

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

Principal Learning

Manufacturing & Product Design
MP201 Paper 01

Running a Manufacturing Business

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Running a Manufacturing Business

General comments

The paper produced a good range of responses. Lower ability candidates sometimes gave generic responses and so did not gain full marks. Higher ability candidates attempted more questions, including the more demanding questions at the end of the paper and were able to produce responses that were detailed. These responses were specific to the question being asked.

It was encouraging to see candidates using appropriate exam techniques to help them identify the key responses required for each type of question and that this series, candidates attempted to respond to nearly all questions including the more demanding calculation questions.

Question 1 was answered correctly by the majority of candidates as 'micro' or 'sole trader'. However a few candidates incorrectly answered with the name of an organisational structure e.g. hierarchical or centralised.

Question 2(a) was answered correctly by many with 'secretary' being the most popular answer.

Question 2(b) was again answered correctly by many with 'manager' being the most popular answer.

Question 3 was answered very well by many, with candidates able to describe the role of the planning function. A few candidates responded incorrectly by describing the term 'to plan' and answers included how they planned their school work.

Question 4 was generally poorly answered with candidates failing to describe how the sales and distribution functions co-operated, and answering instead by describing the role of each individual function.

Question 5 was answered correctly by the majority of candidates, with many gaining maximum marks for this question.

Question 6 was answered correctly by many although a few candidates are still confusing the definition of 'sustainable enterprise' with environmental concerns – a sustainable enterprise is one that maintains company profits.

Question 7 asked candidates to describe two differences between a partnership and a sole trader. A few candidates were able to answer this correctly - the number of people involved in each type of business being the key difference. Some candidates incorrectly responded with answers describing the advantages of working with other businesses, or 'partnering up' with another company. Sole traders and partnerships are key types of business structures for many small

businesses and should be understood by all candidates.

Question 8 asked candidates to describe three benefits of a staff development programme, and many answers partially described two or three benefits. However candidates were not gaining the full marks available as they did not fully expand on any benefits identified.

Question 9(a) Many candidates gained full marks on this question by correctly identifying two pieces of information that should be included with a product to ensure customers know how to use it safely. Popular answers included adding instructions for use or assembly information, and warning labels highlighting what age group the product is designed for.

Question 9(b) Many answered incorrectly with references to health and safety.

Question 10 and Question 11 were answered correctly by many although some candidates incorrectly identified tax or VAT as possible answers.

Question 12(a) was correctly answered by many with candidates able to identify the organisational structure as being tall or hierarchical.

Question 12(b) A range of diagrams were drawn to illustrate the new organisational business structure required for this question with some candidates failing to read the question correctly and drawing many-layered hierarchical structures similar to the one shown before the change.

Question 13 Answers indicated that candidates do not have a complete understanding of span of control and its disadvantages. Centres are reminded that span of control is one of the key concepts within understanding how manufacturing businesses are structured.

Question 14 Answers indicated that candidates now understand VAT and its influence on company decision making.

Question 15 Many candidates attempted all parts to this question, with many correctly answering part (a) although few gained full marks for their calculations in parts (b) and (c). Many answers to part (d) did not reflect the security of investment of this situation.

Question 16 saw many partially explained answers with many candidates failing to identify that the number of parts being returned is not only increasing but increasing at 5% each month. Some answers identified a possible problem with manufacturing quality.

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