



2003

Business Management GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students must give examples to support their responses to achieve full marks for questions. They should read the question carefully and ensure the question is answered.

The extended response questions generally did not score highly as students' responses were not of sufficient length and did not use examples to support their discussion. Students who chose Question 8a, Operations Management, and used Rip Curl as an example either did not understand the difference between a manufacturing and service organisation or had only learnt about a manufacturing organisation and used it as their example, despite the question requiring a service organisation. Question 8b was the most favoured of the extended response questions and generally students handled this well with sufficient discussion and supporting examples.

Section A

Part 1

Question 1

a

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	65	28	7	0.42

Profitability

More successful responses:

An indicator of a firm's success or measure of business performance. Usually expressed as a percentage figure over time, for example, the firm improved its profitability by 10% this financial year.

Less successful responses defined profit as 'total revenue less expenses', thus not understanding the difference between profitability and profit.

b

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	22	39	39	1.16

Strategic direction

More successful responses:

Long-term planning by the business approximately 3–5 years established by senior management regarding the path for business's future.

Less successful responses repeated the term, for example, the strategic direction of the business. Others suggested it was the short-term planning of an organisation done by line managers.

Question 2

a

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	36	9	20	20	15	1.68

More successful responses:

Planning – setting objectives, developing methods/strategies for achieving them, implementing and evaluating their success.

Organising – the facilities, labour, non-labour, equipment, structure to achieve goals.

Leading – motivating staff, modelling appropriate behaviour, creating and communicating a vision for the business.

Controlling – monitoring the performance of the business, establishing performance indicators and evaluating business performance against them.

More successful responses:

Confused management roles with management skills; responses included communication, delegation and time management.

b

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	18	35	47	1.29

More successful responses:

Indicators that measure internal and external business comparisons over a set time period. Measures included – but were not limited to – profit, sales and expenses.

Less successful responses did not understand what a performance indicator was or stated a measure, for example profit, but did not explain what was measured from this.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	15	22	27	22	14	1.97

More successful responses:

Issues suggested included reviewing the materials management processes from the new supplier, changing activities with the new processes, redesigning the facility for the new equipment or the regulatory changes, establishing quality measures about cleanliness, thus relating them back to Operations Management.

Less successful responses suggested Kay Tee would need to do something because of the new supplier and the new regulations, but did not explain any further.

Part 2

Question 4

a

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	42	39	1.20

Vision statement

More successful responses:

A vision statement is the starting point from which organisational aims and objectives are developed. It provides the organisation with a common framework for its decision-making processes.

Less successful responses suggested that a vision statement was a statement of the business vision thus repeating the term to be defined. Others did not explain how it related to Silverstone and so did not score full marks.

b

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	27	29	44	1.17

Staff turnover

More successful responses:

The number of resignations over the average size of the workforce, or the number of resignations of staff who had left the organisation and the number of new staff employed.

Less successful responses suggested the number of staff employed at the organisation, thus not understanding what turnover meant.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	23	24	34	19	1.48

More successful responses offered and explained communication, time management and delegation.

Less successful responses only listed two or three skills but did not explain them so did not score full marks, or else did not relate skills to the survey, thus not reading the question properly.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	24	20	26	18	12	1.75

Stronger responses:

Financial incentives, regular briefings, restating company values, training in customer service and career paths.

Less successful responses generally had problems with the word ‘strategies’ in the question. Many students gave management skills rather than Human Resource strategies in their answers.

Question 7

a

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	20	18	39	23	1.64

Stronger responses:

Consultative and participative were identified as the best likely management style. Students explained these styles giving two or more of their features, typically two-way communication and decentralised decision-making.

Less successful responses suggested autocratic where the manager makes all the decisions and tells the employees what is going to occur. This response was from not reading the question properly as it did not 'address issues of employee morale'.

b

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	27	38	35	1.08

Stronger responses:

Explained by discussing the widespread disenchantment and distrust of the employees. Either consultative or participative was the management style best suited to deal with the issues. The features of the styles were then expanded to show how this style would help the organisation.

Less successful responses continued the justification of the style they chose which was as a result of not reading the question correctly.

Section B

Question 8 (Average mark 4.31/available marks 10)

a

Operations management

Stronger responses:

Students either gave an input, process, output or quality, materials, facility layout and design and technology approach. The organisation examples reflected their understanding and reading of the question as service organisations were used.

Weaker responses, while making a general attempt at the question, used the examples from Rip Curl and their manufacturing process which was clearly not what the question asked for.

b

Human resource management

More successful responses gave a good discussion of attracting, retaining and motivating employees with many good examples used to support essays.

Less successful responses tended to provide only a discussion on attracting employees and did not cover retaining and motivating, thus not answering the question.

c

Corporate management (change)

More successful responses gave good discussions regarding communication, training and participation of employees and justification of how the resistance to change could be overcome.

Less successful responses talked about a change in an organisation that had occurred, but not how the organisation dealt with resistance to the change, thus not answering the question and scoring low marks.

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