



STAMFORD COLLEGE

FOUNDATION STUDIES IN BUSINESS (SEMESTER 2)

FSBN109 : BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Date : 21 May 2007 (Monday)

Time : 9.30am – 11.30am

Duration : 2 Hours

Instructions to Candidates

Answer FOUR out of FIVE questions.

Please ensure that this examination paper contains FIVE questions on FOUR printed pages before you start the examination.

Books, papers and other written materials are not allowed to be brought into the examination hall. A candidate who violates the examination rules of Stamford College or commits a malpractice will be disqualified from the examination.

Write your Examination Index Number on each page of your answer booklet.

This paper consists of FIVE questions. Candidates are required to attempt any FOUR questions. The total marks allocated for each of the questions are shown in brackets.

Question 1

Jean Simmonds, Personnel Manager of *Alpha Electronics, 80 -90 Zeus Street, Manchester GG73 6LP*, says to you, "Will you write a memo from me to Simon Clark, my deputy, please? When he returns from his holidays next Monday I shall be starting a three-day conference at Harrogate. Ask him to interview the four candidates for the clerical vacancy in the Mailing Section on Monday, starting at 14:30. He should make an appointment if there is a suitable candidate. The candidates have been invited for interview and the application forms and references are in the middle drawer of my desk. I'll leave my desk keys with you. On Tuesday at 10:00 Gerry Rhodes, the union representative, has an appointment to see me. If Simon can deal with whatever Gerry wants, I shall be grateful. If not, I'll make another appointment to see Gerry when I'm back on Thursday."

Write the memorandum for her.

(25 marks)

Question 2

Your employer is giving a talk entitled "Running Your Own Business" at a local club. She says to you, "Will you, please, list the main points about being your own boss and the misconceptions people have about it from this leaflet? It will help me in giving my talk."

There are all kinds of reasons for wanting to be your own boss. Some people like the idea of there being no one in authority over them, telling them what to do, saying their work is not up to standard, turning down their ideas, or insisting on methods that seem pointless. Others are attracted by the thought of deciding their own hours or days of work.

Running your own business gives you the status of being self-employed, perhaps also of being a company director. There is the general feeling of independence and that your income – and perhaps even your way of life – is in your own hands. Some are attracted to the idea of starting a small enterprise and making it grow, much as a gardener tends his plot and makes a number of plants come to maturity, each in turn creating further growth.

If you are your own boss, say some people, work is much more pleasant. You can get someone else to do the less interesting jobs and you are not bogged down in annoying details. Work becomes easier, too, because you can get someone else to do the more difficult tasks.

Many others want to set up a little business of their own to occupy their spare time and as a pleasant way of earning extra money from work they like doing.

These are just a few of the reasons commonly given. Some have good sense behind them; others are based on completely false ideas. Most contain some element of truth which gets magnified out of proportion and seized upon without it being borne in mind that there are points to consider as well.

As with so much else in life, running an enterprise of your own entails disadvantages as well as advantages. It is surprising how rarely people stop to consider in real detail just what the drawbacks are, yet this is an essential first step for anyone thinking about whether it is even practicable for him to be his own boss.

An important reason why there is such glamour about being in charge of your own business is that when you are working for someone else, many of the petty irritations of life as well as the chore of often having to get down to work that you do not feel like doing at that particular time, become associated with being an employee. There is a feeling that if only you were your own boss, life would immediately become infinitely pleasurable and free of irksome detail.

This is almost entirely misleading. Many of the little annoyances probably have nothing to do with being an employee; being interrupted when you have at last immersed yourself in some disagreeable task, missing the bus when you are in a hurry, feeling tired or in other ways not really up to working hard at the moment, and so on. These occur just as much when you are your own master. In fact, they tend to happen much more often, while at the same time, their effects can be far more upsetting.

There are very real drawbacks to running your own business, though for the right kind of person, immeasurable benefits also.

Write the list.

(25 marks)

Question 3

You work at the *Hospitality Hotel*, Bath Road, Harrogate, Yorkshire HG2 3NF. The telephone and fax numbers are 01423 5655354 and 01423 56553264. You suggest to the Manager, Mr David Loyd, that it would be a good idea to stress some aspects of security in a notice to be put in all bedrooms. He looks at your notes and asks you to **write a notice** under his name.

Here are your notes:

Hotel cannot accept responsibility for thefts or for items lost / damaged.

Lock room when going out.

If guests have anything valuable or important – hand item in at reception for safekeeping in hotel's safe

Hotel responsible only if hotel staff are negligent

Outside doors are locked at 23:00 at night. If guests forget their keys (guests are given one when they register) they should ring the bell which is to the right of the front door.

Remind guests not to leave valuables and important documents in their cars in the car park.

Draw up the notice to be put in all bedrooms.

(25 marks)

Question 4

To extend its trading activities, *Damai D-I-Y Sdn Bhd.*, is to open a chain of superstores throughout the country. The first one will open Subang Jaya in July 2007. The exact date will be announced in the local papers

Store will supply both tradesmen and general public especially the DIY enthusiasts.

Comprehensive stocks all displayed on one floor – special discounts for the 100 customers – traditional and contemporary kitchens/bathrooms on permanent display – planning service available - no waiting, enormous stock held and or obtained within a few days – everything to install a complete new bathroom or kitchen - plumbing and electrical fittings – paints, adhesives, sealants, tiles, wall and floor coverings, etc – each department supervised by expert, - helpful staff – parking for 600 cars – 5 minutes walk from LRT station – Metro bus nos. 20, 22 stop outside – free delivery of all orders over RM 250 otherwise small charge.

Credit facilities at very low interest rates available – no interest payable in first year – open 7 days a week – 10 am to 10 pm.

You are employed in the Marketing Department of *Damai D-I-Y Sdn Bhd* and your Sales Manager, Mr Thomas Lee has asked you to compose a letter for circulation to householders prior to the opening.

Write the sales letter that Mr Lee requires.

(25 marks)

Question 5

Read the following passage and then answer the questions that follow it, using your own words as much as possible. Your answers should be written concisely in **complete** sentences, unless you are told otherwise.

Business Meetings

A committee normally comprises between three and twenty members. It is headed by a chairperson who has the power to control the discussion. The abilities of the chairperson are likely to be reflected in the effectiveness of the committee. He (or she) will be expected to identify the problem for the committee members, consider the available facts with them, and encourage them to express their views.

The use of a committee in business can be advocated whenever the normal chain of command is inappropriate. The committee allows people from different departments and specialisms to come together to deal with problems of common concern. They also allow people from different levels in the organisational hierarchy to meet and confer, for example in a joint consultation committee where representatives from the management side can consult directly with worker representatives.

The committee is essentially a communication device. The problem in a large organisation is to ensure a two-way flow of instructions (downwards) and feedback (upwards). It is often possible for a management to delegate the responsibility for making decisions in non-critical areas to committees, though it is important to remember that the Board of Directors (at the apex of the organisational hierarchy) is also a committee and functions accordingly. Minutes are required to be kept of the decisions taken at the meeting which become a record of the business transacted and the decisions reached. The proceedings are required to follow the order set out in the agenda which is distributed to the members before the meeting.

Under no circumstances can voting take place unless a quorum (a minimum number of members) is present. The quorum will be laid down in the committee's term of reference. A motion (or resolution) is the term used to describe the point in the meeting when a decision is being considered. One of the members will normally make the proposition and will the need to find a seconder – someone who supports it. The wording of the resolutions is very important as the committee will be bound by it if more than half of the members present vote in favour. The only way a member can avoid the collective responsibility for the decision is by resigning.

Another of meeting used in business is what sometimes described as a 'command meeting'. In this case the manager calls his subordinates together and uses the occasion either to tell them or to listen and exchange ideas with them. It is a very effective way of ensuring that the team is kept fully informed. Some managers have these meetings on a regular basis, say every Friday afternoon at three o'clock, so that the coming week's programme can be discussed. The meeting can coincide with a tea break and this gives the group an opportunity to socialise before getting down to the serious business. These meetings are in no way comparable with the committee meetings since they are very much a vehicle for the individual manager. He can use the time to sell ideas to his team, seek their aid in finding solutions to problems, or simply inform and instruct them.

From the workers' point of view perhaps the most important meetings are those conducted by their trade unions. As well as the local branch meetings there are regional and national executive committee meetings which are all conducted on a formal basis. Shop stewards committees operate at factory level and play an important role in communicating workers' grievances to management.

Having read the above passage, **answer the following questions in your own words.**

- a) Why does the chairperson of a committee need to be chosen carefully? (3 marks)
- b) When is the formation of a committee justified? (3 marks)
- c) Who would you expect to find in a Joint Consultation Committee? (3 marks)
- d) In what sense is the Board of Directors a committee? (3 marks)
- e) How does the committee reach a decision? (3 marks)
- f) How is the decision recorded? (3 marks)
- g) What is a command meeting? How does it differ from a committee? (4 marks)
- h) What options are open to the member of a committee who strongly disagree with a resolution passed by the majority of the committee's members? (3 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

– END OF PAPER –