Communication and I.C.T

Leaving Cert Business Studies

SHORT QUESTIONS

2011

3 (a) Distinguish between two types of meeting which are common in a business.

AGM (Annual General Meeting).
This is a meeting of the shareholders of a company. It is held once a year. At the AGM, shareholders can ask the directors questions, the chairperson gives an address, directors are elected, auditors are appointed and accounts are presented.

EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting).
This occurs when a matter of such importance arises that the business cannot wait until the next AGM to discuss the issue.

Board Meeting.
These are regular meetings held by the board of directors of the company. Tactical planning, strategic planning and review of company performance are often on the agenda of a board meeting.

Management/executive meetings/ad hoc.
Meeting held by various managers in the business to deal with operational issues/immediate problems.

(b) Outline two benefits of meetings as a method of communication.
1. Meetings allow discussions to take place on different proposals which in turn allow for good, effective decision-making/ co-ordination of the work of various departments.
2. Meetings allow information to be disseminated to the various stakeholders in the company, e.g. a meeting of management and the employees of the firm regarding industrial relations issues.
3. Meetings are creative forums, e.g. a brainstorming session during the idea generation stage of the product development process.
4. Meetings are appropriate when sensitive or confidential issues are being discussed e.g. redundancy, dismissal of staff and business contraction/expansion.
5. Meeting allow for feedback to be given and received.
6. A written record (i.e. minutes) of decisions can be made for future reference.

2009

2. Using today's date draft a memorandum (memo) from Peter Murphy, Marketing Manager, to Mary O'Brien, Managing Director of a retail business outlining two different sales promotion incentives to encourage sales.

MEMO
<u>To:</u> Mary O'Brien, Managing Director
<u>Subject:</u> Sales Promotion Incentives
<u>From:</u> Peter Murphy, Marketing Manager
<u>Date:</u> 9th June 2009
Memo to include outline of two sales promotion incentives to encourage sales. Sales promotion incentives are short term marketing techniques designed to increase sales of a
product
<u>Signature:</u> Peter Murphy,
Marketing Manager

2008
5. Agenda of an AGM of a Private Limited Company:

1. Minutes of the 2012 AGM
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Chairperson's Report
4. Auditors report and accounts
5. Declaration of Dividend
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Election/reappointment of Directors
8. Motions
9. A.O.B.

LONG QUESTIONS

2012

3 (A) Outline four developments in technology that have facilitated the growth in globalisation. (20 Marks – 4 points x 5 marks)

<u>Design/ CAD</u>**.**
CAD (Computer Aided Design) had revolutionised the design process, making it much easier and faster, and allowing companies to react quickly to changing global market conditions. Instead of drawing up designs individually in each market or country, computers can design and test the product that can then be mass produced.

<u>Production/CAM</u>
Computer aided manufacture (CAM) where all equipment can be computer controlled and computer integrated manufacturing (CIM) which involves total integrated control of the production from design to delivery, all add to the efficiency of production and the ability of firms to locate anywhere in the world and produce standardised products irrespective of local labour skill sets. It also means work can be carried out 24 hours a day without making mistakes. This enables companies to mass produce for their global market whilst reducing costs as less staff are needed to implement the production.

<u>EDI</u>

EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) greatly facilitates communication in a global market. Document transfer, automated stock ordering, details of trading figures etc. can be transmitted globally in a matter of seconds. It allows companies to more efficient with their resources such as staff and as a result costs are reduced.

Communication/ISDN
ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) uses telephone lines to transmit and receive digital information. File transfer, teleworking, video conferencing, e-mail etc. allow vital information to be transferred anywhere in the world. This greatly assists management planning, organising and control and facilitates effective decision making and research. It also means that information can be transferred in real time which makes companies more efficient.
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Marketing/Internet/
The Internet including social network sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, along with business networks such as LinkedIn have facilitated the global marketing of companies and the establishment of global brands. Network advertising, company web sites and electronic payment have allowed global E-commerce to flourish.

Distribution/ JIT
Logistics, just-in-time delivery, container transport and the relevant computer software programs facilitate the global distribution of goods. This is hugely important as many global businesses rely on local agents or distribution companies to deliver their product (e.g) Coca Cola allows local businesses to bottle and distribute Coca Cola under licence.

4 (A) Illustrate the factors that a business needs to consider when communicating with its various stakeholders. (20 Marks – 4 points x 5 marks)

Appropriate Language/Clarity (E.g. stakeholder, the consumer)
If the language is too technical or too difficult for the customers to understand then the message may be misinterpreted. The business needs to choose language appropriate to its audience. In the case of customers, short clear sentences and visual supports etc. may be suitable for product assembly e.g. flat packs.

Confidentiality/Safety (E.g. stakeholder, the employee)
The medium chosen must be appropriate to the message been given. If the message is sensitive for the stakeholder e.g. terminating the employment contract of an employee, then a meeting would be more appropriate than a letter or an e-mail.

Cost (E.g. stakeholder, the manager)
The expense of the communication process is a very important factor. A CEO communicating with his managers worldwide may choose to hold a virtual meeting to cut down on travel and subsistence costs.

Urgency/Speed/Destination (E.g. stakeholder, the supplier)
If a crucial piece of information has to be communicated instantly to a supplier, then a phone call, a text or e-mail may be appropriate e.g. to arrange a change in delivery times.

Feedback/Accuracy/Record (E.g. stakeholder, the Government)
The business may be looking for feedback in order to take further action. Communication with the revenue commissioners may require regular correspondence and written records and in this case business letters and e-mail can provide formal evidence of the feedback process, eliminating misunderstandings.
Other relevant factors: Legal requirements; Availability of technology etc

4 (B) Distinguish between the duties of a chairperson and a secretary in the organising and running of an AGM. (20 Marks – 2 points x 10 marks)

The Chairperson
- The chairperson in conjunction with the secretary is responsible for convening the meeting by drawing up the notice and agenda.
- The chairperson opens the meeting only after ensuring the quorum is present. S/he calls the meeting to order and welcomes everybody setting the correct tone.
- S/he ensures that minutes of previous AGM are read, adopted and signed.
- The chairperson ensures that the agenda is followed in the agreed order / ensuring compliance with standing orders.
- The chairperson guides the discussion and manages time and contributions. Keeping order and dealing with points of order is important/ allowing discussion only of matters on the agenda.
- The chairperson organises vote taking and in the event of a tie s/he has a casting vote.
- The chairperson has power to adjourn the meeting.

The Secretary
- The secretary sends out the notice and agenda to all those who are entitled to attend. This should be sent out in plenty of time giving members or shareholders time to prepare for the meeting.
- The secretary arranges a suitable venue ensuring that essential resources such as refreshments, audio-visual equipment and seating plans are in order.
- The secretary informs the meeting of important correspondence and documents received by the organisation.
- The secretary assumes the role of minute's secretary. This involves reading the minutes of the previous meeting and having them approved and then signed by the chairperson. It also involves taking notes so that the minutes of the present meeting can be written up accurately later.
- The secretary assists and advises the chairperson on points of order, information etc. during the meeting.

2009

4 (C) "There is often a legal requirement for members of the public to hand over their personal information to public bodies." Discuss the provisions of the Data protection Act 1988 with respect to:
(i) Rights of Data Subjects

(ii) Obligations of Data Commissioners   (20 Marks – 2 points x 10 marks)

The Data Protection Act was introduced to provide rights and responsibilities in relation to the storage of computerised data:

(i) The Rights of Data Subjects
- Right of Access – person has right to receive copy of data held electronically relating to him/her, within 40 days of lodging a written request
- Right of Correction – person has right to correction of errors/inaccurate information.
- Right to Compensation – person has entitlement to be compensated for loss as a result of inaccurate information held. The person also has the right to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner where a data controller is suspected to be in breach of the act.
- Right of Removal- person has the right to have their name removed from direct marketing lists.

(ii) The Obligations of Data Controllers
- To keep the data secure – data must be protected against unauthorised access.
- To update the information – data should be accurate and updated periodically
- To use the data for the purpose intended- information should only be used for the specific purpose provided
- To obtain the information fairly and openly.
- To keep a register of data kept.
- To provide a copy of data held electronically within 40 days of receiving a written request from a person

6 (A) Illustrate how the following developments in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) have impacted on business.
(20 Marks – 7+7+6)

(i) Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
EDI is an automated method of processing transactions between suppliers and customers e.g. ordering of stock, invoicing, payment etc. EDI is dependent on the supplier and customer having access to compatible EDI software.

Impact of EDI
- Faster method of processing transactions
- Cost effective method of processing transactions –labour costs, stationery/office expenses, overheads, time required all reduced

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- Stock levels may be reduced as automated processing ensures speedier stock re-order/fulfillment of order – more effective stock control system leading to reduced stock holding costs e.g. insurance, storage etc.
- Scope for human error is reduced as transactions are automated
- Installation and training costs of installing EDI

(ii) World Wide Web and Internet

The internet is the global network of computers facilitating the transmission of data and communication between users. All computer users who are networked to the Internet (through an ISP) can access information via the World Wide Web - using the website address e.g. The Irish Times may be accessed at www.irishtimes.com) or through a search engine e.g. www.google.ie. Users may also communicate with each other via e-mail. Broadband is the fastest means of internet access.

The internet has both a personal (social) and a business use. Social Networking websites Twitter and Facebook are a popular method of communication where registered users are allowed to share photos, music, blogs etc.

The internet has also had a profound effect on how we conduct business, facilitating e-business – both B2B (business to business) and B2C (Business to consumer).

Impact of the Internet on business

- Facilities e-business – both B2B and B2C
- Faster, more cost effective method of communication – consumers can communicate directly with business and vice versa
- A website may be an effective marketing tool – internet provides access to a worldwide market
- Business can conduct market research via their website –e.g. www.amazon.com profiles the interests of its users, and reminds users each time they log on to the Amazon website of any new books etc which may be of interest to them
- Customer relationship management supported through on-line customer support services and on-line market research

2008

4 (B) Describe the barriers to effective communication in a business entreprise and suggest methods a business might consider to overcome two of these barriers

Language
If the language is too technical or too difficult for the audience to understand then the

message may be misinterpreted. This can be overcome by choosing language appropriate to the audience (e.g) talking to adults vs talking to children. Short clear sentences, visual supports can all help comprehension

Wrong Medium

The medium chosen must be appropriate to the message been given. A letter would be more appropriate than an e-mail if terminating employment. 'Texting' may be inappropriate for formal communications. The medium chosen might be too slow for any action to occur. Using e-media such as text messages or social media with personal communication is the most appropriate. Writing is very important as to be understood your writing has to be legible and the terminology used must be very precise.

Not Listening

If the intended recipient is not listening when a verbal message is being communicated the information will not be received correctly. Synopsise, Summarise, Review, and Repeat the message. Relay the message in a quiet room rather than a busy street or workplace.

Timing (Wrong timing/inadequate amount of time)

Communications takes place with a purpose in mind. If the message is sent too late the recipient may not be able to act on the information. Plan the process. Enough time must be given to read/listen, understand, and respond to the message. Reduce speed in the interest of understanding.

No Feedback

The sender may be looking for feedback in order to take further action, e.g. the sales manager may require information from the production manager before taking an order from a customer. Build in a feedback mechanism into the process e.g. a specific time slot for feedback / questionnaire etc.

Relationships between people/Credibility Trust

A lack of trust between the parties acts as a barrier to effective communication. Build long term ethical relationships to ensure a trusting relationship exists. Use communications training to overcome all the barriers.

Information Overload.

Too much information given. The main points may be lost. Reduce the volume of information so that issues can be dealt with effectively.

Prejudice

If the receiver has a personal bias towards against the person sending the message, he might not listen to the communication and therefore the message does not get through.

6 (C) Illustrate the impact of new technologies on business opportunities
(20 Marks – 4 Points @ 5 marks each)

- The increased use of technology in production allows for the standardisation of production, resulting in increased output/productivity and reduced costs.
- Applications such as computer aided design (CAD) make the design process easier and increase productivity. Computer aided manufacture (CAM) where all equipment can be computer controlled and computer integrated manufacturing
- (CIM) which involves total integrated control of the production from design to delivery, all add to the efficiency of production/fewer repetitive tasks.
- New job opportunities are created in service industries like hotel, catering and tourism businesses, and health and education service providers.
- New products: Some new products owe their existence and success to technology e.g. reserving seats on airlines and making hotel reservations from any part of the world at any time. Another example are apps.
- Research facilities with information on businesses, people, countries, products, in the world at the touch of a button.
- Spans of control can be widened. Ability to monitor larger groups or groups which are geographically apart.
- Organisation size can be reduced: Fewer employees needed/lower costs and increases in efficiency.
- Communications: Staff can be equipped with laptops, mobile phones and e-mail links which enable instant communication leading to increased business efficiency/global communications.
- Tele-Working: With the use of broadband it is not necessary for employees to work together in the same building. This leads to savings on office costs and allows a business to hold on to staff who may prefer to work from home.
- Marketing: Many businesses now use the internet to market their goods and services. By creating a website a large number of potential customers can be reached at minimal cost/e-marketing/e-selling.
- E-business: Many business functions can be carried out using the internet e.g. E.D.I. Electronic Data Interchange where goods can be ordered automatically from a supplier when stocks go below a certain level.
- Training: In many occupations the training of workers can be done by or with the help of computers and the different software packages available.
- New business methods: Home banking; home insurance quotes; video conferencing; home offices.

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2007

4 (B) Discuss the importance of good communication between levels in an organisation (20 Marks – 4 Points @ 5 marks each)

Good communication is very important for a business. The manager must have good communication skills to communicate effectively with staff and all the people that the business comes into contact with. This helps to avoid any problems that could potentially harm the business. There are 4 principles of good communication that aid and help communication within a business.

(i) <u>Appropriate Language must be used</u>
The objective of the sender is to be understood. Therefore they must consider their audience before they communicate and choose language appropriate to whom they are communicating to. This will ensure that the receiver understands the message and can act on the information received. Jargon must not be used to avoid confusion. If a manager is too technical with a member of staff in a less skilled position, the message will not be understood

(ii) <u>The message must be clear</u>
This must apply in all cases especially when reading, speaking and writing. Writing must be legible to make comprehension easier and faster. For example, instructions given to a new member of staff or even an existing employee on procedures involved in manufacturing must be clear or it may affect the manufacturing process.

(iii) <u>The message must be sent on time</u>
Communication must be made in plenty of time so that the receiver has time to both understand the message and act on it before a deadline expires. The idea of communication is usually with a view that they will act upon that information so timing is key. For example, it is important that a secretary sends notice and agenda of a meeting in plenty of time to ensure that as many or all members can attend and plan for the meeting.

(iv) <u>Listen carefully</u>
Good listening skills are vital to every verbal communication as with these, the receiver will understand the message exactly as intended. For this to happen it is important that the sender pick the correct time and place to do this as doing so in a busy office at a time when the receiver is doing something else will only lead to the message not being understood. For example, when a manager is delegating a task, the employee must listen carefully or they may end up doing the task incorrectly or outside a deadline.

(C) The Data protection Act 1988 sets out the following. Explain any of the two above:

(i) The Rights of Data Subjects
- Right of Access – person has right to receive copy of data held electronically relating to him/her, within 40 days of lodging a written request
- Right of Correction – person has right to correction of errors/inaccurate information.
- Right to Compensation – person has entitlement to be compensated for loss as a result of inaccurate information held. The person also has the right to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner where a data controller is suspected to be in breach of the act.
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- To keep the data secure – data must be protected against unauthorised access.
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- To use the data for the purpose intended- information should only be used for the specific purpose provided
- To obtain the information fairly and openly.
- To keep a register of data kept.
- To provide a copy of data held electronically within 40 days of receiving a written request from a person

(iii) Functions of the Data Protection Commissioner:
- Responsible for supervising and monitoring the operation of the Act
- Keep a register of data controllers and data processors. This includes government bodies, financial institutions, insurance companies and anybody else that collects personnel information.
- Use 'enforcement notices' to deal with people who breach the Act such as holding onto incorrect data or not deleting data when it is not needed.
- Use 'prohibition notices' to stop data being transferred outside the state
- Issue 'information notices' which force data controllers to provide information when requested.
- Investigate complaints made by the public.
- Report to the houses of the Oireachtas annually.