

Level 3 Certificate in Selling and Sales Management



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Annual Qualification Review

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INTRODUCTION

The annual qualification review provides qualification-specific support and guidance to centres. This information is designed to help teachers preparing to teach the subject and to help candidates preparing to take the examination.

The reviews are published in September and take into account candidate performance, demonstrated in both on demand and series examinations, over the 12 months. Global pass rates are published so you can measure the performance of your centre against these.

The review identifies candidate strengths and weaknesses by syllabus topic area and provides examples of good and poorer candidate responses. It should therefore be read in conjunction with details of the structure and learning objectives contained within the syllabus for this qualification found on the website.

The review also identifies any actual or proposed changes to the syllabus or question types together with their implications.

PASS RATE STATISTICS

The following statistics are based on the performance of candidates who took this qualification between 1 January 2011 and 30 September 2011.

Global pass rate 55.64%

Grade distributions

Pass	73%
Credit	26%
Distinction	0.6%

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- understanding roles of a Sales Manager
- impact of internet on selling
- understanding key skills for a telesales training programme
- knowledge of types of sales forecasting

Weaknesses

- lack of understanding of disciplinary procedures
- misunderstanding questions
- insufficient application to the context of the question e.g. electronic equipment

TEACHING POINTS BY SYLLABUS TOPIC

Section A

Syllabus Topic Area 1: The Role of Selling for Profit whilst Retaining Competitive Advantage

Candidates need to show how selling varies in different situations e.g. for business to business or business to government. They must show they understand the use of different forms of communications e.g. mobile phones or call centres.

Candidates should answer with reference to the specified business context. They also need to understand the importance of electronic commerce.

Syllabus Topic Area 2: Setting Sales Objectives

Candidates must show the importance of setting correct selling objectives and the strategy and tactics needed to achieve them. They must understand the importance of the environmental audit and SWOT analysis when selling into different markets.

Key teaching points are:

- explain the importance of a SWOT analysis
- understand the difference between strategy and tactics
- understand the environmental audit

Syllabus Topic Area 3: Practice and Demonstrate the Key Steps in the Personal Selling Process

Candidates must be able to explain each stage in the process and apply each stage to the given business situation.

Key teaching points are:

- explain how to apply each stage in the process

Syllabus Topic Area 4: The Role of Selling within the Marketing Promotional Mix

Candidates must show an understanding of all the elements of the communication mix. They need to explain how each element might be applicable in different situations. It is important to understand the importance of brands and branding and to illustrate the activities that need to be carried out in order to work closely with customers.

Key teaching points are:

- to understand the importance of branding
- to show how different forms of promotion work alongside selling
- describe the importance of exhibitions and trade shows
- illustrate how to retain customers

Syllabus Topic Area 5: The Buying Process

Candidates will need to know both the Jobber and Lancaster and the Kotler formats of the buying process. Candidates will need to understand each stage in these processes and apply them to different situations. They will need to show the importance of selling in different forms of distribution, for example intermediaries such as wholesalers or retail stores. They need to understand the role in selling of the internet and call centres.

Key teaching points are:

- to understand the buying processes
- to understand the role of selling in different situations
- to understand the roles of the decision making unit
- to show how to develop the buyer and seller relationship

Syllabus Topic Area 6: Tactical Sales Plans

The required layout for the answer to this compulsory question is given in the question. Candidates need to understand different ways to develop relationship selling.

Candidates should answer in this specified format, with clear reference to the business situation e.g. a business to business (B2B) or a business to customer (B2C) situation.

Key teaching point is:

- to keep to the format prescribed for the compulsory question
- to learn how to develop relationship selling
- to understand reverse selling, TQM and JiT

Section B

Syllabus Topic Area 7: Managing the Sales Office

Candidates need to understand the different roles involved in managing both the sales office as well as the sales force. Other important topics include segmentation and targeting as well as managing key accounts.

Some key areas for sales management include:

- setting sales targets
- effective territory coverage
- call rate frequency
- setting standards of sales practice

Key teaching points are:

- key roles of the sales office
- to understand the importance of sales reports
- to show the difference between managing a sales office and a sales force
- to understand segmentation and targeting

Syllabus Topic Area 8: Sales Management Controls

Sales forecasting techniques are an important area as are types of sales forecasting and budgeting. Sales force evaluation and remuneration methods are also important areas.

Key teaching points are:

- refer separately to each horizon of short, medium, long term
- refer separately to the different qualitative and quantitative techniques
- sales force evaluation and sales reports
- sales force compensation and discipline

Syllabus Topic Area 9: Sales Force Recruitment and Training

Candidates may be asked to describe sources of recruitment. In this case key teaching points are:

- the interview process
- provide a list of sources
- provide an explanation of each source
- separately list and explain each source
- give examples appropriate to the situation

Candidates may be asked to explain main methods of sales training. This is also a popular choice.

Key teaching points are:

- to understand the interview process
- preparation of a job profile and job description
- describe different types of training methods

Syllabus Topic Area 10: International Selling

Candidates need to show the importance of selling into a global market. Different products and services will be viewed according to the various markets. Candidates will need to identify the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of exporting.

Key teaching points are:

- to explain the difference between methods of overseas distribution e.g. agents or distributors
- to explain different methods of exporting

Syllabus Topic Area 11: Legal and Ethical Issues in Selling

Candidates should show an understanding of the contents of a contract. They should be able to give examples of different terms and conditions. They will need to understand the application of regulations such as data protection and health and safety.

Key teaching points are:

- understand the difference between legal and ethical issues
- remedies available to resolve problems between seller and customer

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Planning answers

The most frequent examiner comment is that there is very little evidence of a full explanation in their answers. The time allocation is sufficient for candidates:

- to ensure you have the knowledge for your question selection
- to use correct report format when required
- to answer in the context of the stated business or industry
- to answer all sections of a question
- to read all the questions thoroughly so that they can be understood
- to select the information necessary for the answer
- to organize the information sensibly
- to write the answer in sufficient detail

Candidates frequently lose marks because of a lack of application of the answer to the context stated in the questions.

Organising information

In addition to the general approach to planning an answer that is given above, it is also helpful for candidates to remember that most types of business communication benefit from having:

- a beginning in which some form of introduction is given, possibly outlining the background or reason for the message
- a logically ordered middle section that gives the details of the information clearly and concisely
- an ending that closes the message by summing up the message very precisely or in some other way 'rounds off' the communication

The syllabus

The above details refer to the current syllabus which ran from Series 2 2009. From Series 2 2009 the syllabus was in two major sections. Section A was entitled Selling and section B was entitled Sales Management.

EXAMPLES OF CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The question is taken from the Series 3 2012 paper.

QUESTION 4

- (a) Briefly explain why the following are important for a sales person selling computers to a bank:
- (i) sales presentations and demonstrations (5 marks)
 - (ii) dealing with objections (5 marks)
- (b) Briefly explain five selling skills for a successful telesales training programme for this company. (10 marks)
- (Total 20 marks)**

The following answers were written by three candidates in response to this question.

Example A shows a fail response

Example B shows a pass response

Example C shows a distinction response

Example A – Fail response

- (a) (i) Sales Presentations and Demonstrations
Bank retailers would want to see whether the computers are still working. Computers should be presentable so that before being asked they will see that they are efficient. Computers have to be tested before being surrendered and the bank.
- (ii) Dealing with Objections
This helps to build customer confidence. A sales person should be confident coming up with the advantage of the computers. A sales person again have to pick some of the hidden problems associated with the computers before the customer complains.
- (b) Prospecting – Sales people have to source for new customers e.g. by using trade directories

Pre-approach and Approach

Sales people should prepare on good approaches to customers. They should start by smiling and a hand shake. Sales people sometimes have to joke so that customers will have more interest.

Presentation and Demonstration

The computers have to be presentable and sales people should demonstrate first to customers so that they see that they are efficient.

Dealing with Objections

When there is a misunderstanding even if the customer is wrong the sales person should support him/her. Objections should be treated with respect.

Closing the Sale and Follow Up Stage

Examiner comments

- (a) (i) This is a poor answer providing minimal reference to the importance of a presentation. The only detail is to say that the computer is efficient. However there is reference to a bank and to computers. The answer should refer to the benefits of a two-way communication and how a demonstration will show the detail of how the computer can work for the bank.
- (ii) This answer makes no reference to a bank but does refer to computers. There is no reference to the need for good communication skills. The answer does not refer to the opportunity to provide product knowledge or the opportunity to lead to closing the sale. An objection is a sign of interest in the presentation.
- (b) The question is asking for selling skills, particularly related to telesales. This answer shows the selling cycle which does not answer the question. It also refers to a handshake, smile and a demonstration which are not skills and are irrelevant to a telesales situation. The answer should include such areas as persuasion, communication skills and product knowledge.

Example B – Pass response

(a) The following are important for a salesperson selling computers to a bank:

(i) Sales presentations and demonstrations.

The presentation involves telling the computer product story to the bank. This sales stress on the important benefits, advantages, and features. The sales person convince the buyer that they can supply the solution.

Demonstrate qualities, benefits, and features of the computer model by using customer comments or recommendations. Example; show written evidence from satisfied customers, stress the increase in sales to specific customers.

However demonstration enables the salesperson to maximise the “U” benefits to potential purchase/bank.

It is also easier for the salesperson to ask questions in order to ascertain buying behaviour.

(ii) Dealing with objection.

Objections are any concerns or questions raised by the bank, the buyer. Most of objections are expressions of interest by the buyer.

Dealing with the objection enable the salesman turns the objections into a trial order. For instance listen, question, use a trial close, meet hidden objections, deny, offer efficient deliveries.

(b) Five selling skills for a successful telesales training programme for the company include:

1. Listening Skills

One of the successful telesales programme is listening skills. A lot of people have the opinion that listening is not so much an art or skill. It is equated to hearing. But one can probably hear, without listening. Salesman doing telesales must be trained to have the listening skills.

2. Communication Skills

This involves training on handling customer complaints.

(ii) A Call Centre

1. Orders could be made at the call centre

2. It is an interface between the sales-man and the customers

3. Payment of goods and services are made and received at the call centre

4. Customer counselling could be done at the call centre and complaints could also be handle there

5. Good customer reception are offered at the call centre, customer data could also be handled at the call centre.

Examiner comments

- (a) (i) This is a good pass answer. It makes reference to the opportunity to stress the important benefits of the computer. It also refers to the demonstration showing the qualities, benefits and features of the computer. There is some, though minimal, reference to the bank and computers.
 - (ii) Not much detail in this answer. A very useful and valid point is that it refers to objections being expressions of interest by the buyer. It also refers to objections that should be listened to and attempt to lead to a trial close. There is no reference, however, to either computers or to the bank.
- (b) The question asks for five selling skills, but only listening skills and communication skills have been given in the answer. The other three points refer to the activities of a call centre and therefore do not answer the question. The pass mark was attained by the two valid selling skills in addition to the reasonable pass marks in part (a). The answer makes no reference to computers or a bank.

Example C – Distinction response

(a) Explaining why the following are important for a salesperson selling computers to a bank

(i) Sales presentations and demonstrations

- Through presenting and demonstrating the computers to the customer, the customer can be able to see and learn how to use it or operating instructions.
- The customer can become interested on the skills and confident displayed by the sales person
- Need for the product can be aroused through presenting, demonstrating, showing how it works and telling the customer the features of the computer
- Customer can be forced to search for the product since they allowed to experiment with it and seeing its benefits
- Through using brochures and catalogues as a supporting tools for presentations the customer can be able to additional benefits of the product on brochures and catalogues

(ii) Dealing with objections

- The excuses aroused by customer when not want to buy the product must be handled carefully or amicably to make a sale
- Good communication skills should required here from sales person for them to continue the buying centre of the bank
- Good product knowledge are also important in handling the objections, so that any excuses stated by the the buying centre of the bank which can be the product type, colour and means of payment can be handled amicably
- Through using objections techniques like closing technique the sale person can win a sale and more profits to the organisation
- Having skills sales person in dealing with objections are more profits to the organisation since an excuses of not wanting to buy will be handled

(b) Five selling skills for a successful telesales training programme for the bank

1- Persuasive Skill

This are skill which telesales must have for him or her in order to handle or make the sale against objections

2- Communication Skills

A pleasant tone or voice will be require for a telesales for sale products on telephone, since it will be not face to face selling
So this communication skill must help telesalers to make a sale and create customer relationships through telephone

3- Product Knowledge

Telesalers must have product knowledge made for them to tell the feature and benefits of the product to customers (bank)
Able to arouse the need for the product through telling the buying centre of the bank the advantage of using their computers
Able to arouse AIDA process which start with unaware

4- Initiative Skill

Telesales must able to solve customer problem or making a sale according to situation

5- Self Motivated

Telesales must be self motivated to for them to work willingly and without or minimum supervision
They can able to go extra mile when serving customers, like every query customer sings with can be seen that it solved amicably and customers are satisfied.

Examiner comments

- (a) (i) This question has been answered in a good level of detail. It is a very good answer that explains how the product can be presented and demonstrated to show how the product works and the features of the computer. It points out that supporting materials like brochures can be used within the presentation. The answer gives reference to computers but not to a bank.
 - (ii) This answer identifies the importance of good communication skills when handling objections. It also identifies the importance of good product knowledge to enable the objections to be answered in an acceptable manner. It also identifies how correct handling of objections can lead to a successful sale. The answer gives reference to a bank but not computers.
- (b) This answer identifies five valid selling skills for a successful telesales training programme. It particularly highlights persuasion skills, communication skills and product knowledge and explains them in reasonable detail. It also identifies the importance of initiative and self motivation. The answer makes reference to both computers and a bank.

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