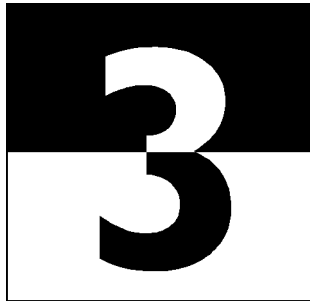


Certificate in

Customer Service



Level 3

Series 2 2003

(Code 3013)

Model Answers

(UK Accreditation No: 100/1809/8)

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Certificate in Customer Service Level 3

Series 2 2003

How to use this booklet

Model Answers have been developed by LCCIEB to offer additional information and guidance to Centres, teachers and candidates as they prepare for LCCIEB examinations. The contents of this booklet are divided into 3 elements:

- (1) Questions – reproduced from the printed examination paper
- (2) Model Answers – summary of the main points that the Chief Examiner expected to see in the answers to each question in the examination paper, plus a fully worked example or sample answer (where applicable)
- (3) Helpful Hints – where appropriate, additional guidance relating to individual questions or to examination technique

Teachers and candidates should find this booklet an invaluable teaching tool and an aid to success.

The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board provides Model Answers to help candidates gain a general understanding of the standard required. The Board accepts that candidates may offer other answers that could be equally valid.

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QUESTION 1 (Compulsory)

A manufacturer of industrial products has been keeping a record of problems reported by customers over a 3-month period. The problems fall into 3 categories, as shown in the table below:

Category of problem	Number of problems reported
Dissatisfaction with products	178
Difficulties with administrative systems	209
Frustration with communication methods	151

Among the remarks made by customers, the following are typical:

- *“The products are not up to date”*
- *“The company is rarely able to access our records promptly”*
- *“This company uses the post for too many of its communications”*

- (a) Explain how you could further analyse the numerical data to give more useful information about customers' problems. (5 marks)
- (b) Give **4** reasons why the company might consult its customers when developing products. (4 marks)
- (c) Describe how a computerised customer record system could facilitate storage and retrieval of customers' records. (4 marks)
- (d) Give **2** methods of communication and explain the circumstances in which **each** would be preferable to using the post. (6 marks)
- (e) Outline a system for monitoring satisfaction levels over a 1-year period, once the company has made changes to improve customer satisfaction. (6 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 1

- (a) How I could further analyse the numerical data to give more useful information about customers' problems:
- by grouping different kinds of problems within each category
 - by considering whether answers given by different types of customer vary
 - by considering variations in responses according to product types
 - by looking at whether the numbers of problems are consistent for different customer service staff
 - by looking at dates of problems to see if there are patterns related to events

An additional acceptable answer could be:

- by cross-checking factors that may be giving rise to problems to see if there are links

- (b) Reasons why the company might consult its customers when developing products:
- the customers are businesses, they need specialised products to meet the needs of their changing businesses
 - the customers will feel valued and will have faith in the company
 - a product that meets the needs of customers is likely to have high sales
 - it is a good way to keep ahead of competitors

- (c) How a computerised customer record system could facilitate storage and retrieval of customers' records:
- the computer can easily retrieve data using either a customer's name or other data such as account number
 - it can show a customer's history of purchases over a long period with a lot of detail
 - it is able to store a complete accounts history, individual aspects of which can be retrieved at any time
 - it is easy to note queries and their resolution, comments, etc – a permanent record, easily retrieved

An additional acceptable answer could be:

- data is safely stored centrally and can be retrieved by any authorised personnel on a network

- (d) 2 methods of communication, with an explanation of circumstances in which each would be preferable to using the post:

Email is preferable where quick transmission and response are required in writing, with a facility for automatic storage of original.

Facsimile is preferable for speed, but has the benefits of the post otherwise as an actual document and signature are copied, leaving the original as a paper record.

An additional acceptable answer could be:

Telephone is preferable where instantaneous 2-way communication is required, but is not suitable where actual proof of the communication needs to be kept.

- (e) A system for monitoring satisfaction levels over a 1 year period:
- select a representative sample of customers using stratified quota sampling and obtain their permission to participate in a longitudinal survey
 - survey the sample of customers at 3-monthly points over the 1 year period to monitor changes in satisfaction levels
 - at the end of the 1-year period, analyse all the data collected, looking at similarities and differences between different categories of customer for different aspects of service

QUESTION 2

- (a) List **5** benefits of **personal example**. (5 marks)
- (b) Explain how all members of a team can benefit by the supervisor setting a good example. (14 marks)
- (c) List **6** ways in which a supervisor can set a good example to the team when communicating with customers. (6 marks)
- (Total 25 marks)**

Model Answer to Question 2

- (a) Benefits of personal example:
- it motivates others
 - it can drive a cause forward
 - it can help in overcoming adversity
 - it assists an individual's development
 - it is an agent for change and gain
- (b) How the whole team can benefit by the supervisor setting a good example:
- members of a team look to more senior members for guidance and example
 - team members will assume that the behaviour of their senior is acceptable, so will copy it
 - when the supervisor treats team members in a helpful and respectful manner, they will treat each other accordingly
 - since the supervisor is a working member of the team, other members should have the confidence to work at the supervisor's personal standards of behaviour
 - the supervisor will be respected for high personal standards of behaviour, which will gain the team's commitment
 - by the supervisor setting a good example, high standards are established, accepted and maintained by team members
 - pride in personal standards of behaviour will lead to high morale amongst team members
- (c) Ways in which a supervisor could set a good example to the team when communicating with customers:
- talk in a friendly tone of voice
 - listen actively
 - use open questions
 - use friendly body language and facial expressions
 - tell the truth
 - use tact when speaking

An additional acceptable answer could be:

- thank customers for their business or information

QUESTION 3

The management of an organisation intends to establish a centralised customer service function, which will lead to other departments relinquishing their customer service roles.

- (a) What could the management do to help ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangement?
(8 marks)
- (b) In what ways might employees attempt to disrupt the transition to the new arrangement?
(8 marks)
- (c) Give the **advantages** of a centralised customer service function.
(9 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 3

- (a) What the management could do to help ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangement:
- consult staff
 - meet with departments affected
 - explain the benefits of the new arrangement
 - invite questions and answer them honestly
 - invite employees' ideas on how customer service might operate in the new arrangement
 - invite staff to apply for jobs in the new department
 - offer benefits for going over to the new system
 - offer training for staff willing to move to the new department
- (b) Ways in which employees might attempt to disrupt the transition to the new arrangement:
- refuse to follow new procedures
 - refuse to refer customers to the new department
 - try to disrupt the new system
 - refuse to co-operate with staff in the new department
 - employ misinformation strategies
 - take industrial action
 - criticise the new arrangement to customers
 - feed negative publicity about the change to the press
- (c) The advantages of a centralised customer service function:
- tighter control by management
 - policies and procedures specifically for customer service can be set
 - management can have more confidence that policies and procedures will be correctly implemented
 - likely to be greater consistency in standards of service
 - easier to promote standards of service to centralised staff
 - customers can identify more easily where to get support
 - staff in the department can specialise in customer service
 - the department can be line-managed by a professional
 - overall, the service will be more professional

QUESTION 4

A hospital catering department serves primarily 2 groups of customers: staff and ward patients. The department wishes to review its service in the light of customer needs.

- (a) (i) For **each** of the **2** groups of customers, identify **2** methods of collecting information on their needs. (8 marks)
- (ii) Explain how the **2** methods complement each other. (12 marks)
- (b) (i) Define **quantitative** and **qualitative data** for **each** group of customers. (2 marks)
- (ii) Briefly explain how they might **both** play a role in the catering department's survey. (3 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 4

- (a) (i) 2 methods of collecting information on the catering needs of staff and ward patients.
- For staff:**
- Survey cards could be placed on canteen tables; staff would be invited to complete them and put them in a box for collection.
 - Collect staff views via normal staff meetings. This could be done by the agenda, and views would be fed back via minutes.
- For ward patients:**
- Catering staff could visit the wards to talk to individual patients about their requirements.
 - Nursing staff could be sent a memo inviting them to reply with a memo outlining their patients' needs.
- (ii) The 2 methods complement each other, since cards in the canteen will provoke an immediate response from those who use the canteen (but only those who can be inclined to fill in the cards, so the views may not be representative). Meetings, however, give everyone the chance to have their say – even those who are not current users (a group who would be missed by merely using cards in the canteen).
- The 2 methods complement each other because it is useful to obtain the views of consumers first hand, and many would like the opportunity to give their views, but may be too ill to fill in a form. On the other hand, the views of nursing staff are valuable, as not only can they speak on behalf of patients who are too sick to talk, but they may have a view on needs that the patients do not fully understand.
- (b) (i) **Quantitative data** gives the numbers of responses in different categories, while **qualitative data** gives the reasons why people think or act as they do.
- (ii) How quantitative and qualitative data might both play a role in the catering department's surveys:
- In the provision of a catering service, it is necessary to know how many people have different needs. However, to better understand their needs, it is necessary to find out why they have certain requirements – which may relate to attitudes or personal circumstances.

QUESTION 5

In a given area, there are 3 companies providing a particular service to consumers. The following are the sales in millions of these companies over the years 1998-2002:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Company A	22.3	24.1	25.4	27.3	28.5
Company B	28.6	27.3	25.6	24.4	23.4
Company C	19.4	19.6	20.9	22.5	23.8

- (a) Briefly describe the industry trends over the 5 year period. (5 marks)
- (b) Give **5** reasons why customers may be discouraged from buying services from an organisation. (5 marks)
- (c) Give **6** ways in which a customer survey could help a company learn more about its problems. (6 marks)
- (d) List **3** functional specialists within a service organisation of your choice, and for **each** describe **one** way in which the specialist provides customer service. (9 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 5

- (a) The industry trends over the 5-year period briefly described:
- The market overall has grown
 - A and C have seen their sales grow annually
 - B has seen a steady decline in sales
 - A and C have seen an increase in market share
 - B has drastically lost market share
- (b) Examples of problems that may discourage customers from buying an organisation's services:
- the standards of service may not be in line with competitors
 - service may be getting slower
 - prices may be higher than those of competitors
 - there may be communication barriers
 - the personal standards of staff may be low
- (c) Ways in which a customer survey could help a company learn more about its problems:
- by keeping the company up to date with customers' opinions
 - by reflecting customers' feelings, needs and problems
 - by highlighting problems that have not previously been recognised
 - by avoiding potential situations that could be damaging
 - by providing feedback on how well competitors are doing in the customers' eyes
 - by giving immediate feedback on matters that are creating or causing problems
- (d) Functional specialists within a service organisation (shop), with a description of one way in which each specialist provides customer service:
- Sales assistant**
- advises customers on choice of goods
- Accounts assistant**
- sets up payment systems for customers who require credit
- Stock handler**
- shifts goods in and out of the stockroom according to customer demand

QUESTION 6

- (a) Briefly describe how quality teams operate and how they deal with customer problems. (5 marks)
- (b) What are the organisational benefits of using teams to solve customer problems? (6 marks)
- (c) Explain how the agenda and minutes of a meeting contribute to effective communication. (6 marks)
- (d) A customer service individual wishes to persuade management to adopt a new service proposal. Give 4 processes that the individual could undertake in order to make a sound case at a meeting. (8 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 6

- (a) How quality teams operate and deal with customer problems:
- members are drawn from across the organisation or from different areas of expertise
 - meet on a regular basis to discuss aspects of customer satisfaction
 - identify problem or complaint areas
 - individually establish potential solutions
 - brainstorm as a team to suggest solutions

Additional acceptable answers could be:

- work as a team to deliver agreed solutions
- have management support and approval to implement necessary changes

- (b) The organisational benefits of using teams to solve customer problems:
- individual ideas and suggestions can be discussed and evaluated
 - everyone has an opportunity to contribute
 - the pressure is not placed on a single person to provide a solution
 - a solution or change to procedure is more acceptable and less likely to meet resistance if presented as a result of a team effort
 - a positive attitude can be generated, which will show itself in the outcome, to the customer's benefit
 - having been set up as a result of a management decision, the team will have management support for its decisions

Alternative acceptable answers:

- decisions will have an effect across the organisation, so the team is likely to consider the overall implications
- as a team, the various areas of expertise can be utilised in assessing the problem and working towards a solution
- mutual support within the team can transfer to individual departments and generate further team building and working

- (c) How the Agenda and Minutes of a meeting contribute to effective communication:
- An **Agenda** is a plan for a meeting, which lays down topics for discussion in an appropriate order, and is sent to members in advance so that they can prepare adequately.
 - **Minutes** are a written record of what is said at a meeting, by whom, and action agreed. They are distributed after a meeting to remind participants of what was said and agreed at the meeting and of any action they are expected to carry out. They are checked for accuracy at the start of the next meeting.

Model Answer to Question 6 continued

- (d) Processes that could be undertaken in order to make a sound case at a meeting:
- collect evidence relevant to service, eg conduct a customer survey on satisfaction
 - write a report citing the evidence with a full analysis of the situation
 - prepare proposals on how to resolve service issues, backed up by facts and figures
 - present the report verbally at the meeting and distribute the written report to meeting participants



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