your customer will be grateful for receiving an “add-on” product? (2 marks)
- d. What might happen if you attempt to sell an “add-on” product to a customer who genuinely only requires one basic product? (3 marks)
- e. Why does an add-on product not have to be a totally different product to that requested by a customer? (2 marks)
- f. What is likely to happen if you attempt to sell a totally unconnected product as an “add-on”? (2 marks)
- g. What is meant by the sentence “Your aim is to secure the optimum benefit of the purchase for both yourself and the customer”? (sixth paragraph) (4 marks)
- h. In the last paragraph, what does Mr Cheeseman suggest the customer is likely to do if you miss the opportunity to sell an “add-on” product? (2 marks)
- i. Give an example from your own experience of a product that could be sold as an “add-on” to another product, giving reasons for your answer. (4 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 4

Situation

You are employed in the office of the *Grand Central Hotel* in your area. This morning the Manager of the hotel, Mr Bruno Marinelli, said this to you:

“There’s a bit of a problem, I’m afraid. Please keep this to yourself – it’s important that only the senior staff know this – we’ve failed our inspection from the Fire Department! I should say there’s no immediate risk or danger. We’ve corrected some of the problems immediately; it wasn’t sensible of us to keep fire doors locked when Inspectors were around! But one problem is that the alarm system isn’t sensitive enough to detect very small fires. Fortunately, I’ve been able to contact the company that installed the alarm, *Rausman Brothers*, and they can come and do the necessary work in two days’ time.

“It should only take a day to do the work, but on 14th June the alarms are likely to go off all the time. This will be a nuisance for all concerned, staff and guests, but we’ll all have to ignore the alarm for this day.

“I’d like you to send a memo to all staff explaining what is happening. Don’t tell them about the inspection failure, of course, but let them know about the alarm being repaired. We will be working as usual on the day so, if there happens to be a real fire (let’s all hope there isn’t), all staff will have to raise the alarm as best they can and make sure everyone leaves the building. Stress that this is for one day only and everything will be back to normal on 15th June.

“We’d better let the guests know what is happening. I’d like you to prepare a notice that we can put in each occupied bedroom and on the notice boards. Just let them know what is happening on 14th June and tell them politely to ignore the alarm. Try to reassure them that, if there is a real fire, we’ll get them out of the building.”

Task

- a. **Write a memo** to send to all members of staff. (15 marks)
- b. **Draft a notice**, as requested. (10 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

SERIES 4 EXAMINATION 2006
ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

LEVEL 3

(Code No: 3041)

TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER

Instructions to Candidates

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-



QUESTION 1

Situation

You are employed in the Customer Services Department of *Freshways Foods*, a company which produces a wide range of tinned and processed foods. Its products are sold in stores and supermarkets all over the world.

The company's range of tinned soups is very popular but this morning your manager, Ms Rita Addari, shows you the letter she has received.

317 Eastern Avenue
Parkway City
20 November 2006

Dear Sir or Madam

I have used and enjoyed Freshways Foods' products for many years but I'm sorry to report that I have to complain about a tin of your Spring Vegetable Soup that I recently bought from Val-U stores in the High Street, Parkway City.

I opened the tin and served it as part of my meal, but my wife then found a piece of wood in her soup. It looked like it was part of the stalk of one of the vegetables. Fortunately my wife saw this in her bowl but she could have choked if she had swallowed it.

I still have the piece of wood and I can send it to you if you wish but I'm sure you will understand that I am very disappointed with your product and I hope you can explain how this could happen.

Yours faithfully

Bruno Capaldi (Mr)

QUESTION 1 CONTINUED

Ms Addari says this to you:

“This looks odd to me. As far as I recall, it is impossible for anything like this to get into a tin of soup, but please have a word with the Production Manager to confirm this.”

“I’d like you to respond to Mr Capaldi but first check our complaints files. Some people complain regularly, usually for no good reason apart from the fact that they hope to get some sort of compensation. If he is a “regular” you can take a firm line and deny all responsibility. If this is the first letter, he might well genuinely believe in his complaint so you can be more sympathetic. Of course, you still shouldn’t accept responsibility, but you can then ask him to send us the bit of wood he maintains he found and we’ll look at it, at least!”

When you speak to the Production Manager, he tells you the following.

“I can say quite categorically that it would be impossible for a tin of soup to be sealed and sent out with something like this in it. Our production process is fully enclosed and if there happened to be any “foreign body” in the soup this would be filtered out.

“Actually, we did have a problem with one batch of this product a couple of years ago. For some reason an extra portion of red-hot chillies went into the soup which made the product impossible to eat. But we have made sure that only fresh vegetables go into the soup. In fact, if a piece of wood did find its way in, it would disintegrate during the cooking process – we have to use very high temperatures to destroy any harmful bacteria.”

“So there’s no chance anything went into the soup at our end. Maybe it got into the soup from Mr Capaldi’s kitchen?”

You check the complaints files and find that it is the first complaint Mr Capaldi has submitted.

Task

Write the letter to Mr Capaldi as requested. You can assume that the company’s headed notepaper is used but you should include all other components of a business letter.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Situation

You are employed by a railway company, *Wiseline Railways*. A new fleet of trains is about to be introduced to the routes on which it operates and the company is now giving consideration to various aspects of its customer services.

Wiseline's Customer Services Manager, Mr Donald Pieteron, would now like to review the way announcements are made through the public address systems used on trains. He has said this to you:

"We have received many letters and emails about on-board announcements. Have a look at those please and then speak to Sonja Merkel, our Operations Manager. She is responsible for the staff who make the announcements. When you've done this, please write me a report with a summary of the issues and your suggestions about what we could do about them."

You note that the main comments from customers are as follows:

"The announcements are so repetitive. After each stop we hear the same things – all the future times and arrivals for places on the route, services on the train, security announcements etc. Can't you shorten these?"

"Many announcements are complicated and don't apply to all passengers. Why announce ticket restrictions, for example? I don't understand such announcements as 'Outward portions of Seven Day Advance Saver tickets are not available on the train'."

"Why make announcements at all? Can't each carriage have a plasma screen giving all the information we need?"

"Announcements vary in quality. Some staff speak clearly and distinctly. Others rush the announcements, seem to be unrehearsed and are very difficult to understand."

"The volume of the announcements seem to vary. Sometimes you can barely hear them but on other occasions they are uncomfortably loud."

"Of course, passengers need to be told such things as restaurant opening times, why there are delays on the line, next calling point etc. But if there are too many of these, they disrupt what you are doing, whether it is reading, talking to a fellow passenger or, as in my case, sleeping!"

You put the major points to the Operations Manager, and this is your summary of her responses.

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

Accepts comments about number/length of announcements – it is present company policy to give full announcements after each stop.

Currently no staff training (other than how to use public address equipment) – variable volume mainly due to use of old equipment on trains – will be rectified when new trains are introduced.

Staff would welcome training – they often have problems in deciding what to say when faced with a new situation – eg delays on line. Would welcome guidance on using plain language etc.

No plans for screens on new trains – other companies report that passengers prefer announcements. But worth considering for future.

Task

Write the report as requested.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 3

Situation

You are employed by *Marton Manufacturing* (MM) a medium sized manufacturing company. The company sells its products by a range of methods including its website. The Company Manager, Mr Stephen Hottiger, is concerned that the website does not appear to be generating the volume of sales to be expected and has asked you to investigate this.

You recently attended a conference where a leading expert on website design, Mr Zeljko Kejak, gave a talk on maximising sales. The text of the speech appears below. After you have read this, answer the questions that follow to demonstrate your understanding of the issues raised.

Ladies and gentlemen.

I know you are here today because your company uses a website as part of its marketing strategy. But the fact you are listening to my talk indicates that you have concerns about its effectiveness. Let us not forget that websites are no longer the novelty they were only a dozen years ago. It is now unusual for a company not to have one. Simply having this feature is no longer sufficient and a badly designed facility is, at best, a waste of time and effort, and, at worst, a vital selling opportunity missed.

Let me start by clarifying the purpose of a website. If you are one of the increasingly rare companies without a website then you will certainly give an impression that you are out of touch with the times. With some very traditional companies in a conservative market this is not a bad thing to advertise but such companies are rare. In most cases the website is there to inform present and future customers, generate sales and also play a part in your administrative services such as tracking orders or allowing payments to be made. As part of the world-wide web, smaller companies are also giving an illusion of a global presence.

The main purpose, however, will always be to generate sales; all other purposes are secondary to this. Without sales any business will cease to exist.

However, let us not assume that all website visitors are equal in their desire to purchase. It is helpful for you to accept that web traffic varies greatly and then design your site to maximise the potential for all types of visitor.

Basically, you should cater for five types of visitors to your site.

The first type, we can call *accidental tourists*. Such visitors arrive at your site by chance. You should not entertain high hopes of a sale here as these visitors come with no intent to purchase anything but you should not let go without, at least, impressing them with your product or services. On future visits they might have a stronger desire to do business. The second type are called *browsers*. Such people have some ideas about what they wish to purchase, but have not made a final decision. Now they have more promise; grab their attention, let them see your unique selling point, and, who knows? Their browsing might end with you.

The next category, *prospects*, are visitors who have made a fairly firm decision to purchase and need convincing that you are the right company. You must enable them to navigate the site in order for them to join the next category, *customers*. Such people have made a decision to purchase and want to place an order with you. So why not make sure the order is made? Allow them to purchase then and there – online. It's surprising how many sites do not allow this and so miss an opportunity to make a sale, and increase profits.

QUESTION 3 CONTINUED

Whatever your category of visitor, you should ensure that they carry out some activity. If they can't always be customers, then why not make sure that the visitor joins your mailing list or subscribes to your newsletter? If you are able to do this, why not book an appointment for the visitor at your premises, or arrange a visit by a sales representative?

It is also vital that you track visits carefully. There are many software programmes available to help to calculate how many "hits" the site has had, which pages were viewed, how long the visitor remained with you, and how many visits were converted into orders. You can also estimate the category of visits when they arrive at the site, and the category they are in when they leave!

If one of your sales staff was underperforming, you would almost certainly consider training or even dismissal. But if your website is underperforming, would you be as ruthless?

Task

Using this information, answer the following questions, **in your own words as far as possible**, to show your understanding of the points raised.

- (a) What is meant by the phrase "websites are no longer the novelty they were only a dozen years ago."? (3 marks)
- (b) Why is it an advantage to some companies not to have a website? (3 marks)
- (c) Why do you think that having a website gives smaller companies "the illusion of a global presence"? (3marks)
- (d) Why does Mr Kejak emphasise that the main purpose of a website is to generate sales? (2 marks)
- (e) Why should you not entertain high hopes of sales from *accidental tourists*? (2 marks)
- (f) What is the main difference between *accidental tourists* and *browsers*? (4 marks)
- (g) What should be your aim when *prospects* visit your site? (2 marks)
- (h) What mistake is often made when *customers* visit your site? (3 marks)
- (i) Why do you think it is important to track visits carefully? (3 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 4

You work as an administrative assistant to Mr Iqbal Asif, the Manager of *Pendalino Products*, a small manufacturing company based in Comlon Boulevard in the town of Crossways. Mr Asif said the following to you this morning.

“I’ve got some remarkable news. The company is going to be in a big-time movie! Apparently there’s a film being made in the area at the moment; the director is someone called Pedro Locha and the star is a man called Steve Thrust. I can’t say I’ve heard of either of them, have you?”

You point out that Pedro Locha is a well know director of crime films, and Steve Thrust is a major American movie star and Mr Asif continues:

“Really? Well I don’t see many movies. Anyway, for some reason they need to add a scene in a small factory and we’ve been chosen. In fact they’ll be here on Thursday of next week to do the filming. I’m told that this Locha person will not be here. He’s sending someone called a Second Unit Director. In fact he’s going to ring later today to tell us what she wants. The film company will be paying us for use of the place, so I’ve agreed to let them film what they want.

“As you seem to know something about this movie business, could you speak to this Second Unit Director, please? She’ll tell you what is happening and could you then send a memo to all the staff. I’m sure they’ll be pleased to hear about this. Actually, don’t mention the fee to them! I’m sure the film company will come up with some other reward as well.”

When you speak to Caroline Adrian, the Second Unit Director, she says this to you:

“There’s no need for your staff to get too excited. To be honest, we just want to do one short scene in the factory and then one later outside in the car park. The scene we’ll be doing next Thursday is that Steve Thrust will walk down the factory floor and stop in the middle to have a word with someone operating a machine. He’ll then walk back out. We would ask (and your boss has agreed to this) that all your staff just get on with their jobs and don’t look at the camera. We’ll probably have to do a few “takes”; this means we’ll need to film it several times from different angles, but we won’t disturb anyone when we do this. By the way, it will be an actor that Steve talks to – this is a speaking part. The film is called “The Cost of Dying”, by the way. The co-star is the actress Salena Malbranque, but she isn’t in the scenes we’ll film at your place.

“Oh yes, we will film an action scene in your car park, as Steve leaves the factory with lots of gun shots and car crashes, but we’ll do this on Sunday morning when the factory is closed, so we can use our own cars and drivers. When the film is finished, we’ll be pleased to put on a free showing in Crossways for the staff.”

You report back to Mr Asif, who says:

“We shouldn’t miss the opportunity to get a bit of publicity here. Please prepare a short article for the *Crossways Gazette*, our local newspaper. I know the Features Editor, and he’ll always publish a short piece for us. Make it no more than 125 words and give us as much favourable publicity as you can.”

Task

- (a) **Write the memo** to be sent to each member of staff, as instructed. (15 marks)
- (b) **Write an article** of no more than 125 words, as instructed (10 marks)
- (25 marks)**