

Level 3 Certificate in Selling and Sales Management



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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 preceding 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 October 2007 and 30 September 2008.

Global pass rate 57.27%

Grade distributions

Pass	31.85%
Credit	22.35%
Distinction	3.07%

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- correct report format
- awareness of the importance of the application of I.T. to aid selling
- answers to question 1 – compulsory

Weaknesses

- lack of depth in answers
- misunderstanding questions
- lack of application to given situations e.g. a furniture retailer

TEACHING POINTS BY SYLLABUS TOPIC

Syllabus Topic Area 1: Establish a Sales Plan

The required layout for the answer to this compulsory question is given in the question. Where candidates answer in the correct format, it is often the best answered question.

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.

Syllabus Topic Area 2: The Selling Function

Candidates should answer by indicating each key step in the selling process. An explanation of each step is required. Each step needs to be explained with reference to the specified business or organisation setting. No marks are awarded for showing a buying process.

Where the question asks for an explanation of the buying process the same guidelines apply as those above.

Syllabus Topic Area 3: Distribution Channels

Candidates may be asked to explain the roles of exhibitions and trade shows. Good answers will explain each one separately accompanied by examples of products.

Where candidates are asked to describe the main methods of selling into global markets, strong answers will include examples of different methods and the advantages of each method.

Syllabus Topic Area 4: Recruitment and Training

This is frequently a popular choice. Candidates may be asked to describe sources of recruitment. In this case key teaching points are:

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

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

Key teaching points are:

- list each method
- explain each method
- explain the advantages of each method

Syllabus Topic Area 5: Sales Management

This is another popular choice. The question frequently asks about specific methods of managing a sales force. In this case the key methods to include are:

- setting goals and objectives
- effective territory coverage
- call rate frequency
- key account management
- setting standards of customer care

Syllabus Topic Area 6: Sales Forecasting, Budgeting and Evaluation

This is always a popular selection. Candidates frequently fail to answer the question by referring to techniques instead of time horizons.

Key teaching points are:

- refer separately to each horizon of short, medium and long term
- where asked about techniques, refer separately to the different qualitative and quantitative techniques

Syllabus Topic Area 7: Sales Records

This is not a popular selection and frequently asks about customer databases.

Key teaching points are:

- explain the benefits of analysing and responding to customer complaints
- explain the purpose and benefits of keeping sales records
- explain the types of sales records

Syllabus Topic Area 8: Legal and Ethical Issues

This is an area where candidates produce some very poor answers. The main problem is that candidates fail to identify the difference between a legal requirement and an ethical issue.

Key teaching points are:

- a legal issue is a requirement
- explain what could be included in a legal contract
- ethical issues are not compulsory
- an ethical stance should improve a reputation

Syllabus Topic Area 9: Sales Control

This is an area that is very popular and not answered well.

Key teaching points are:

- explain how the sales manager controls the sales office
- do not refer to how the sales manager controls the sales people
- explain the role of the sales office

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Planning answers

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

- 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
- to check the answer for errors and to correct them.

It is emphasised that many candidates who fail do so not because of inadequate English but because of inadequate planning.

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 questions are divided into at least 2 separate sections. This is necessary in order to ensure a template coverage of the syllabus.

Changes to syllabus

There will be no further changes to the syllabus until Series 2 2009. This new syllabus will not involve any major changes to the syllabus content. From Series 2 2009 the syllabus will be in two major sections. Section A will be entitled Selling and section B will be entitled Sales Management. There will be no discernible difference between the questions and question layout. All question papers will refer to the same syllabus content.

EXAMPLES OF CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The examples are taken from the Series 3 2008 paper. The question is as follows:

In a report to the Chief Executive Officer of a retailing company selling jewellery and watches:

- (a) Explain briefly the **advantages** of the following methods you may use in a sales skills training programme:
- (i) the lecture (2 marks)
 - (ii) in-the-field training (2 marks)
 - (iii) case studies (2 marks)
 - (iv) films, DVDs and videos (2 marks)

(Report titles 1 mark; report style using bullet points or numbered sections 1 mark)
(2 marks)

- (b) As an additional section of this report, select and briefly explain **5 stages** in the selling process which may be emphasised in the jewellery and watch sales training programme.
(10 marks)

(20 marks)

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

Answer (a) shows a fail response

Answer (b) shows a pass response

Answer (c) shows a distinction response

Answer (a) – fail response

(a) To: CEO (Chief Executive Officer)
From: Candidates Name
Subject: Training Programme
Date: 06-05-08

(i) Advantages of lecture

- if we deliver the lecture candidates can understand more things about our company and sales

(ii) Advantages of in-the-field training

- while they are in the training they can work
- they get experience

(iii) Advantages of case studies

- in the training we give case studies and tell them to solve them

(iv) Advantages of films, DVD, and video

- put films and ask them questions

(b) (i) Explain about the product

- tell what is good about the product and explain about its uses

(ii) Persuade

(iii) Negotiate

- “win win” method means an acceptable situation for the seller and the buyers

(iv) Close sale

- give them a reasonable price and close the sale

Reasons for fail:

- It lacks depth
- It shows no preference to the products
- It provides no explanation of training methods
- It only gives 3 of the 5 stages of the selling process and has minimal or no explanation of these stages.

Answer (b) – pass response

(a) To: Chief Executive Officer
From: Candidates Name
Date: 5th June 08
Subject: Sales skills training programme

The advantages of the following methods to use in a sales skills training programme:

- (i) The lecture
 - provide information and knowledge of sales skills
 - provide opportunities for trainee to ask questions during a discussion
 - (ii) In-the-field training
 - provide an actual environment to trainee to have training
 - (iii) Case studies
 - provide some cases for reference so that trainees can take appropriate action when they face similar situation
 - (iv) Films, DVDs and videos
 - videos provide a situation for trainees to remember how to perform their duties
- (b) Stages in the selling process:
- The opening
It is the first impression to the customer of the company's image
 - Problems and needs identification
To understand what problem that the customer is facing
 - Negotiation
Sales force may make some concessions. For example credit terms, discounts etc.
 - Closing sales
Sales person may take the initiative and ask the customer to close the sale
 - Follow up
To establish a relationship with customers

Reasons for Pass:

- It explains the training methods in adequate detail
- It lists all 5 stages in the selling process with a brief explanation
- It is only a pass because it shows no reference to the products.

Answer (c) – distinction response

To: Chief Executive Officer
From: Candidates Name
Date: 5th June 08
Subject: Sales Training Programme

This report is divided by 2 parts: (a) advantages of different training methods and (b) stages in selling process that may be emphasised during training.

- (a) The advantages of the following methods in a sales skills training programme:
- (i) The lecture
- It can go to great depth of different knowledge as it is conducted by professionals and they may share their experiences with the students
 - They can explain the differences between different jewellery and watches by showing on screen and students can ask for professionals to answer their questions
- (ii) In-the-field training
- It can help students to experience the actual selling process as they need to sell jewellery and watches in a shop with the customer.
 - It can help people to discover their weakness and ask for their supervisors or team head to help them to solve their weakness and make improvements
- (iii) Case studies
- It can help people to apply their knowledge into the actual case and find out if they can apply the solution to solve the case problem
 - It can be a group discussion, so training staff can share their opinions about their solution and seek a final one to solve the case. Also, it can help to build close relationship among colleagues.
- (iv) Films, DVDs and videos
- It can help people to understand the process of making jewellery and watches and so they may be more persuasive when selling to the customer
 - It can be recorded and so absent staff can view by himself/herself later

- (b) 5 stages in the selling process which may be emphasised in the jewellery and watch sales training programme:
- (i) The opening
 - When a customer walks in the shop, staff may open their conversation by asking:
 - “Hello, can I help you?”
 - “Hello, which types of jewellery or watches are you finding?”
 - It can help the customer to feel the staff in the shop are enthusiastic and friendly in order to develop a comfortable atmosphere for the customer
 - (ii) Demonstration and presentation
 - After knowing the customers’ preference, staff may choose some of the jewellery or watches to sell to the customer. They may present the details and product benefits of some watches or jewellery or may help the customer to try wearing jewellery or watches for them to see the suitability.
 - (iii) Handling customer objections
 - Customers always have objections to products, price or even the attitude of staff, they may complain to staff. In this stage, staff should stay calm and be polite by using different techniques:
 - hidden objection; by asking customer whether they understand
 - agree but counter; agree to their objection but explain to the customer the actual situation
 - (iv) Negotiation
 - Customers may negotiate with the price of the jewellery or watches. In this case, staff must know the company’s bottom-line and the customer’s expected price. Also they should know about the jewellery and watches benefits in order to negotiate with the customer. And with no loss to the company, they can give a discount or gift in order to maintain and retain the customer for repeat purchase.
 - (v) The closing
 - If staff sense the customer is interested in buying the jewellery or watches, they should close the sales by saying:
 - “would you like me to take one for you?”
 - “should I pack this for you?”

Reason for distinction:

- It lists and explains the training methods in detail
- It lists and explains in detail the 5 stages of the selling process
- In every part of the answer it refers to the products and provides explicit examples.

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