

TEXT BOOKLET

0352/01

BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE

Vantage

Reading

Sample Test

**SUITABLE FOR CANDIDATES WHO ARE VISUALLY
IMPAIRED**

PART ONE

TEXT FOR QUESTIONS 1 – 7

A

Market awareness of the mobile telephone has exploded and the retailer who specialises in mobile phones is seeing growth like never before. Admittedly, some customers buy their first mobile phone in the supermarket, but for advice, add-ons and particular services they turn to the specialist. There are a large number of mobile phone retailers and I can't help but feel the market only has room for four players. Undoubtedly, customer service is the factor that differentiates operators and I think this year we will probably see rationalisation in the sector.

B

When I first started in the industry, mobile phones were retailing at a thousand pounds and were as large as box files. Now, prices are constantly being driven down and handsets are considerably more compact. There is intense competition between the network providers and every time they lower their tariffs, more people come into the market. This will continue, and while retail dealers' profits will be affected dramatically, network providers will have to generate more revenue by offering internet provision and data services to the mobile user.

C

Over a few years, prices have dropped sharply and technological advances have meant products have changed – and are changing. Successful retailers must try to keep on top of these developments and invest in the training of employees so they are able to offer impartial advice to customers. E-commerce is taking off but this won't necessarily replace traditional retail outlets. In order to stand out, you need innovative ideas on customer service. We don't believe in criticising other retailers, but there's nothing particularly exciting out there at present.

D

The mobile phone business is behaving like the internet industry in take-up and the pace of innovation and it's important not to be left behind. We must continue to innovate in delivering the product to the customer. In terms of service provision, you can draw comparisons between us and our closest rival, but clearly all the main mobile phone retailers have succeeded in taking the industry forward. Growth has accelerated rapidly and the mobile telephone has changed from simply being a business tool, to being a means of communication for everyone.

PART TWO

TEXT FOR QUESTIONS 8 – 12

HOTELS FAILING BUSINESSWOMEN

Hoteliers should take note because they are facing serious criticism! Women account for more than half of all business travellers, but hotels are not doing enough for them. (0) G . These show that the number of complaints made about the way women guests are treated is increasing.

The Bartonsfield Hotel in London also conducted a recent survey of UK businesswomen, which reveals that 70% feel they receive an inferior service. (8) . The attitude of hotel staff made them feel out of place in public areas; for example, 62% chose to eat in their rooms because they were made to feel uncomfortable by staff when dining alone. (9) . Four years ago, for example, a similar survey had revealed that a significant number of women travelling alone and wishing to use the hotel restaurant were actually turned away.

Many of the suggestions for improved services put forward by the Business Travel Association are relatively simple. (10) . Placing tables in restaurants in a way that allows the head waiter to introduce guests to one another, so they can choose to sit together over a meal, was a further suggestion. Guests in the dining room would then have the opportunity to meet up with others who might, for example, be attending the same conference, or have the same business interests.

Wendy Manning, executive manager of the Bartonsfield Hotel, agreed with the Business Travel Association that hotel star ratings should be influenced by the level of service they offer to female business guests.

(11) _____. ‘Our survey highlighted the unwillingness of many women to air their views if they are treated badly,’ Wendy Manning pointed out.

A group of influential businesswomen recently met to discuss the results of the Business Travel Association questionnaire. They suggested that businesswomen should not hesitate to make it clear if they have a problem. (12) _____. Once clients have gone, it is all too easy for the issue to be ignored by hotel managers, and it will also be forgotten by the overworked business executives themselves.

PART THREE

TEXT FOR QUESTIONS 13 – 18

PRODUCT LIFE CYCLES AND SALES STRATEGY

One of the most important concepts in sales management and marketing is that of the product life cycle. This is a historical record of the life of a product, showing the stage in its life the product has reached at a particular time. By identifying the stage that a product is in or may be heading towards, companies can formulate better marketing plans. All products have ‘lives’ in as much as they are created, sell with varying profitability over a period of time, and then become obsolete and are replaced or simply no longer produced. A product’s sales position and profitability can be expected to fluctuate over time and so, at each successive stage in the product’s cycle, it is necessary to adopt different tactics.

The two main features of the product life cycle are unit sales and unit profit. The unit sales figures usually jump on introduction, as a response to heavy advertising and promotion, as customers buy the product experimentally. This is generally followed by a levelling off while it is evaluated – the length of this period depending on the use to which the product is put. Then, unit sales rise steadily through the growth phase to the maturity phase, when the product is widely accepted, and so on to saturation level. By this time, competitors will have entered the market with their own version and, from this point, the sales team will have to work even harder to win all additional sales. Eventually, the product’s sales decline as better versions enter the market and competition becomes too strong.

In retrospect, most firms know what happened to their products from launch to withdrawal. They can compile this information from the records of unit sales.

Unfortunately, unit sales are not the complete story as it is unit profit that is the decisive factor, although this is not always recorded accurately. It is this figure that sales management has to monitor, though, to ensure an effective marketing strategy and to produce effective profits.

At launch, the product is costed accurately on the basis of production costs plus selling costs. Initially these remain fairly stable, but, when the product is proving successful, competitors will bring out their own 'copy-cat' products. With a competitor in the field, the original firm has to respond in order to maintain its market position. It can run special sales promotions, improve deliveries, make more frequent sales calls and so on. Often the extra expenditure is not accurately charged to the product and the result is that, long before unit sales are noticeably falling, the unit profit has already fallen.

The product life cycle, then, presents a picture of what happened in the product's 'lifetime', so how can this be used as an ongoing aid to management decision-making? Every sales manager has a chart on which the progress of sales is plotted and this can be used as a guide to the stage of development each product is currently in. An essential management skill is being able to interpret sales results and draw in the stages as they occur. Deciding where each stage begins and ends can be a random exercise, though usually the stages are based on where the rate of sales growth or decline becomes pronounced.

PART FOUR

TEXT FOR QUESTIONS 19 – 33

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING PRESENTATIONS

Most presentations today (0) B on the use of some sort of technology, such as a laptop computer linked to a projector. While this technology can help to (19) presentations better, it also has a (20) of getting in the way. As a general (21) , it is better to (22) on the content of a presentation as a means of (23) your audience's attention, rather than relying on sophisticated equipment.

Bear in mind that when an organisation invites (24) for a contract, they may (25) four or five presentations from different companies on the same day. Each of these companies will probably be using the same computer graphics (26) and the same equipment. The chances are the presentations will be similar too.

That's why the content and (27) _____ of what you say are important. Think about what you want to say and how to say it as clearly as possible. As a first step, you need to (28) _____ the main points you want to get across. Audiences are easily bored and (29) _____ to remember only the most entertaining, exciting or unusual ideas.

Next create your materials, choosing the images for your presentation carefully. Remember you do not want to stop your audience from listening to you, nor do you want to (30) _____ them.

Finally, make all the necessary (31) _____ for the equipment you need. If technology is to be an important (32) _____ of your presentation, make sure you know how to use it (33) _____ and test it out beforehand.

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