

English for Business

ASE3041

Level 3

Thursday 4 April

Time allowed: 3 hours

Information

- There are 4 questions in this examination.
 - Total marks available: 100
 - All questions carry equal marks.
 - There is credit for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
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Instructions

- Do **not** open this paper until you are told to do so by the supervisor.
 - Answer **all questions**.
 - Write your answers in blue or black ink/ballpoint.
 - Please ensure your answers are written clearly.
 - All answers must be correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.
 - You need to communicate appropriately and well.
 - When you finish, check your work carefully and cross out any preparatory work.
 - You may use an English or bilingual dictionary.
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Question 1

Situation

You work in the Marketing Department of a large leisure company – Outdoor Pursuits Ltd. It has recently built a new visitors' centre at one of its country-park locations, the Taw Valley Leisure Park. The Manager, Mr Stefan Godeski, says this to you.

“As you know our new visitors' centre has been completed and we want to let all our previous customers know that it's been built and replaces the old one. Could you please **write a letter, in my name**, to all our past customers/visitors advising them of the opening of our new visitors' centre at Taw Valley Leisure Park and encouraging them to come and see it for themselves?

“Do you remember the old visitors' centre? If you recall there was limited space in the centre itself for ticket sales, and also in the shop, where I think potential sales were lost because of this. We really did not have adequate facilities for the numbers of visitors attending. Lack of refreshments, together with a need for adequate toilet facilities, had been identified as two of the major criticisms of the old visitors' centre. Ticket sales were very low last year and we are hoping that the money we've invested in the new building will eventually bring in much-needed revenue.

“When we planned this new visitors' centre, we had identified that we had missed a significant target market - the family. So we have designed and created this new visitors' centre with the needs of the family very much to the fore.

“The new visitors' centre is four times as big as the old one. It has ample space for exhibiting items such as local artworks. There is a shop selling local produce, and a cafeteria supplying healthy light meals with fresh produce from the neighbouring area. One feature in the cafeteria is that it has a bottle-warming service for parents with babies. There is also a range of baby-foods provided for toddlers, and appropriate seating for babies and young children. Last, but not least, toilets are in a new building with improved facilities provided for the needs of parents with children.

“By the way, please do mention that there is ample parking for coaches, cars and motor cycles. We had over 25,000 visitors last year and, as we want visitor numbers to increase, we are anxious that we have plenty of parking for all visitors.

“Also, please highlight the fact that the opening of this new visitors' centre does mean that we now have upgraded our accommodation and facilities to cater for coach parties. We are very keen to develop this type of business by extending our visitor base. We want to encourage visitors to stay overnight, as we have good-quality accommodation and can offer breakfast if needed.

“Finally, please do emphasise the first-rate outdoor facilities we've provided. For example, a picnic area has been set out with tables and benches located in a tree-lined area to provide a sheltered, pleasant place to eat outside. Also, we're particularly delighted with the children's adventure playground which has been created. We hope the children will enjoy playing there and that parents will have peace of mind knowing that their children are in a secure and safe environment.

“I forgot to mention, parking is free by the way! Thanks for agreeing to do this for me.”

Task

Write a circular letter to all existing visitors of the Taw Valley Leisure Park, as requested. You can assume that the company's notepaper is used but you should include all other components of a business letter.

(Total 25 marks)

Question 2

Situation

You are employed in the Sales Division of a major restaurant chain. One of the restaurants (The Manor Grill) has shown low sales figures for the past few months. Your Manager, Ms Augusta Doman, asks you to advise her on what could be done to assess the current situation.

She says “**Can you produce an informal report** on the main ways we can carry out research into the problem of declining sales figures? I will put the report to the Operations Committee who will decide on what action to take.” The notes of your research are as follows:

From: Interview with Marketing Manager, Ms Julia Jolenta

“It seems you have a problem there. It needs some primary market research. You obviously must find out from the customers themselves what **they** think about the quality of food and service at your restaurant. I suggest one of the most effective ways is to provide them with a questionnaire to complete.

“Questionnaires are a good way to collect data but require very careful construction to be efficient and unbiased. It is usually best to begin with simple classification questions relating to the respondent, for example, sex, age, locality, occupation, etc. These will allow the answers of the respondents to be broken down according to different criteria.

“First and foremost, take my advice and make sure your questionnaire is easy to follow and quick to complete. 10 minutes should be adequate time for anyone to spend on it. I advise you to make clear, right at the beginning, exactly what it is that you are trying to find out. Then make sure your questions are clear and unambiguous. By the way, check that there’s adequate space for the responses and remember to include a ‘thank you’ at the end! I suggest you ensure that the questionnaire is completed at the restaurant and not taken away to be completed later. Finally, when you think you’ve completed your design of the questionnaire, run a pilot check with any friends/colleagues, so that you can sort out any possible problems beforehand.

“Do consider that another way you can find out exactly what customers think is to adopt the Mystery Diner scheme. This is where anonymous customers, employed to report on standards, may go to the restaurant at any time and report back on what they find. This could be another useful way you could find out valuable information and could be very effective.”

From: Marketing Handbook

“There are a number of valuable guidelines relating to questionnaire construction:

- Important - explain purpose of the questionnaire Keep questionnaire brief
- Ensure a logical sequence Questions should be clear and precise
- Aim for a sensible level of precision in responses Avoid ‘yes/no’ answers, if you can
- Questions should not intrude into people’s private lives or beliefs
- It is often helpful to offer a range of graduated responses, e.g. The level of service was:
Excellent/good/satisfactory/disappointing/very poor
- A numbered scale can also be useful: Excellent 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 Very poor
- Leave some space at the end of the questionnaire for general comments”

Task

Write the report for your Manager, Ms Augusta Doman, as requested.

(Total 25 marks)

Question 3

Situation

Your Manager has asked you to read the following article, about the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in America. When you have read the article, answer the questions which follow.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS IN AMERICA

When I was in New York recently, visiting the New York public library in midtown Manhattan, I went to see the local park called Bryant Park. I discovered that this park – once a haven for drug-dealers - had been cleaned-up and reopened through initiatives of local businesses and was an example of New York's business improvement districts (BIDs) which allow private sector landlords to provide municipal services. There are thousands of business improvement districts across America. Although controversial, and often criticised, they are thought to provide the best opportunities for parts of America's cash-strapped cities to get working again and give employment and hopes of prosperity for the future.

Legally, BIDS are intended to augment city services rather than replace them but they operate by, in effect, privatising bits of city government in chosen areas. BIDs raise mandatory taxes on the businesses within their boundaries and use the proceeds to provide security, rubbish collection, tourist guides, street improvements and even rudimentary social services. They employ their own staff and manage their own budgets.

The geographical area of most BIDs runs for only a few streets, usually around a shopping area such as Thirty-fourth Street - Herald Square, home of Macy's department store and Madison Square Garden. But the biggest and most controversial BID covers some of the most expensive commercial property in America – 53 blocks of midtown Manhattan.

The Grand Central Partnership BID, named after the station at its heart, employs hundreds of people and raises funds through the issue of 30-year bonds. This is the first time that a BID has sold its own debt to raise money for capital projects. The cash is earmarked for an ambitious scheme to improve the district's streets with new signs, lighting and green shrubbery.

Supporters of the BIDs claim they work for two simple reasons. First, they tap into the willingness of landlords to pay for local services the city cannot afford, provided they get some return for it. Second, they are able to spend the money they raise efficiently because they are unencumbered by the baggage of municipal politics and the inherent inefficiencies of the city's bureaucracy.

However, it is this lack of public accountability that most worries critics of BIDS. There is pressure to curb BIDs by curtailing the amount of debt they can take on and limiting their life to ten years. It is claimed that the districts are becoming like cities within cities, doing public work without elected control; they are diverting resources from needier parts for the benefit of business, and thereby creating two-tier government.

These criticisms have some weight; yet cities would undoubtedly be less well-served if the BIDs did not exist. New York's BIDs provide millions of dollars' worth of services a year that the city cannot provide. That is helping the city keep business and jobs – and consequently its tax base. New York City only gives a small proportion of the funds needed for Bryant Park. The businesses of the Bryant Park BID provide the lion's share. If they didn't, who could?

Question 3 continued

Task

Answer the following questions, **in your own words, as far as possible**, to show that you have understood what you have read in the article.

- (a) Bryant Park, in New York, is identified as an example of a Business Improvement District. What is the main objective of a BID? (2 marks)
- (b) What do you understand by the phrase: "BIDs are intended to augment city services, rather than replace them"? (3 marks)
- (c) How do the BIDs raise the money they need for the services they provide? (2 marks)
- (d) Identify some of the services which the BIDs supply. (3 marks)
- (e) What was the key feature about the funds raised by the Grand Central BID? (3 marks)
- (f) What are the main claims made for BIDs? (4 marks)
- (g) What are the main criticisms of BIDs? (4 marks)
- (h) Overall, do you think the article favours BIDs? Please give your reasons. (4 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Question 4

Situation

You are employed in a Human Resources Department. Your company's Sports Club wants to offer Tai Chi Chuan exercise classes in response to requests from some staff. You have read the article below about Tai Chi Chuan. Your Manager, Ms Ang Sung Yi, asks if you would **write a memo**, on her behalf, to all staff, giving details of Tai Chi Chuan and its apparent beneficial effects. **She suggests that you concentrate on the perceived health benefits of the exercises for staff.**

Tai Chi Chuan

The name Tai Chi Chuan, which roughly translates as “supreme ultimate fist” or simply “the fist”, is a type of Chinese martial art practised for both defence training and its known health benefits. Today Tai Chi Chuan has spread worldwide. Most modern styles of Tao Chi Chuan trace their development to the five traditional schools: Chen, Yang, Wu/Hao, Wu, and Sun.

Tai Chi Chuan is accessible to all ages and physical abilities and can be practised on many levels, from a simple “meditative” exercise to a realistic martial art. The first, and most familiar, aspect of Tai Chi Chuan is the Hand Form. This is a series of slow movements you can often see performed in the parks, in China, early in the morning. There are many benefits claimed to be gained from practising the Hand Form.

On its simplest level the Hand Form is an exercise system. It is believed that there are meridians or pathways which travel through the body carrying energy. Tai Chi Chuan exercises promote the smooth flow of this energy. By performing the postures of the Form, in co-ordination with relaxed, natural breathing and with the intent or focus of the mind, we help to keep the energy moving smoothly through the channels. Therefore, in doing these external movements, we are assisting the free flow of internal energy,

Tai Chi Chuan can also help to increase flexibility, suppleness and exercise the muscles. The smooth, gentle movements also aid relaxation and help to keep the mind calm and focused. These benefits are extremely useful in today's stressful society.

It is important to have an awareness of the concept of Yin and Yang which is at the root of the system of Tai Chi Chuan and traditional Chinese medicine. Yin is considered to be the soft, feminine principle and Yang the hard masculine principle. In terms of applications a blow or strike would be considered to be Yang force. When the force is coming towards you, you greet it with Yin or softness thereby neutralising your opponent's strike. The postures of the Tai Chi Hand Form are constantly changing from the Yin to Yang aspect. By training slowly, the body becomes familiar with this constantly-changing energy. Through training over a long period of time, we can develop these reactions to become instinctive in a combat situation.

On the health aspect, Tai Chi Chuan classes have become popular in hospitals, clinics, and community centres in recent years. In addition, older people have become interested as a method of low-stress training. In itself each move, or posture, in Tai Chi Chuan, is an exercise in balance, co-ordination, physical control and regulation of breathing.

Researchers have found that intensive Tai Chi Chuan practice shows some favourable effects on the promotion of balance control, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness and has been shown to reduce the risk of falls in the elderly. It was found that Tai Chi's gentle, low impact movements actually burn more calories than the physically-demanding sports, like surfing and downhill ski-ing.

Task

Write a memo to all staff, as requested.

(Total 25 marks)