

Pearson LCCI

English for Business

Level 3

Friday 6 June 2014

Time: 3 hours

Paper Reference

ASE3041

You will need:

An answer book

Instructions

- Do **not** open this examination paper until you are told to do so by the supervisor.
- Use **black/blue** ink or ball-point pen
 - *pencil can only be used for graphs, charts, diagrams, etc.*
- Ensure your answers are written clearly.
- Begin your answer to each question on a new page.
- Write on both sides of the page.
- All answers must be correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.
- If you need more space, use the additional sheets provided. Write your name, candidate number and question number on each sheet and attach them to the inside of your answer book. State, on the front of your answer book, the number of additional sheets used.
- Answer **all** questions.
- When you finish, cross through any rough notes and preparatory work.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 100.
- There are four questions in this question paper
 - *each question carries equal marks.*
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
 - *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- There is credit for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- You may use an English or bilingual dictionary.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers carefully if you have time at the end.

Turn over ►

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Answer ALL questions.

1 Situation

You are employed as an administrator at the North Bridgetown Health Centre. This centre provides health and social services for the people who live in the north of the town of Bridgetown. Some of the doctors who look after the patients live in staff accommodation at the centre.

The centre is located on a main road, next door to a large supermarket, Val-U-Stores. This morning the Health Centre Practice Manager, Dr Azim Khan, showed you a letter he has received from the owners of the supermarket. The contents of the letter appear below.

Dear Dr Khan

Proposed Petrol Station

We at Val-U-Stores always attempt to provide the best possible service for our customers. We are now receiving an increasing number of requests that we should provide a petrol filling station beside the supermarket. As you will be aware, most of our competitors in the area provide this service, so we have decided to seek permission to build a filling station in our car park beside the entrance to Bridgetown Highway. We would, of course, lose some customer parking spaces but we believe that the car park will still provide a more than adequate number of spaces. The car park is rarely filled at present.

As we value the good relationship we have with neighbouring businesses and organisations, we hope that we will have your support when we submit our formal application. We would be delighted if you could let us know your views on this proposal. We hope to submit our planning application very soon so if you are able to make a prompt response, I shall be very grateful.

Yours sincerely

Simon Fisher

(Mr Simon Fisher)
Store Manager

Dr Khan said this to you:

“This is very interesting. I think we should respond and I’d like you to **draft a letter for my signature**. Please have a word with Mrs Cortez, our Chief Receptionist, and ask her to consult some of our patients when they attend the centre. It might also be helpful to have a word with our resident doctors.

“My view is that we should keep an open mind on this, but we should let Simon know what our patients who live nearby feel. Of course, there is a very big issue. As you know, our car park is very small and we’ve had a sort of unofficial arrangement with Val-U-Stores that staff and patients can use their car park when ours is full. When you write, please ask very politely if this can continue – you know, say how much we appreciate this.”

Mrs Cortez makes these notes of her consultation with patients who are residents of the area.

Majority of patients a little worried – they hope our patients can still use Val-U-Stores' car park. Some feel proposed filling station would bring extra traffic to the area – Bridgetown Highway always very busy – more congestion if there is a filling station? – although some patients said that it might just be existing shoppers who use the filling station and not additional customers – could Val-U-Stores clarify this? – some concern about when tankers deliver petrol – suggested that this is often done at night – if so, could be noisy in the area.

Some residents did welcome new station – said supermarket petrol is often a little cheaper – they wonder what Val-U-Stores' pricing policy will be?

A resident doctor said this:

“Well, if we can get cheap petrol next door, this is great! But seriously, the traffic on the Bridgetown Highway is very heavy. With increased traffic, more accidents are inevitable. And I would hate to think the filling station would be one of these that remain open all night. It could be noisy for us if this is the case. Of course, we must make sure that our people can continue to use the supermarket car park.”

The address of the supermarket is: Val-U-Stores, 1689 Bridgetown Highway, Bridgetown, BH6 9ST.

Task

Write the letter for Dr Khan's signature as requested. You can assume that the Health Centre's headed notepaper is used but you should include all other components of a business letter.

(Total for Question 1 = 25 marks)

2 Situation

You are employed as an administrator in an advertising agency. In recent months, some staff have left the agency to work elsewhere or become self-employed. The Manager of the agency, Mrs Paulina Zajac, recently said this to you:

“A problem is starting to emerge here. We expect there to be staff turnover – it’s inevitable that colleagues will move on to other posts. But recently, they appear to be taking our clients with them when they move. This is a significant loss of business for us, and we need to investigate if there is anything we can do. I’ve heard from friends that other companies build into staff contracts something called a restrictive covenant to prevent this happening. Could you please look into this, and **let me have a report** that I can present to the Directors?”

“It would be helpful to know what these covenants involve, and what advantages there might be if we introduced them. The Directors will make the final decision, of course.”

The notes of your research are as follows.

You spoke to a business lawyer and recorded his comments.

“A restrictive covenant is a clause in the contract of a member of staff to prevent them from doing something against the company’s interests. So you could insert a clause to prevent your staff from ‘stealing’ your clients; please excuse me using this emotive term, but I am a lawyer, and it really is stealing. The law states that this clause has to be ‘reasonable’. If someone leaves your organisation and several years later a former client of yours approaches their new company, it would be difficult to enforce a restrictive covenant. It is acceptable if you place a time limit – say six months or a year. This deters the clients from moving immediately to the former staff member’s new company.

“It is also helpful to include a ‘non-solicitation’ clause, which means that your former employee should not approach their ex-clients. If, by chance, the client later decides to move to the new company, then this is lawful.

“You always have to be very careful in drawing up a covenant. You should get a lawyer to do it for you – yes, I know this is something you would expect me to say! But remember, if someone breaks a covenant, then this is not a criminal offence and you, not the police, must take them to court. A covenant that is unreasonable, such as one of excessive duration, will not be enforced by the court.”

You speak to the Manager of a similar company to yours and the notes of your conversation are as follows.

Company introduced restrictive covenants a few years ago – applies to all staff, who should not engage former clients with new company for 12 months. Works well. Existence of covenant seems to deter staff who might think of doing it. Rarely had to go to court to enforce it – but have been successful when they did.

A contact from another company sent you the following message by email.

From: John Besag (Manager, Besag Agency)
To: A Candidate
Subject: Restrictive Covenants

Hello. I got your message and I have to say, I'd be careful before you introduce them. We tried this some time ago and gave them up. Taking legal action to enforce them is incredibly expensive – I'll let you know just how much the next time we meet, but we realised it was cheaper to lose a client than to go through the courts.

Have you thought of other strategies to stop your staff stealing your clients? We have a system which we call 'Staff Rotation'. We make sure our clients do not have the same dedicated member of staff working with them for more than 12 months, so that the connection doesn't become too close.

We also keep a very close eye on our staff, as some have been known to try to steal our clients even before they leave us! It sounds remarkable, but one of our staff was making offers to clients even before he left to become self-employed.

Task

Write the report as requested by your Manager, Mrs Zajac.

(Total for Question 2 = 25 marks)

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3 Situation

You are employed in a small, but growing business. Many rival businesses in the area have a presence on various social media sites and staff from your business believe that this should be part of its media strategy.

You have found the following article on this topic. Read the article and then answer the questions that follow to demonstrate your understanding of the points made.

Business and the Social Media

It is tempting to associate social media sites with personal 'chat', often of an ephemeral or trivial nature. However, there are many good reasons why businesses should have a presence on one or more sites. Establishing a presence does not incur a cost to the business, which is not the case with most promotional methods, and there can be many rewards.

Choosing your site

If you create a presence, you then have access to a 'following'. This is your audience, so your first consideration must be, what is the intended audience? Different sites attract different types of audience; there are sites devoted to serious business personnel, others attract a particular type of person, perhaps of a specific age group. A cursory examination of these sites should assist you in deciding who uses them, but if you have any doubts you can ask your existing or potential customers which site they use.

Use of the site

You might be disappointed if you decide to use your site purely as a means of boosting sales, although that will always be the long-term aim. In the short term, it is your opportunity to engage with customers, help to create the image of your business and build up some brand loyalty.

Username

It might seem obvious to state that your business requires a username so people can access your contributions. It is helpful if your username is the same as, or close to, your business name. It is often suggested that businesses should sign up initially with all social media sites, before focusing on one or two. Your username is then established should you wish to engage with other sites later.

Links

Joining a site does not make many technical demands on your organisation, but there are still points to consider. First and foremost, you must provide clear and reliable links to your website, which must be updated regularly.

Update regularly

Users of social media sites are not renowned for their patience, so it is vital that you provide regular updates. As you are attempting to build up customer loyalty, you should not disappoint your followers because of a lack of content. This need not be as demanding as it appears to be. There are tools you can use to submit many contributions at the same time, but then allow them to be posted at regular intervals. The technical term for this is 'queuing up' your submissions.

Engage with your followers

You must remember that there are now literally hundreds of millions of social media followers and they expect posts to be interesting and worthy of consideration. The biggest turn-off on social media sites is to be boring and, therefore, what you post must be exciting and dynamic. This can happen when you make the communication with your customers a two-way process. Your content will then not appear to be pure self-promotion, but a genuine interaction. For example, you can use social media to gauge customers' opinion when you are making a decision, such as making a change to the packaging of a product. Some engagement might just be for fun; for example, a clothing company started a campaign in which followers submitted pictures of themselves wearing the clothing in famous locations all over the world.

Evaluate success

All businesses have access to a great deal of information on how many followers they have and how much they share or respond to your posts. This is an area where you must constantly review your actions and policies. In the words of the old saying, you must run fast to stay where you are!

Task

Answer the following questions, **in your own words as far as possible**, to show that you have understood what you have read in the article.

- (a) What is meant by “personal ‘chat’, often of an ephemeral or trivial nature”? (3)
- (b) How should a business choose which social media sites are the most appropriate for it to use? (3)
- (c) What are the differences between the long-term aims and the short-term aims of establishing a social media presence? (4)
- (d) Why is it suggested that the business should sign up to all social media sites at first, even if the intention is to use only one or two of them? (2)
- (e) What do you believe is meant by “users of social media sites are not renowned for their patience”? (2)
- (f) Describe how ‘queuing up’ works in the context of producing contributions for sites. (3)
- (g) What is meant by “the biggest turn-off on social media sites is to be boring”? (2)
- (h) How can you make the communication with your customers a ‘two-way’ process? What examples of this are given? (3)
- (i) What does the writer mean by the phrase “you must run fast to stay where you are”? In what context does he use it? (3)

(Total for Question 3 = 25 marks)

4 Situation

You are employed as an administrator in the Sales and Marketing Department of a large company, TEL International. The company is expanding and is introducing a new and exciting range of products. The sales staff are grouped into teams in various locations all over the world, and each is headed by a local sales manager.

Each of these local sales managers has been given a budget and asked to organise local presentations for existing and potential customers in that area.

The Company's Head of Sales and Marketing, Mrs Agnes Toth, said this to you:

"As you know, our sales managers are highly experienced and we have many excellent members in each of their teams. However, I'd like you to **send a memo** to each local sales manager to advise them how we expect the presentations to be carried out. You can also ask if they need training on any aspect of these as we can provide this back at headquarters. Please be very tactful in what you say. These people know their local areas and what is best for them.

"Have a word with Tom [Tom Goldberg, Deputy Head of Marketing] and Rose Gilbert, who's the catering expert in our department. They will be able to tell you what is expected of our local sales managers."

Rose Gilbert says this to you:

"Some would say that providing food and refreshments is the most important aspect of a presentation! I don't agree entirely with this, but visitors will gain a very bad impression of the company if there are problems with the catering.

"I'd say, always get a reputable local company to provide the refreshments. They can advise you on what goes well in the area, but you still have to make some decisions. We expect these presentations to be for about a couple of hours so if it is the morning, a drink and a snack on arrival would be good. Afternoon sessions could end with this. Make sure you have a full range of food and drink available – you could have people who are vegetarian attending the session, or those who can't or won't drink tea or coffee. I'll give you one more tip – a lot of business can be done when you meet customers over a drink or snack, so allocate some time, preferably after your presentation, when you can meet people."

You meet Tom Goldberg and make the following notes.

Venue

Look for suitable venue – of appropriate size with facilities you require – make sure booking is confirmed in writing to avoid any double booking/confusion. Choose venue that is accessible – adequate car parking – check for any emergency procedures (e.g. fire drills)

Corporate image

All documentation given out must be either standard company advertising materials – or acceptable to Head Office – signs with company logo must be displayed prominently. Have sufficient literature to give to all attending

Equipment

All equipment to be used should be tested in advance – to make sure it is compatible with venue's systems – have a technician on hand in case anything goes wrong

Speakers

Make sure anyone who is presenting is qualified and comfortable with speaking in public – they should prepare and practise speeches – especially for timing – training can be given for less experienced presenters – arrange this through Head Office

Signing in

All who attend should give name and address – useful to build up database of customers and potential customers

'Post Mortem'

After each session – full evaluation of what went well and what did not is needed – report back to Head Office with evaluation of session

REMEMBER! Head Office can provide training in any aspect of presentations.

Task

Write the memo to send to all local sales managers.

(Total for Question 4 = 25 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 100 MARKS

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