

Section A - General Conversation

Section B - Discussion of Reading Text

CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Instructions

Examiner to:

- give candidate the Reading Text to study (allow 1½ minutes maximum)
- ask questions based on the document in order to test comprehension
- explain any key words that the candidate may be unsure about

Candidate to:

- study the Reading Text
- engage in discussion and explain key vocabulary and concepts as required

Reading Text (for Examiner's reference)

CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Recent results from the Workplace Employee Relations Survey, the largest survey of its kind in the world, show that firms with modern management practices perform better than those without them. The main findings were:

- modern management practices lead to improved financial performance, fewer resignations, less dismissals, higher employee commitment and better manager-employer relations
- job satisfaction and employee commitment were higher when employees felt they had some influence over the work they do, when management treated them fairly, and when their views were taken seriously

Analysis of interviews with senior managers revealed the following:

- 90% said that management of people rather than processes had become a higher priority in the last three years
- 97% thought that training was critical to the success of the organisation
- 80% said that it was essential to create high performing teams, and to involve employees in all aspects of the organisation.

However, despite these obvious benefits of adopting best management practice, the majority of workplaces still do not have enough of these in place. The survey found that only 14% of workplaces had more than eight modern management practices in place.

CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Examiner's questions

1. **According to this survey how do firms with modern management practices perform?**
 - *Better than those without them*
2. **What were some of the main findings?**
 - *improved performance, better relationships between managers and employees, fewer resignations and less dismissals*
 - *employees are more committed and job satisfaction is higher when employees felt they had some influence over the work they do and are treated fairly.*
3. **What aspect of management has become a higher priority over the last three years?**
 - *Management of people*
4. **What is thought to be crucial to the success of an organisation?**
 - *Training, creating high performing teams and involving employees in all aspects of the organisation*
5. **What evidence is given that not many organisations have modern management practices in place?**
 - *The survey found that only 14% of companies have more than eight modern management practices in place*

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section B - Discussion of Reading Text

Reading Text - Candidate's copy

CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section C - Recorded Dialogue

Instructions

Examiner to:

- explain procedure
- play the introduction
- stop the recording after the introduction, allowing the candidate sufficient time to note the speakers' details (and check with the candidate that the sound level is acceptable)
- play the dialogue
- ask the candidate to give a summary of the dialogue (see **key points** below)
- ask any necessary follow-up questions and ask for the candidate's opinion on the issues raised in the dialogue (see **opinion questions** below)
- take in all notes made by the candidate

Candidate to:

- listen to the recording (and make notes if they so wish)
- outline the **key points** of the dialogue
- answer any **follow-up questions**
- give **opinions** as requested

KEY POINTS

- the relationship between the speakers and the reason for the meeting
- reference to the new teamwork project and the difference from before
- reference to the new focus groups and the ideas that have been put forward
- reference to the survey on management practice
- Karen's suggestion for cross-functional team training
- Clive's attitude
- reference to writing a draft proposal

OPINION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think there would have been teething problems for the new team?
- 2 Do you think that workers should be more involved in managing their own work?
- 3 Why does the survey suggest that training is such a top priority?
- 4 Do you think the idea of cross-functional teams is realistic?
- 5 What do you think is Clive's attitude to the idea of cross-functional team training?
- 6 What sort of ideas might come out of the focus groups meetings and internal networks?

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section C - Recorded Dialogue

Tapescript

Clive McKinley is the training and development officer for a bottle manufacturing firm. He is talking to one of his managers, Karen Gibson, about a new teamwork project that she is in charge of.

CLIVE Karen, I'm glad we have this opportunity to talk. So how is the new teamwork project getting on?

KAREN Well, there have been a few teething problems at the start but I think it is slowly starting to come together.

CLIVE Yes, I realise that some of what we are doing now is a fairly new concept for us. After all, our production managers have only been used to looking at the production processes in the past, without really understanding the wider context of what they were doing or how the workers operated as a team.

KAREN Hmm, yes. We always used to think just about the function of the individual role, without considering the way a team worked together or was involved with the company overall. But most of the workers are really welcoming the chance to have their views heard, and it's been quite refreshing really to see the changes which have started to happen.

CLIVE Oh good. What kind of changes?

KAREN Well, we've started weekly focus groups, as you know, to target different aspects of the production process - it's a kind of internal networking between different teams. We've also looked at our own team goals and targets and looked at how they fit in with the company's overall goals and targets. It all seems to have created a good atmosphere for innovative new ideas and ways to streamline and improve what we are doing. It's really great.

CLIVE Sounds like quite a change, doesn't it? It kind of ties in a lot with this survey I read about new management practices. It was saying that companies perform much better when they encourage team working and employee involvement.

KAREN Sounds interesting. What else does this survey say?

CLIVE Well, it says for example that those firms with modern management practices usually have better financial performance, fewer resignations and higher employee commitment.

KAREN Yes, but what exactly do they mean by "modern management practices"? It all sounds a bit vague to me.

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section C - Recorded Dialogue

Tapescript (continued)

CLIVE Well, you know – things like making sure that employees have some influence over the work that they do and that their views are taken seriously. I guess you are making that happen through things like the focus groups which you've put in place and this internal network you were talking about.

KAREN Thanks. There is something you could help me with though.

CLIVE Sure, happy to.

KAREN I think the teams need more training and skills development, and to do that I'd like to see cross-functional teams working in different areas of the factory. I think we'd start to see a real difference then, in terms of performance levels.

CLIVE Cross-functional teams? You mean teams working across different jobs in different areas?

KAREN Absolutely, yes.

CLIVE Okay, but this could be quite costly - and won't they expect to be rewarded for what they might see as increased workload?

KAREN But you said yourself that firms perform much better with higher employee involvement.

CLIVE Yes, I know, I know! And you've just reminded me actually of something else in that survey as well, where they said that 97% of the senior managers thought that training was absolutely essential to the success of an organisation. I'm just not sure about cross-functional teams though.

KAREN Well, I think it's something we could look into. And as a team leader I'd like to put it forward as a suggestion.

CLIVE Hmm - I suppose we could start to look into it. I don't know - I suppose we could possibly write a draft proposal to present to the senior management team.

KAREN Great! I could provide some input with that from the team, if you like.

CLIVE Okay, I'll think about it.

Section D - Business Text

Instructions

Examiner to:

- give the candidate the Business Text to study (allow 2 minutes maximum)
- ask who has written the e-mail and to whom, and what is the basic purpose of the e-mail
- ask the candidate to **summarise the key points** of the e-mail
- ask any follow-up questions to confirm the candidate's comprehension of the text
- ask the candidate to explain 3 to 5 of the underlined words or phrases

Candidate to:

- study the Business Text
- respond to the examiner's questions and give a summary of the **key points**
- respond to any follow-up questions
- explain words or phrases as requested by the examiner

Note: The candidate should retain their copy of the Business Text for reference during Section E (role-play).

Key Points

- It is an e-mail about the proposal for cross-functional team training.
- Clive does not want to take this further for the moment.
- He thinks there needs to be more time for the team to settle and for the internal network to become established first.
- He also needs to provide a clear rationale for the proposal and does not have enough information to do so.
- He is willing to review the situation in six months time.

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section D - Business Text

Examiner's copy

To: karengibson@bottle.com
From: clivemckinley@bottle.com
Re: Cross-functional training proposal

Dear Karen

Thanks for our conversation earlier today. It was very useful to get some insights from you about the new team.

I have thought about your suggestion for cross-functional training and have decided not to take it further for the time being. The reasons for this are as follows:

- I think we should allow a little more time for the teams to settle and for the internal networks to be established before introducing a new training scheme.
- I would need to have a convincing proposal in place for senior management to approve a budget for this. At the moment I do not have enough information to draw up a clear rationale for putting this in place.

In principle I'm sure this is something we can look at in, say, 6 months' time.

Meanwhile I look forward to hearing continuing good news about the team!

Best wishes

Clive

Clive McKinley
Training and Development Officer
Bottle UK
+44 (208) 582 0492

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section D - Business Text

Candidate's copy

To: karengibson@bottle.com
From: clivemckinley@bottle.com
Re: Cross-functional training proposal

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SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section E - Role-play

Instructions

Note: The Business Text from Section D to be retained by the candidate.

Examiner to:

- give the candidate the Cue Card to study (allow 2 minutes maximum)
- initiate (and, if necessary, guide) the role-play

Candidate to:

- participate in the role-play, including the points specified on the Cue Card

CANDIDATE CUE CARD (For examiner reference)

Outline of the role-play

The candidate will play Karen Gibson (team manager)

The examiner will play Clive McKinley (the man she was talking to on the recording)

Candidate instructions

You are having a meeting with Clive McKinley to discuss the e-mail he sent you. You are not happy with his decision not to take the proposal for cross-functional training further.

In addition to responding appropriately to the examiner's questions, you should try to bring up the following issues that are on your mind:

- *You believe it is essential at the very least to draft the proposal*
- *It is important for the teams not to lose momentum.*
- *Some of the ideas which are coming forward from the focus groups actually require cross-functional training to take them forward and implement them*
- *You have already suggested the idea to your team and it was met with great enthusiasm*
- *You think that this will make a real difference to the performance of the bottling plant, and are determined to convince Clive to agree to draft a proposal.*

Examiner instructions

- You believe it is too early to be drafting a proposal for cross-functional training at this stage
- express concern about the cost and the need to provide a clear rationale to get the training budget approved
- stress the importance of having clear deliverables and outcomes from the training scheme, and that these would need to be incorporated into the proposal
- eventually you agree to preliminary actions for putting a proposal draft together

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)

LEVEL 3 – SET A

Section E - Role-play

CANDIDATE CUE CARD

Outline of the role-play

You will play Karen Gibson (team manager)

The examiner will play Clive McKinley (the man she was talking to on the recording)

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