

Pearson LCCI

English for Business

Level 3

Wednesday 19 November 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 attached.
- 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 by *Xtra Taxis*, a large taxi service. There are many taxi providers in your area and *Xtra Taxis* is keen to remain competitive.

The Company Manager, Mr Adam Wysocki, has shown you a letter he has received from an organisation, *Massive Media*, that is launching what it refers to as 'a sophisticated in-taxi advertising scheme' in the area. Mr Wysocki says this to you:

The letter from *Massive Media* is very interesting. They want us to install display screens in our taxi cabs so that local businesses will be able to promote their products and provide messages to passengers on the screens. The system seems to be well produced, with all kinds of other information and features, to support what appears on the screens. It seems like a great idea. I'd like you to do some research for me and then write to the Promotions Manager of *Massive Media*.

You can say we are interested but you'd better not promise anything at this stage. I've got a couple of points that I'd like to clarify. They don't pay us when they install the systems in our taxis but, as part of the deal, they'll make a promotional video about our company that we can show on the screen. You'd better confirm that this is the case. Also, I'd like to know if we have any control over the advertisements shown. We carry a lot of children during school hours, for example, so I would not like it if there were inappropriate things on the screen.

Also, please have a word with Michael Chynoweth [Company Operations Manager]. I think he's had experience of something like this before he joined us.

You speak to Michael Chynoweth and he says this:

Oh yes! I've come across this type of thing before, and I can't say I was impressed. It was a few years ago now and maybe technology has improved, but the screens did break down a lot! It was really annoying for our passengers and it was a nuisance for our drivers as they had to report this.

What else can I say? We must be very sure that the noise levels from the screens are not distracting to our drivers, of course, and I'd like to think that we have some control over which companies advertise in our cabs. We don't want to offend any passengers. To be fair, the media company I came across before, which wasn't *Massive Media*, did have a range of advertisements for different times of day. You know, early morning shoppers are not the same as night-time revellers. I hope *Massive Media* can do something similar.

I should say that when I was in New York recently, some of the famous 'yellow cabs' had these screens, which advertised local attractions like theatres and restaurants. The Americans do this sort of thing very well and it was very helpful to passengers. I wonder if *Massive Media* could do something similar.

If you're going to contact this organisation, it would be very helpful if you could find out how many companies and organisations have been signed up to advertise. They might be reluctant to tell us, but we can ask.

Massive Media are based at Generator House, Railway Street, Darway City DA7J PP3.
The Promotions Manager is Ms Raquel Suarez.

Task

Write a letter to Ms Suarez as requested. You can assume that your company's headed notepaper is used.

(Total for Question 1 = 25 marks)

2 Situation

You are employed as an Administrator for *Southern Press*, a company that publishes local newspapers. *Southern Press* charges a standard price for all its newspapers in different areas and this price has not increased for two years. There is now a debate in the company; as some costs have increased, some staff believe that the price of the paper should be increased, whilst others believe that it is better to maintain the present price.

The *Southern Press* Company Manager, Mr David Hall, says this to you:

“There seem to be two distinct ideas about whether we should increase our prices at the moment. I don’t have any strong feelings either way, but it would be very helpful if I could put a balanced report to the next Management Committee Meeting. I’d like you to have a meeting with Alexander Grant [Finance Manager] who’s keen to put up our price and Agnes Hobot [Marketing Manager] who is against this. Please let me have a clear summary of the arguments so the committee can make a decision. I don’t expect you to make any recommendations, of course!”

This is the conversation of your meeting with Mr Grant and Mrs Hobot as you recorded it.

You: I think you know why I’ve brought you together. Mr Grant, will you start, please? I know you believe that we should increase our prices.

Mr G: Yes, I do. I wish we didn’t have to – it would be great if we could hold our prices to their current level, but it’s just not possible. Costs are increasing all the time and we’ve held our prices for two years. Our customers must realise that prices have to go up sometimes. I would suggest about 5%.

You: Right, Mrs Hobot, I believe you don’t agree.

Mrs H: Well, I understand Alexander’s point, but I’m concerned about our competition. As we all know, there are many local papers. If we increase our prices, our customers will simply go to one of our competitors.

Mr G: That’s debatable, Agnes. We do have a lot of brand loyalty and I’m sure we would not lose many customers.

Mrs H: Brand loyalty only goes so far. You can’t blame customers who are balancing their own budgets, and who will simply look for a cheaper alternative. And you must bear in mind that there are so many other sources of local news now, that many customers might just give up buying newspapers altogether if they have to pay more.

Mr G: Yes, I know there are some risks, but we must face facts. Our costs are rising – newsprint is 20% more expensive now than it was a year ago – staff wages have risen, transport is more expensive – oh, I could go on. Unless we can increase our revenue, we will be in real trouble.

Mrs H: That’s the problem, Alexander. I don’t think raising prices will increase revenue as we’ll sell fewer papers. Perhaps we could increase our revenues in other ways – maybe more people could be persuaded to advertise in our papers. Maybe we could reduce our costs.

Mr G: Agnes, we've gone as far as we can with efficiency savings and cost reductions over the last few years. I don't think there is the potential to reduce our costs any more. Yes, we could push for more advertising, but all our competitors are trying to do this.

Mrs H: Well, I think we should try to look at alternatives before we increase our prices. Do we not have any cash in reserve to cover costs in the short term? We might be able to increase our prices at some time, particularly if our rivals do, but it would be great if we didn't have to do this just now.

Mr G: Oh yes, we have reasonable reserves, but we should keep them in reserve. We might face some real emergencies in the future.

Mrs H: I still say we should keep our prices stable for as long as we can, to maintain our customer base. We should look to cost savings or other ways of generating revenues.

Mr G: Sorry, Agnes. The time has come to increase our prices or we could face real financial problems.

You: Well, thank you very much for your views. I realise that this will not be an easy decision.

Task

Write the report, using any appropriate style.

(Total for Question 2 = 25 marks)

3 Situation

You work for a large manufacturing company and recently your manager said this to you:

"I've been doing quite a bit of reading recently on the subject of emotional intelligence, which is all about human behaviour and relationships, and I've heard that there is a very good conference about to take place locally on this topic. I'm hoping to attend part of this but I'm not able to hear the major speech, by a university professor, about how you might be able to detect when people are not telling the truth. This could be interesting and it would be a very useful skill for members of our staff to acquire. I'd like you to attend this speech and we can then discuss the ideas in it."

A transcript of the speech follows. After you have read the speech, answer the questions that follow to demonstrate your understanding of the issues raised.

Good afternoon. My name is Professor Ernst Kontek. I'm pleased to see so many of you have opted to hear my talk about how you can spot if someone is deceiving you. I'd better make sure I tell the truth!

(laughter)

First of all, let me dispel a myth. It is widely believed that there are those with a natural, instinctive ability to tell if someone is not being honest. I have rarely encountered such a person. Spotting deception is something that can be learned, although, as with any skill, some people prove to be more proficient than others. I'm often asked a question at this point. If spotting deception is a skill that can be learned, is it possible to cover up the signs that you are telling lies? Well, the answer is, not entirely. Many of the signs of deception are involuntary and cannot be disguised.

So what are these signs? The answer is that when we tell lies we conceal an emotion. This causes what we refer to as 'micro expressions' that affect your body language. Some of these are small expressions that might not be noticed unless the observer is well trained. For example, the eyeballs of a deceiver can flicker in a particular direction, often momentarily. Similarly, the rate of the blinking of the eye can increase in speed when someone tells a deliberate untruth and there is a tendency for the pulse rate to rise. This is not always easy to identify, but it can lead to unnatural body movements, particularly in the extremities of the body. A person standing might shuffle their feet.

There are many more tell-tale signs that I don't have time to mention in detail. But I will give a word of warning. People might hide emotions for reasons other than pure deception. For example, recognising when someone is telling a lie is a very useful skill for a police officer when questioning a suspect. During an interrogation certain signs suggesting deception might occur, but the reasons behind them could be different. It could be that the suspect is trying to hide anger, grief or simply a massive level of stress.

So how can this be of assistance in the business world? Of course, the skill of spotting deception can be very valuable, particularly when there is a crucial interface, such as that between salespeople and customers. I guarantee that sales staff who undergo training will be much more effective. They will have a better idea of when to withdraw from a sales pitch by recognising customer deception.

But there are other circumstances in which this is important. For example, a human resources manager told me recently how much the effectiveness of staff appraisal had improved when he could recognise the veracity of the respondent.

There is another aspect to this topic, of course. My grandfather, a very wise man, always used to say 'liars must have good memories'. You can tell if people are trying to deceive you because what they say is inconsistent or does not make sense. If you always tell the truth, what you say will be consistent. This has nothing to do with emotional intelligence but is much more to do with unskilled liars. However, some people are able to lie in a convincing manner. If they weren't, people like me would be out of a job!

(Applause)

Task

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

- (a) Why did the audience laugh at the beginning of Professor Kontek's talk? (3)
- (b) What did Professor Kontek mean when he used the phrase "let me dispel a myth"? (Paragraph 2 of the speech.) (3)
- (c) What does Professor Kontek believe about the way in which people achieve the ability to recognise that someone is telling lies? (3)
- (d) Why is it not entirely possible for someone to hide the fact that he/she is not telling the truth? (2)
- (e) What is meant by the term micro expressions? (Paragraph 3 of the speech.) (2)
- (f) How could apparent signs that someone is being dishonest not be reliable? (4)
- (g) Give **two** examples from the speech of benefits to a business of being able to recognise when someone is being dishonest. (4)
- (h) What does Professor Kontek mean when he commends his grandfather's saying "liars must have good memories"? (Paragraph 7 of the speech.) (4)

(Total for Question 3 = 25 marks)

4 Situation

You are employed in the national headquarters of a retail company, *TEL Stores*, which has branches in all larger towns and cities in your country. It has been company policy, in recent years, to allow each local branch a great deal of independence. National management believes that local managers know more about their own areas.

The company's Public Relations Manager, Mr Peter Czornick, said this to you:

"Management has taken another decision about devolving responsibilities to branches. I must say, I'm less sure about this, but I hope it will all be OK. It's been decided that branch managers can handle press releases entirely on their own in future. As you know, at the moment any releases produced locally must be submitted to us at head office before they are issued, but from the first of next month, branches won't need to do that.

I'd like you to send an internal memo to all branch managers to announce this. You had better make it clear that we'll still be here to offer any advice, but, well, otherwise they are on their own! We will still supply a standard press release form – you know, the one that allows you to write in who it is from, who to contact for more information and the date the news can be released. That should help our managers, but I am a little worried that some will be better than others at writing these releases. I think it would be very helpful if we added some guidance on writing press releases in the memo. We can have a talk about this later and I'll give you some ideas."

You subsequently speak to Mr Czornick on how to write a good press release and your notes are as follows.

Press releases – great for publicity – many newspapers welcome them as it helps to fill their pages.

Start with most important items – if papers have limited space they will cut out details further down the article.

Target releases to particular papers – see what sort of things they have published previously and in what style.

Don't use technical language – careful with acronyms and abbreviations – will everyone understand these?

Add a quote if possible – maybe halfway down release – adds interest.

Don't use too complicated language – make it quite lively.

Keep in mind what you are trying to achieve.

Don't go beyond 250–300 words – usually enough.

Task

Write the memo to go to each branch manager as requested.

(Total for Question 4 = 25 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 100 MARKS