

**DP05**

# **Business Communication**

**7 SEPTEMBER 2007**

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 passage below and answer the questions that follow in **full sentences**:

A fair price for farmers' produce and a guaranteed supply of it for retail to consumers, with quality standards upheld "**from farm to fork**", is the promise of contract farming, an idea which is timely. In these early stages of the genesis of the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER), the differences of mindset with the Southern Corridor's Iskandar Development Region (IDR) are already apparent. Where the IDR is about massive investment, multinational participation and top-down economic growth, the NCER is being grown literally, from the ground up. Here, the emphasis is on the small farmer and his individual efforts. The potential of contract farming had to wait for certain downstream developments in this country, but now the hypermarkets, supermarkets and retail franchises are up, running and spreading. They offer economies of scale and retail capacity to deal with farmers and cut out the middlemen who have for so long been the scourge of the farmers.

Today, for foodstuff ranging from prawns, chicken and vegetables, the huge new urban retailers are dealing directly with growers and breeders. The retailers offer capital, technology, incentives and guidance to ensure they acquire the produce they need at the quality they desire and at prices appreciated by farmers and consumers alike. This marks an advance for everyone in the food supply chain. Farmers are freed from the vagaries of price fluctuations, and retailers from the whims of wholesalers and middlemen who more often than not, restrict supplies when prices rise and dump produce when they fall, holding the rest of the supply chain to ransom for their own interests. The Giant supermarket chain works directly with Cameron Highlands fruit and vegetable growers. Tesco deals with lowland farmers and animal rearers in Perak and Perlis, and now sources up to a quarter of such produce through contract farming.

These big retail players are taking the lead in this pragmatic new approach in raising the status of the agricultural sector into an engine of growth for the national economy. This understated revolution, taking place in the rural areas far away from the glitz and grandiosity of urban development, promises to be far-reaching in its emancipation of Malaysian agriculture from a green rut of poverty into a thriving cornerstone of national prosperity.

*Adapted from "New Straits Times", 21 July 2007*

- (a) How can consumers benefit from contract farming? [2]
- (b) What is the emphasis of the Northern Corridor Economic Region? [1]
- (c) Describe **three** ways how hypermarkets and retail franchises help small farmers. [3]
- (d) How do retailers benefit from dealing with contract farmers directly? [3]
- (e) What does the expression "**from farm to fork**" in paragraph 1, line 2 mean? [1]
- (f) Using your own words, write a summary of the passage in about 120 words. [10]

(Total:20 marks)

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

7/9/2007

The Manager  
First World Bank  
108 Jalan Pertama  
50505 Kuala Lumpur

I applied for a new cheque book on 9 July. The document was delivered to me last month but as I wasn't at home, the courier service man left a "non-delivery" note in my mailbox. You see, I'm a busy person, so I asked your bank to courier my new cheque book to my house.

After calling the courier company to make a new delivery arrangement, I received a cheque book on 14 August but it wasn't meant for me. Thinking that the rightful recipient would be waiting for the cheque book, I purposely went to your bank on 17 August to return the cheque book, thereby spending time and money. I told the customer service officer, one pretty lady by the name of Shirley Hor, of the consequences of the bank's carelessness. She listened without any response and snatched the cheque book from my hand. Not even a word of thanks. Meanwhile, I enquired about my new cheque book which should have been delivered. She nodded her head and walked away. Guess it must have been one of her bad hair days!

Three weeks have passed and I'm still waiting for my cheque book. Most probably it has ended up in somebody's house. Looking at the cock-up in the cheque book delivery and your bank's stinking customer service, I don't think I want to bank with you anymore. Something is grossly wrong!

*Christine Lee*

Christine Lee (Ms)  
49 Jalan Sukahati  
Taman Bahagia  
45800 Petaling Jaya

- (i) Analyse the letter above by listing and describing **five** different aspects of poor communication. [10]
- (ii) Rewrite the letter using effective communication principles. [10]
- (b) List and briefly describe **five** components of writing style for business letters. [5]  
(Total:25 marks)
3. (a) Most organisations have a code of ethics which they expect their staff to follow.  
State **three** ways how a company's code of ethics can help its staff in the workplace. [3]
- (b) List **four** strategies that a listener can use to provide feedback when using encouraging listening skills. [4]
- (c) (i) State **two** purposes of an introduction in a speech. [2]  
(ii) List **two** strategies to improve the introduction of a speech. [2]
- (d) Connecting with the audience is important in public speaking.  
State **four** ways to establish rapport with the audience. [4]  
(Total:15 marks)

4. (a) (i) State **four** principles of writing good e-mails. [4]  
(ii) List **two** advantages of using e-mails in business communication. [2]
- (b) (i) List **three** types of persuasive letters. [3]  
(ii) Describe a writing plan for a persuasive letter using the AIDA formula. [4]
- (c) You are the Personnel Manager of a large book store. Write a memorandum to the staff to announce a 20% staff discount on books sold at any of your branches. The discount cards have to be presented when staff members make purchases. They have to collect the discount cards from your office during working hours. [7]  
(Total:20 marks)
5. (a) List **two** duties of a secretary during a meeting. [2]
- (b) State **two** task-related roles that participants have to undertake before a meeting to ensure that the meeting is productive. [4]
- (c) List **two** factors that can cause communication barriers at a meeting. [4]  
(Total:10 marks)
6. (a) Bill walks into a large music store and asks a store assistant where he might find a particular CD. The store assistant points to a display aisle and walks away. Unable to find the CD, Bill goes to the service counter. The assistant behind the counter is on the telephone talking about her plans after work. After waiting for approximately 10 minutes, Bill is furious and he decides to complain to the supervisor of the store.  
  
Assume that you are the supervisor of the store. Write a four-point plan, using the PAIR approval strategy, to handle this complaint. [4]
- (b) List **six** key steps in communicating effectively on the telephone. [6]  
(Total:10 marks)

– END OF QUESTION PAPER –

## OUTLINE ANSWERS

The comments given in the boxes below indicate the areas of weaknesses the examiners have identified and their advice to future candidates.

### Question 1

- Candidates lifted answers verbatim from the passage instead of rewording them.
  - Candidates should not copy wholesale sentences from the passage.
  - Candidates should attempt to write short sentences.
  - Candidates need to remember to exclude examples in summary writing.
1. (a) Consumers are guaranteed a fair price for farmers' produce. They are also assured of a regular supply of high quality produce.
- (b) The North Corridor Economic Region emphasises agriculture, involving the smaller farmers.
- (c) Three ways how hypermarkets and retail franchises help small farmers:
- Hypermarkets and other retail players are able to offer economies of scale and retail capacity in dealing with farmers because of their sheer size.
  - They eliminate unscrupulous middlemen, thus ensuring that farmers get fair prices for their produce.
  - They also offer capital, technology, incentives and guidance to farmers so that the farmers can come up with high quality produce acceptable by consumers and, in turn, get decent prices for their produce.
- (d) Retailers can buy farmers' produce at fair prices. They do not have to deal with wholesalers and middlemen who dictate produce prices to make profits.
- (e) It means the time from when the produce is grown until it is put on the table or consumed.
- (f) With the rapid and massive growth of hypermarkets and retail franchises, contract farming is timely. Contract farming involving the smaller farmers ensures that retailers and consumers get a consistent supply of farmers' produce at fair and stable prices, and of high quality. The retail players offer economies of scale and retail space to deal with farmers, thereby eliminating the unscrupulous wholesalers and middlemen who dictate prices for their own gains. Retailers deal directly with the farmers who are given capital, incentives and expertise so that the farmers come up with high quality and marketable produce. By taking the lead, the retail kingpins help to raise the status of the agricultural sector, freeing the farmers from poverty. (117 words)

### Question 2

- Candidates were able to identify and list the aspects of poor communication in a letter.
- Candidates failed to describe the aspects of poor communication in a letter.
- Candidates described the five components of a letter instead of writing style.
- Candidates need to write concise and clear letters.
- Candidates should elaborate their points when describing the aspects of poor communication.

2. (a) (i) Aspects of poor communication:  
(Give any **five** of the following)

- Wrong order of letter format – writer’s address should be at top left corner
- Date is not written in full – may be confused with the American form
- No salutation
- No subject line
- Ideas and paragraphs are not organised in sequence
- Tone is patronising
- No complimentary close
- Inappropriate words – contractions (wasn’t, don’t), stinking
- Informal language – e.g. “cock-up”

(ii)

49 Jalan Sukahati  
Taman Bahagia  
45800 Petaling Jaya

7 September 2007

The Manager  
First World Bank  
108 Jalan Pertama  
50505 Kuala Lumpur

Dear Sir

#### **Cheque Book Delivery**

I am writing to express my disappointment with your bank regarding the delay and blunder in the delivery of cheque books by courier service.

On 9 July, I applied for a new cheque book with clear instructions that the cheque book be delivered to my home address. A month later, a document was delivered to my address but as I was not at home, the courier service left a ‘non-delivery’ note in my mailbox. Thinking that it might be my new cheque book, I called the courier company to make a new delivery arrangement. On 14 August I did receive a cheque book but it was not mine.

In spite of my busy schedule, I went to your bank on 17 August to return the cheque book. I told Ms Shirley Hor, the customer service officer who attended to me, the consequences of the bank's carelessness. She seemed disinterested in what I was saying and took the cheque book away from me rudely without a word of thanks. When I enquired about the delay in the delivery of my new cheque book, she walked away from the service counter and did not return.

As a long standing customer of your bank, I view with concern your bank's inept handling of cheque books and the poor customer service. Meanwhile, I am still patiently waiting for my cheque book.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

*Christine Lee*

Christine Lee (Ms)

(b) **Five** components of writing style for business letters:  
(Give any **five** of the following)

- words
- sentences
- paragraphs
- rhythm or flow of words
- tone
- order of information
- layout

### **Question 3**

- Candidates were unable to provide a clear explanation on how a company's code of ethics can help its staff at the workplace.
- Candidates failed to give strategies that listeners can use to provide feedback.
- Candidates need to understand concepts well so as to be able to apply them.
- Candidates should not provide answers which are too brief or in note form.

3. (a) **Three** ways a company's code of ethics can help its staff in the workplace:  
(Give any **three** of the following)

- reinforces the organisation's standard of conduct
- reminds staff members that management wants participants to consider ethical issues in their decisions
- identifies practices that are and are not permissible
- allows leaders, managers and others to share experiences and ideas about what an ethical position is and is not
- develops a shared culture based on ethics and accountability

- (b) **Four** strategies a listener can use to provide feedback in encouraging listening skills:
- invitation to disclose
  - minimal and brief responses
  - pause/brief silence
  - using encouraging questions
- (c) (i) Purpose of an introduction in a speech:
- prepares audience for what you are going to say
  - leads audience into the body of the talk by identifying your aim or main theme
- (ii) **Two** strategies to improve the introduction in a speech:  
(Give any **two** of the following)
- pose a question
  - use humour appropriate to the audience and topic
  - relate a short anecdote
  - present an interesting fact
- (d) **Four** ways to establish rapport with the audience:  
(Give any **four** of the following)
- involve the audience, ask questions
  - invite the audience to sum up during the session
  - step forward and move around
  - add humour in speech
  - maintain eye contact with the audience
  - do not hide behind barriers e.g. chairs and tables

**Question 4**

- Candidates were able to write a memo based on the situation given.
- Candidates were unable to state the principles of writing good e-mails and the advantages of using e-mails.

4. (a) (i) **Four** principles of writing good e-mails:  
(Give any **four** of the following)
- aim for simplicity in layout and structure
  - use appropriate typography
  - enhance text flow
  - plan page layout
  - position text and objects (graphics, tables)
  - avoid clutter
- (ii) **Two** advantages of using e-mail in business communication:  
(Give any **two** of the following)
- faster and more efficient channel than regular mail
  - can be sent at any convenient time and avoids telephone tag
  - can be sent to many receivers simultaneously
  - saves paper
  - documents or files can be attached
  - texts, pictures and diagrams can be combined

- (b) (i) **Three** types of persuasive letters:
- collection letters
  - sales letters
  - job applications
- (ii) Writing plan for a persuasive letter:
- Open with a sentence or paragraph that catches the reader's attention.
  - In the next paragraph, develop an idea that might interest the reader, or show how the product could benefit them.
  - Use the middle paragraphs to build the reader's desire for the product or service.
  - State in the concluding paragraph what action is to be taken.

(c)

**MEMORANDUM**

To: All Staff  
From: Lynne Tai, Personnel Manager  
Date: 7 September 2007  
Subject: Staff Discounts

In appreciation of your good work, all staff members are entitled to a 20% discount on books at any of our branches.

To obtain a discount, simply present your discount card so that your staff number is keyed in with each purchase.

You may collect your staff discount card at my office during working hours.

**Question 5**

- Candidates had a poor grasp of the procedures for meetings, resulting in vague answers.
- Candidates need to pay attention to terminologies and procedures for meetings in their examination preparation.

5. (a) **Two** duties of the secretary during a meeting:  
(Give any **two** of the following)

- prepares enough copies of documents for all members
- answers inquiries from members
- records the names of those present
- reads apologies from absentees
- records these apologies
- records the proceedings which become the minutes

- (b) **Two** task-related roles of participants before a meeting:  
(Give any **two** of the following)
- read the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting
  - prepare any proposal or motion to put to the meeting in writing and forward to the chairperson
  - prepare any oral presentation for the meeting
- (c) **Two** factors that can cause communication barriers at a meeting:  
(Give any **two** of the following)
- poor verbal skills
  - inappropriate nonverbal skills
  - poor listening
  - unwillingness to speak

**Question 6**

- Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the PAIR approval strategy.
- Candidates should list steps in telephone communication clearly and avoid repetition

6. (a) Four-point plan (PAIR approval strategy) for handling Bill's complaint:
- Placate Bill by listening, empathising and responding with concern
  - Attend to the complaint
  - Investigate the circumstances and details of the incident
  - Resolve the complaint by deciding on the action to be taken and taking the action
- (b) **Six** key steps in communicating effectively on the telephone:  
(Give any **six** of the following)
- answer the telephone promptly and courteously
  - speak clearly and directly into the telephone
  - identify yourself and the organisation
  - make sure you are speaking to the right person
  - listen carefully
  - provide relevant information
  - collect the correct information
  - organise and prepare for your call
  - call at the appropriate time