

**DP05**

# **Business Communication**

**11 APRIL 2003**

1. Time allowed : Three (3) hours
2. Total number of questions : Six (6) questions
3. Number of questions to be answered : All six (6) questions
4. Begin each answer to a new question on a fresh page.
5. A blank page is provided at the end of the question paper for rough work.

## ANSWER ALL SIX (6) QUESTIONS

1. Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

Malaysia's future hinges very much on its ability to reinvent itself over the next few years, a chief executive officer said at an investors' forum yesterday. Having made an enormous transition from an agriculture-based to a manufacturing-based economy, he said, Malaysia now stood at the crossroads of development, but it risked being left behind if it continued to stand still.

Unless the country went into "phase two" of "reinventing the Malaysian economy", it would be a country without a future, he warned investors in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. He said the country had to intensify its efforts in value-added manufacturing, as well as develop expertise in the services sector if it was to move on to the next stage of development.

There was a need for Malaysia to change its economic model and move from simple manufacturing of textiles, household appliances, semiconductors and consumer durables to value-added industries. He stressed that China and many other developing countries had proven to be just as competent in manufacturing low technological consumer products, as they have the advantage of a cheaper workforce and the ability to produce goods at lower manufacturing costs. As a consequence of this competition, investment inflows into the country have also diminished considerably. Malaysia, in looking to the future, had to ensure that its labour and capital were more effectively utilised, he said.

Its obvious export dependency and heavy reliance on the United States had also put the country in a **vulnerable** position, and had highlighted the need to develop more of a domestic-led growth. "We have to find new sources of growth," he added, but stressed that the transition did not mean an end to manufacturing activities. What was necessary, he said, was adding value to it and attracting more upscale investments.

In the services sector, more had to be done to develop tourism, logistics, education, healthcare and ports. "There is potential in these areas and they have to be given greater emphasis", he noted. "Where skills are lacking in certain service areas, the government is open to foreign management", he added, citing Maersk Sealand's assistance in operating the Port of Tanjung Pelepas in which the Danish shipping conglomerate has acquired a 30% stake.

He stressed the importance of building a strong brand image also. Penang and Malacca have done this quite successfully in the area of health services, he said. But the country still lacked recognition in the area of software development although it had been stressed as a priority area for the country.

In the area of tourism, it was noted that tourist arrivals in the country were projected to reach 14.3 million by 2005. Apart from the first two months of the year, tourist arrivals had exceeded one million monthly. The three big markets for Malaysia, namely China, India and the Middle East, needed to be given more concentration in its efforts to bring the tourist numbers in. China represented an extremely lucrative market, because Chinese tourists are now reportedly the world's biggest spenders. Chinese nationals who can travel out of the country are very rich, he noted. While Chinese arrivals now average about half a million a month, the aim is to double the figure by 2006–07, he said.

But he said that a major challenge to the growth of tourism was the "soft skills", and there was a need to ensure that waiters, taxi drivers and sales people were better equipped to perform their roles so that visitors who came would leave the country with very favourable impressions.

*Adapted from "The Star", 31 October 2002*

Answer the following questions **in full sentences**:

- (a) Why does Malaysia risk being left behind in economic development if it continues to stand still and not reinvent its economy? [2]
- (b) What **two** important areas should Malaysia focus on primarily in its next phase? [2]
- (c) Why does Malaysia have to move from simple manufacturing to value-added industries to survive economically? [1]
- (d) Paragraph 4 states that "Its obvious export dependency and heavy reliance on the United States had also put the country in a vulnerable position...".
- Give **two** examples of situations that can reduce Malaysia's revenue from trade relations with the United States. [2]

- (e) Name **two** “soft skills” the tourist industry can develop to equip its service personnel. [2]
- (f) Give another word or phrase that can best replace the word “vulnerable” in paragraph 4 line 2. [1]
- (g) Summarise the passage above in **130 words**. [10]
- (Total:20 marks)

2. (a) Read the letter below and answer the questions that follow:

13 March 2003

123 Jalan Kual  
47300 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor

The Customer Services Manager  
Lot 346 Kompleks Antarabangsa  
Jalan Ayer Itam  
45670 Kuala Lumpur

Dear Sir/Madam

I understand that your company gives a lifetime guarantee for every pot, pan and “wok” that has been purchased, isn’t it? Imagine my surprise when the sales personnel on duty at A-Z Plaza informed me that I couldn’t get a warranty for the “wok” I had bought. Your overzealous counter sales person was so patronising to me. I insisted that I had read on the webpage about the lifetime guarantee for the non-stick coating on the utensils to last without ever blistering or peeling. Without excusing herself, she started calling a number of people, leaving me to wait for more than 35 minutes.

I was very attracted to the features of the “wok” advertised in your recent sales promotion at a few major outlets. So I went onto the Internet to find out which of your outlets was nearest to my home as I intended purchasing one.

Your sales person insisted on speaking in Cantonese when I had told her that I didn’t understand the dialect well. I asked her to speak in Bahasa Melayu or English and she refused. Please tell me this, how do you select your sales team? It’s about time you did something. How can a sales person attend to customers speaking only Mandarin and Chinese dialects? Your company would have lost a good sale that day if I didn’t have my friend with me to translate for me to understand.

After consulting her colleagues she came back and told me that I was wrong. There has never been any such guarantees given before. I was quite offended by her but what surprised me was why every colleague in her department was unaware of the promises the company makes to its customers. Despite all this I still bought the “wok” and promptly rang up your head office and was informed that there is a lifetime guarantee anywhere in the world. I was told that I could get my warranty card from your department.

I end here insisting that you send me the warranty card.

With best regards.  
**Miriam Foo**

- (i) Analyse the letter above by listing and describing **four** different aspects of poor communication. [10]
- (ii) Rewrite the letter using effective communication principles. [10]
- (b) (i) What is the aim of an introduction in a presentation? [1]
- (ii) List **four** strategies you can use in the introduction of your speech. [4]
- (Total:25 marks)

3. (a) (i) What **two** purposes are served by listening? [1]
- (ii) One of the four main listening skills is encouraging listening.  
State and explain the **four** strategies a listener can use to provide feedback for encouraging listening. [6]
- (b) (i) In organisations, oral presentations are made to serve a number of purposes.  
State and explain briefly **three** objectives for making oral presentations. [3]
- (ii) You and two other colleagues have been assigned to do a team briefing. List **five** important considerations you would make, before each of you can speak about your area in the presentation. [5]  
(Total:15 marks)
4. (a) (i) In a business environment, bad-news letters are written for many reasons.  
State **four** situations when bad-news letters are written. [4]
- (ii) Why is the indirect order of information used in writing a refusal letter? [2]
- (b) List the **four**-point strategy for writing an adjustment refusal letter. [4]
- (c) You are the Human Resource Manager of TriTravel Bhd and you have just received a letter from Mr Arun Biswas, one of your branch employees, requesting a raise in salary because of the following reasons:
- The cost of living has gone up.
  - He has bought a new car to travel to visit outstation clients.
  - He has passed an important examination required for his position.
- You feel, however, that this is not the time when your organisation can afford to entertain salary revisions.
- Write an adjustment refusal letter based on the strategy stated in (b) above using a full-block layout. [10]  
(Total:20 marks)
5. Explain the purpose and the procedures to be followed at a meeting for the following:
- (a) A motion [6]
- (b) An amendment [4]  
(Total:10 marks)
6. Albrecht (1992) identifies **four** types of customer values.
- (a) List the **four** types of customer values. [2]
- (b) Give a brief description of each type of customer value. [8]  
(Total:10 marks)

## OUTLINE ANSWERS

### Question 1

Candidates showed weak understanding of the passage and the questions asked. Most did well only if the answers are found directly from the passage, but performed poorly when it comes to other types of questions, e.g. cause-effect, prediction, inference, etc. Some also did not read the questions properly before answering, e.g. instead of naming the “soft skills”, they defined the term “soft skills”.

1.
  - (a) Many other developing countries are manufacturing similar goods. Malaysia cannot compete with China which has a cheaper workforce and can manufacture goods at a lower cost.
  - (b) The two areas are focus in value-added manufacturing and expertise in the services sector.
  - (c) Malaysia has to move from simple manufacturing to value-added industries in order to compete with China and other developing countries, which are able to manufacture the same products at lower costs.
  - (d) Malaysia revenue from trade relations with the United States (US) may be reduced through:
    - War or terrorist attacks which may hamper certain services and reduce foreign investments in Malaysia
    - The US can find cheaper alternatives from other competitors
    - Disruption of services due to strikes, piracy, etc.
    - A lower demand for goods in the US domestic markets or boycott of the Malaysian products
  - (e) Accept any **two** of the soft skills listed:
    - interpersonal skills
    - conversational skills
    - listening and speaking skills
    - the ability to speak different languages
    - the ability to discern the appropriate information to give out
  - (f) weak
  - (g) Malaysia now stands at the crossroads of development but it risks being left behind. Unless the country concentrates on value-added manufacturing and develops expertise in the services sector, it cannot progress. Malaysia needs to move from simple manufacturing to value-added industries. China and many other developing countries can produce goods at lower costs. Malaysia has to ensure that its labour and capital are more effectively utilised to regain investment inflows. Its export dependency and heavy reliance on the United States has also put the country in a vulnerable position. It needs to find new sources of growth and turn to value-added manufacturing to attract upscale investments. In the services sector, tourism, logistics, education, healthcare and ports have to be developed. Malaysia still lacks recognition in the software development arena. (129 words)

### Question 2

- Many candidates were able to identify the aspects of poor communication in the original letter but did not include the examples from the letter to support their answers. Candidates are again reminded to read the question properly and to understand all the full requirements of the question before attempting it, to avoid missing out on certain parts.
- Quite a number of candidates still did not know the format of a business letter.
- Candidates should also note that when writing a letter, they should write the recipient's address as different from the sender's, e.g. in another branch/town that is away from the sender's office.

2. (a) (i) Candidates can list any of the following aspects of poor communication but they have to describe them too.
- Letter format is in incorrect order
  - No subject line or purpose statement
  - Ideas/paragraphs are not organised in sequence
  - The writer is very critical/sarcastic about the way the organisation is run
  - The writer is very directive
  - The closure of the letter is incorrect

- (ii) Miriam Foo  
123 Jalan Kuala  
47300 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor

13 March 2003

The Customer Services Manager  
Tequal Pots and Pans Bhd  
Lot 346 Kompleks Antarabangsa  
Jalan Ayer Itam  
45670 Kuala Lumpur

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **Request for Warranty Card**

I was very attracted to the features of the “wok” advertised in your recent sales promotion so I went onto the Internet to find out which of your outlets was nearest to my home as I intended purchasing one. I had read on your webpage about the lifetime guarantee for the non-stick coating on the utensils to last without ever blistering or peeling too.

Imagine my surprise when the sales personnel on duty at A-Z Plaza informed me that I couldn't get a warranty for the “wok” I had bought on Tuesday, 12 November. She was very patronising and insisted that I had read wrongly. She made me wait for more than 35 minutes without excusing herself, while she consulted her colleagues over the telephone. I was very frustrated when she insisted on speaking in Cantonese although I had requested she spoke in English or Bahasa Melayu for me to understand her.

What surprised me most was why every colleague in her department was unaware of the your company's warranty policy to its customers. Perhaps your sales personnel need to be given in-house retraining and I would strongly recommend that Ms Lee (employee tag number 2003) attends this course when it is held.

I would really appreciate it if you could send me the warranty card as soon as possible. I am enclosing my receipt as proof of purchase to help you in case you need to investigate this matter.

Yours faithfully

**Miriam Foo**

- (b) (i) The introduction aims to:
- state the topic, or identify the main theme,
  - catch the audience’s attention; and
  - give the audience a preview of the presentation.
- (ii) Strategies to use in the introduction are:
- Pose a question
  - Use humour appropriate to the audience and topic
  - Relate a short story
  - Present an interesting fact

**Question 3**

This was a direct knowledge-based question from the textbook on listening skills and oral presentation, and only a few candidates were able to answer. Candidates are reminded that it is not sufficient to sit for this examination just by relying on their skills/experience without reading up the textbook, as that is insufficient to meet the demand of the theory-based questions.

3. (a) (i) • Listening provides feedback on how the receiver has interpreted your message.  
 • Listening to information from a sender allows you to understand the meaning.

(ii)

Invitation to disclose	Invite speaker to continue without pressure to disclose their feelings or thoughts. Continue to give attention using eye contact and an open posture.
Minimal and brief responses	Let speakers know you are listening and encourage them to continue. Responses such as “mmm”, “hmm”, “yes”, “I see”, together with non-verbal cues convey your interest.
Pause	A pause or brief silence allows the speaker time to consider, reflect and decide whether to continue the conversation.
Use encouraging questions	Asking open questions will encourage the other person to share more personal feelings and thoughts. Asking open questions helps the speaker to be more specific or to reveal details.

- (b) (i) The objectives are:
- **To inform** – ideas, facts, information on progress, how something works, etc.
  - **To persuade** – to influence the audience, change their attitude or convince them about a particular product.
  - **To entertain** – a variety of techniques such as humour, anecdotes, examples and quotations are used to combine information.
- (ii) The considerations are:
- the purpose of the presentation
  - the nature of the audience
  - designing the structure and presentation
  - organising into different sections for each speaker
  - aiming for a unified, coherent message rather than a series of individual presentations

#### Question 4

Parts (a) and (b) were knowledge-based question on the different types of bad-news letter. Candidates were required in part (c) to write an adjustment refusal letter in full-block layout, but there were some candidates who did it in memo format.

4. (a) (i) Bad-news letters are written for the following occasions:
- order refusal
  - credit refusal
  - declining invitations/requests for favours/donations
  - refusing an adjustment
- (ii) The indirect order of information guides the reader gradually to the bad news. Any reasons and explanations for the refusal are read before the reader reaches the bad news.
- (b) 1. Open with a courteous greeting or neutral buffer  
2. Explain the situation fully or the criteria necessary for the situation  
3. State the bad news  
4. Close with a positive paragraph.

(c) TriTravel Berhad  
246-8, Jalan Lintang Emas  
45789 Kuala Lumpur

18 March 2003

Mr Arun Biswas  
345 Jalan Besar  
67543 Segamat  
Johor

Dear Mr Biswas

Thank you for your letter dated 10 November requesting a salary adjustment. Your reason was that firstly, the cost of living had gone up, secondly, you had bought a new car to travel to visit outstation clients and thirdly, you had passed an important examination required for your current position.

Your request was brought before the Human Resource Department and much discussion was generated. We went over the conditions for your employment and one condition was that you must to be in possession of a car to visit your clients. Another requirement was that you needed to pass the stated examination within three years of being employed, in order for you to hold your position.

We do empathise with you concerning the higher cost of living now, considering the present poor economic situation. However, we regret that at this time our organisation is not in a position to consider your request.

We will keep your letter in the file and when the economic situation picks up again, we hope you will bring up this request again for our consideration.

Yours sincerely

**Amin Mahmud**  
HR Manager

### Question 5

This was another knowledge-based question from the textbook, but it was poorly answered.

5. (a) A motion is a specific proposal put in writing seeking action or resolution during a meeting.

Procedure:

1. The motion must be put in writing and given to the chairperson before the meeting for inclusion in the agenda.
2. At the meeting, it must be seconded by another member before it can be discussed and voted on.
3. Once seconded, the mover of the motion outlines the motion.
4. The chairperson asks if anyone would speak against the motion.
5. Discussion is held and a vote is taken.

- (b) An amendment is an alteration to rearrange, remove or add words to a motion or items in the agenda.

Procedure:

1. The chairperson asks for a seconder
2. The amendment is discussed.
3. A vote is taken.

### Question 6

This was also a knowledge-based question on the types of customer values, taken from the textbook, but not many candidates answered satisfactorily.

6. (a) They are:

- Basic service
- Expected service
- Desired service
- Unanticipated service

- (b)
- *Basic Service* – is the very basic services or products offered to your clients. They are the organisation's reason for existence, e.g. providing banking services and products.
  - *Expected Service* – are clients' expectations about how the service will be given. It is the service level that your client expects as a right.
  - *Desired Service* – is value-added service, i.e. superior or excellent levels of service, the organisation's preparedness and capacity to offer clients more than they expect.
  - *Unanticipated service* – is anything that can be added to the desired service in the future. Once clients become accustomed to superior levels of service, they may expect something more or different. It is thus, necessary to find ways of giving the client a different and better service that gives unanticipated value.