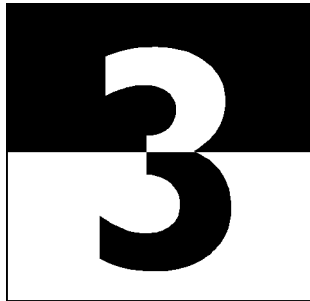


English for Commerce



Level 3

Series 2 2003

(Code 3042)

Model Answers

English for Commerce 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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English for Commerce Level 3

Series 2 2003

QUESTION 1

Write 400–500 words on ONE of the following topics:

- (a) “Success in commerce is more about thorough research and preparation than anything else.” How far do you agree with this statement?
- (b) Outline, with examples, some of the different sales techniques used to attract older and younger consumers.
- (c) Write about the ways, for better or for worse, in which **2** areas of sport or the arts have changed because of increased financial support from commercial organisations.
- (d) Despite the statutory support given to equal opportunities in business, there are still very few women in the position of Managing Director. What do you feel are the reasons for this?
- (e) Discuss some of the matters that a person considering a mid-life career change should bear in mind.
- (f) The MD of your company is anxious to start selling abroad instead of solely in your home country. He has asked you to produce a report on the firm’s current health and readiness for expansion into the international market. **Write the report.**

(25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 1

NOTE:

At Level 3 candidates are expected to develop their own lines of argument within a chosen topic. The following offers, without being in any way prescriptive, some of the lines of argument which might be developed by the candidate.

- (a)
- Agree or disagree with statement
 - Could take personal or company viewpoint
 - Getting the staffing right
 - Training schedules
 - Trials / testing markets / choosing the right time
 - Consideration of product cycle / progression
 - Financial considerations

Others may choose to show what happens when preparation is poor.

- (b) Allow candidates to choose their own ground. Arguments may include:
- Emphasis on reliability for older customers
 - Guarantees and money back schemes
 - Products tried and tested
 - Good value for money emphasis
 - Examples such as insurance / garden furniture / safe holidays
 - Role model identification for younger customers
 - Trend-setting products / vital accessories
 - Internet sales techniques
 - Realisation of limited customer funds
- (c) Candidates will offer a variety of approaches and viewpoints. These may include:
- Organisation loses personal 'feel'
 - Less regard for the individual patron / sponsor / supporter
 - Emphasis on product commercialisation
 - Improved services and products resulting from "sponsorship"
 - Product / repertoire becomes more exciting and risk taking
 - Development of 'interest' groups / youth schemes etc
- (d)
- Difficulty of women still in dual role – career and homemaker
 - 'Lip service' still paid by many firms to equality ideal
 - Still really harder for women to progress at same speed
 - Fewer women actually want to climb the ladder
 - Progress is 'on target' more time needed for success
 - Changes constantly seen – female sports editors etc
- (e)
- Current financial situation – salary, pension etc
 - Security of current job, risks of change
 - Realistic assessment of effects of decision
 - Consideration of dependants' viewpoints / effects
 - Changes in whole lifestyle routines
 - Preparation strategies for new life
 - Correct market assessment of preferred area of work
- (f) Accept any standard format. Look for clear, logical development of report.
- Statement of current situation
 - Consultation with departments and other contributors
 - Statement of findings and conclusions
 - Suggestions for expansion (or not)

QUESTION 2

Read the following passage carefully, then **answer the questions** which follow.

IDENTIFYING THE BUSINESS STARS OF TOMORROW

How do most businesses identify their “high-flyers” – those people on the fast track to the senior roles of the future? If they are selected as those who are bright and excelling in their current roles, the chances are the company has got it wrong. This would appear to be the current situation in the majority of organisations whatever their particular orientation. The new employee may progress to assistant department head and on to section head as a result of their performance in their current position. Most annual appraisal systems are based on the achievement of performance targets, and once the foot is on the ladder, progress normally follows a predictable course.

One thing the employee’s track record can never fully predict, however, is future potential. Indeed, many businesses are unaware of what they should be looking for when forecasting management potential. One company which has been closely studying the development of management potential, and ways of identifying it, found it relatively straightforward to pinpoint their existing high performers, but found it much more difficult to predict who were likely to become their future stars. Since the object of the exercise was to secure the talent, and to aim training and development where it would yield the greatest return over the coming years, an accelerated development programme that would single out *future* high-flyers was necessary. They developed a computer-based exercise that clearly indicated ability and potential, and by judicious use managers were able to find the people with the potential for senior roles and spot any gaps in their development that needed dealing with.

To predict potential there are two critical areas. One is “core capabilities”, the other deals with “enablers and blockers”. These two areas must be addressed for talent and potential to be realised.

Core capabilities are essential pre-requisites that consistently distinguish high-flyers from other managers. High-flyers normally have superior emotional intelligence, “soft” skills which they use to form and manage relationships. They are skilled in negotiation and leadership, demonstrating enhanced ability in the way they motivate and deal with others. A high level of emotional intelligence is one of the strongest predictors of a manager’s potential.

High flyers are also strong learners. They seek challenging experiences and are more prepared to change as a result of information they have gathered as feedback. Once a certain level of seniority has been reached there is a tendency to dismiss the importance of learning, but there is clear proof that some of the most successful managers are those with a real appetite for learning.

In addition high flyers possess strategic thinking capacity. They work deftly with complex, dynamic and strategic concepts; they think of the “big picture”. This is not the same as intelligence or critical reasoning, and cannot be assessed by conventional tests. Using a measure that assesses this area gives results that can be surprising – in particular, the managers with the highest IQ are not always the best strategic thinkers.

Enablers and blockers are factors that either promote or prevent people from realising their potential. Helping managers to gain insight into potential enablers and blockers is a critical part of successful management. Managers need to feel fully prepared for what they may experience when promotion moves them beyond their existing range of experience. The “dark side” of their personality may need to be examined – as managers progress, new pressures and uncertainties can cause certain strengths to “flip” and become liabilities. A normally enthusiastic person can under pressure become volatile, a highly-focused person can become aggressive if pushed beyond

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

his or her limit. These tendencies can significantly block progress and may emerge only after some time in a new role. Fortunately they can now be predicted and individuals can be coached to develop coping strategies.

It is also vital to understand people's motives. Not every manager wants to lead the business. Understanding motives and values is necessary to ensure "best fit" between the individual's priorities and those of the business. Managers therefore receive feedback on their potential "dark sides" and have the opportunity to define their goals.

All the evidence demonstrates that today's high performers are not necessarily the stars of tomorrow. With the prospect that many companies are likely to face a leadership shortfall in the future, businesses need to start focusing now on the factors that predict potential. This process will help the business and the individual to understand what needs to be done to develop and progress. It will enable a business to target and develop its staff in a way that gives the biggest return for its investment in management development.

Adapted from an article in The Sunday Times

- (a) What difficulty in the personnel area did the company mentioned in paragraph 1 experience?
(2 marks)
- (b) State **2** reasons why other companies should adopt the computer-based exercise mentioned in the second paragraph.
(4 marks)
- (c) The passage mentions 3 characteristics of "high-flyers". Write these down and indicate the area of work where each is most important.
(6 marks)
- (d) Why, according to the passage, is it important to "spot gaps" in an employee's experience?
(4 marks)
- (e) In your own words give the meaning of the following phrases as they are used in the passage.
- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| (i) judicious use | (paragraph 2) | |
| (ii) coping strategies | (paragraph 7) | |
| (iii) leadership shortfall | (paragraph 9) | (6 marks) |
- (f) In your own words give **ONE** example of a "blocker".
(2 marks)
- (g) Which phrase or sentence from paragraphs 5 or 6 shows that the most intelligent people do not necessarily make "high-flyers."
(1 mark)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answers to Question 2

- (a) They found it hard to predict who their future stars would be.
- (b) It will allow them to identify staff with potential for leadership, and they will learn how to spot gaps in experience.
- (c) “Emotional intelligence” is important in relationships.
“Strong learners” are able to change in response to new information.
“Strategic thinking capacity” is important when you need to grasp the wider picture.
- (d) Managers must be prepared for changes accompanying promotion, as unsuitability only surfaces after some time in a new job.
- (e) (i) careful application
(ii) tactics for handling problems
(iii) lack of front runners/directors
- (f) Example:
Someone who is normally highly-focussed can change when severely tested and become “pushy” or adopt a “hostile attitude.”
- (g) “In particular the managers with the highest IQ are not always the best strategic thinkers.”

QUESTION 3

Make a summary of the main points of the following passage in your own words. Your summary should be no more than 180 words. Supply a title for your summary.

The Chief Executive places his croissant to one side, arranges his notes and greets the Chairman of the other company ten thousand miles away; their meeting is about to start. At the flick of a switch a face comes into focus on the giant screen in front of him. The two men are using video-conferencing – and they are among thousands of executives around the world showing a renewed enthusiasm for the technology.

Since the events of 9/11 many companies have cut down on air travel because of the fear of terrorist attack and also because of spiralling costs. However, the options are few and far between when face-to-face contact is required, and videoconferencing is once again starting to be a popular choice.

The use of regular videoconferences in place of sending staff abroad has considerable benefits. As well as saving precious financial resources, the video link also saves time – on average a video-conference saves an executive 14 hours of travelling every month, and travel costs can be cut by half. But videoconferencing has to overcome a troubled history. Many firms who took it up enthusiastically in the 1990s abandoned it soon after because of technological problems which can still appear. Meetings can be disrupted by time delays, the sound may not synchronise with the pictures, and there is also a concern over confidentiality. These doubts affect the market, and there is an air of caution which is definitely inhibiting future sales. Since the events of 9/11 companies are not readily spending money, so investment in new systems is not leaping ahead. Firms who sell videoconferencing systems are receiving a great number of positive enquiries, but the actual sale of new systems is slow. As the economic situation improves, though, as it undoubtedly will as confidence is restored, sales are expected to rise.

Whilst many of the technological difficulties that bedevilled the older systems are being removed, it is still difficult to squeeze all the data down a public telephone line, and delays continue to occur in transmission. Furthermore, conferencing is also vulnerable to being intercepted because of this use of public lines. One way to overcome this is to use private networks for the data transmission. Improvements in coding and decoding the information have made for speedier transmissions, and picture quality has also been improved.

Despite the technological challenges and the concerns about confidentiality, the supporters of videoconferencing speak with the fervour of converts. The system will not just fade away. When a company is spread around 50 or more countries, it is impossible to get to all locations and meet with all individuals. Videoconferencing has caught on and promises greater sophistication for the future. It will, however, always be an alternative to face-to-face meetings rather than a replacement. When executives need to get to know each other well and establish trust, an image on a screen will never replace human contact. Nothing will ever beat the reassurance of a handshake.

Adapted from The Sunday Times

(25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 3

A suitable answer would be:

THE RESURGENCE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING

Many companies, worried by recent acts of terrorism and financial costs, are decreasing executive air travel, and videoconferencing is enjoying a revival of interest. It saves a company plenty of money, and it saves executive time.

Videoconferencing still has its former difficulties to overcome; there are still technological problems such as time delays and confidentiality issues. These problems cause prospective buyers to be cautious and whilst many companies make positive enquiries, the actual sales are slow. There is, however, market confidence that improvements are merely a matter of time.

Because of improvements in technology which offer better overall transmission and the promise of greater confidentiality, private telephone networks are replacing the crowded public lines. Questions of confidentiality notwithstanding, the videoconference is here to stay. It should be stated, nonetheless, that it will remain an alternative to the business flight, and not a replacement. When trust is called for, nothing replaces human contact – and a shake of the hand!

QUESTION 4

You are the Manager of a small manufacturing company. Your company, which has a good community record, has recently been the subject of adverse criticism in the local media. A number of employees who were dismissed for absenteeism have received support in the press and on local TV for their allegations that the firm has shown insensitivity towards the needs of working parents. The company has recently introduced a flexitime system for parents with children, and a free crèche is planned to open soon. The employees who were dismissed had a record of absenteeism before they became parents.

Write a suitable letter to the editor of the local newspaper or TV station to set the matter straight, and demand a public retraction of the allegations. You will need to invent suitable names and addresses.

(25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 4

A suitable answer would be:

FALCON ENGINEERING LTD
WATERLOO GATE
CANTERBURY
KENT CT2 8GJ

11 April 2003

The Editor
The Canterbury Enquirer
2 City Wall
Canterbury
CT1 4GJ

Dear Sir or Madam

Criticism of Falcon Engineering

We at Falcon Engineering were aggrieved to read in last week's Enquirer your front-page article accusing this firm of unfair treatment of working parents. Your article, based on unsubstantiated comments from a number of our former employees, was spurious to say the least, and the matter cannot be allowed to pass unanswered.

The complainants that you pictured at our gates were dismissed because of frequent absenteeism long before the time they actually received notice. Throughout their time with us Falcon had done its best to accommodate their needs, but their difficulties were entirely of their own making. I have good evidence that on at least 4 occasions when absence was claimed to be because of child sickness, the offspring in question were marked present on their school register! We have further evidence of a former employee attending a local sports centre on the morning she reported sick. Falcon is in a competitive market and cannot afford this flouting of regulations.

In fact, Falcon make every effort to support our loyal staff and accommodate the needs of working parents. We have run a flexitime system for working parents for over 3 years, and next year we will have a fully-staffed free crèche for children up to 7 years of age.

It is a pity that your search for a controversial front page carries more weight with you than the clear statement of the true facts. At no time have you approached this firm for a comment. We therefore insist on an equally eye-catching retraction of your allegations at the earliest opportunity.

Yours faithfully

Plant Manager



**EXAMINATIONS
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