CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

Unit 15 January 2019 series
Version 1

Contents

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Unit 15 series overview

The structure and case study provided in this session continued to demonstrate the same principles as in previous sessions of this unit. The case study provided information which should appear within the responses provided by candidates and that these provide key information to the responses that should be given to the questions set within the examination. Most candidates were able partially or fully to engage with this case study material and this informed the responses that they gave. Overall it seemed that the time available within the examination was used by all candidates and there was little evidence that there was any time pressure in terms of the candidates not completing all questions within the paper. The knowledge that was demonstrated by candidates showed a wide range of understanding on the topics identified within the content for the unit although, even where sound understanding was shown, there are areas for improvement in terms of for achieving levels within the mark scheme than have been achieved in previous sessions.

Section A overview

This section was made up of three questions which, as in previous sessions, focused on the drivers of change, the barriers to change and the use of theory to create a change management plan. All of these should have answers that make clear use of the context provided within Resource 1 of the associated case study. Time should be set aside by candidates to engage with this material before answering the questions that are linked to this. The most effective candidates were able to assimilate this information as they engaged with the material and then use this as appropriate within their responses.

Question 1(a)

1   Refer to **Resource 1**.

  (a) Outline **two** external drivers of change at *Citru Ltd*.

  1..
  ....
  ....
  ....
  ....**[3]**

  2..
  ....
  ....
  ....
  ....**[3]**

Many candidates were able to provide 1 or 2 mark responses which usually were contextual examples of drivers for change. The two most common ones by far were the introduction of the sugar tax and the intense competition that was facing Citru Ltd as a business. These tended to then have appropriate development in the form of the effect of these on the business to gain a second mark. Few candidates actually achieved full marks for these questions. These responses could have been improved by identifying the actual theoretical driver that these were examples of. Higher ability responses identified the respective driver, applied the context to this and then talked about the effect of this on the business. For example, a three mark response would be:

'One external driver for change is that consumers are switching from sugary, fizzy drinks to water (1). This is a social change (1) and means that Citru Ltd has to look for new ways to increase sales in the future (1).'

Centres should ensure that candidates not only use the case study material which was generally the case, but are also able to theoretically identify which drivers are being exemplified in their responses.

Question 1(b)

(b) *Citru Ltd* plans to open a factory shop that sells directly to the public.

Analyse **four** likely barriers to this change at *Citru Ltd.*

Which one of these four barriers is likely to have the greatest impact on *Citru Ltd* if it is not managed successfully? Give reasons for your choice. **[16]**

As in previous sessions, Question 1b asked candidates to identify barriers to the change. In order to access Level 4, candidates were asked to consider four barriers up to Level 3 responses. This meant identifying the barrier, explaining what the barrier is and its impact and then analysing the barrier in terms of its impact on Citru Ltd.

In this session there were more examples of candidates writing about limiters to success of the change or consequences of the change as opposed to the barriers to change which is the focus of the questions. An example of this would be discussion surround the health and safety issues that arise which would not act as a barrier but is a consequence of the change that will have taken place. Candidates should be prepared to understand the differences between these and ensure that responses focus only on barriers as opposed to the consequences as outlined.

Very few candidates were able to provide four responses at Level 3 to access Level 4; if it is clearly indicated and emboldened in the question that these numbers of responses are required then candidates should provide these to gain access to Level 4. Please refer to mark scheme for examples that could have been used which could have been expressed either theoretically or in the context of the case study. In order to go beyond Level 1 though, clear context was required to achieve Level 2 and above..

Centres should ensure that their candidates not only know theoretically what the barriers to change are, but that they can apply these to any case study material. This will then make access to Level 2 easier as a consequence. Also in terms of achieving Level 3, candidates should be taught about the potential effects on an organisation of a potential barrier being in existence. This response level will be driven by the content of the case material provided in the examination and candidates should practise that they can think through organisational impacts of change that may occur.

Question 1(c)

(c) Produce a plan of action for *Citru Ltd* based on four of Kotter's steps for leading change.

Evaluate the advantages to *Citru Ltd* of implementing the steps contained in your plan.

[16]

For this question, candidates were expected to make use of the indicated change management theory in order to develop a change management plan that could be used to implement the change at Citru Ltd. The requested evaluation would then evaluate the advantages of implementing this plan, which in effect is an evaluation of the advantages of the theory that has been used.

In this instance the indicated theory was Kotter's 8 Step process for leading change and the majority of candidates were able to identify the relevant number of steps. Where this was not the case, the most common issue was providing a vague understanding of the steps, for example, talking about 'communication' without identifying what was to be communicated.

Following on from this though, it was notable that there were responses who did not get beyond Level 1. The main reason for this is that they did not answer the question set. To achieve a Level 2 response, candidates are expected to give an action that would achieve that step of the plan. For example, if a candidate gave as one of Kotter's steps 'communicate the vision' then for Level 2 the candidate should provide information about how this vision would be communicated such as through a whole workforce meeting, via an email to the workforce etc. Many candidates did not provide this information and therefore limited their response to Level 1.

For Level 3 candidates were then expected to write about the effects of the action plan on Citru Ltd. There were few examples of this seen however the most common response tended to revolve around 'improves motivation' or 'enthusiasm' for the change leading to improvements in business performance. Centres should also develop the evaluation skills in terms of the benefits and drawbacks of the various change management theories. These should always be applied contextually to ensure the highest mark possible is achieved.

Question 2(a)

2   Refer to **Resource 2**.

(a) Identify and explain **three** possible impacts on *Citru Ltd's* production workers of working
     in the factory shop.

1..

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....**[2]**

2..

....

....

....**[2]**

3..

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....

....**[2]**

The quality of the responses varied for this question as many candidates tended to focus on the impact
of the change on the organisation rather than on the production workers as stated in question. Many
candidates talked about the data in Resource 2 in terms of absenteeism increasing, labour turnover
increasing etc. but this is not what the question was focusing on.

Where correct impacts were provided, these could have been developed better in the context of the case
study. An example of this is where candidates talked about production workers 'being demotivated' but
then no context development was provided as to why that might be the case.

Centres should be aware that for questions of this type, candidates should be prepared to provide clear
links between the points that they are making and the case material provided. Although the question
indicates looking at Resource 2, it is likely that information can be drawn from Resource 1 to support the
application of the answer to the case study material

Question 2(b)

(b) Analyse the qualitative and quantitative data shown in **Resource 2**.

Advise *Citru Ltd* of the most important issues it needs to address to keep the change management process on track.

Justify your answer.

[16]

The quality of responses to this question showed that a number of candidates were able to access Level 3 through their answers. This meant that they were able to identify an issue from Resource 2, clearly explain the meaning of this issue or provide accurate measurement of the movements of the KPIs and then analyse the effect of these on Citru Ltd to achieve Level 3. In this case study the vast majority of the points within Resource 2 was negative and as such would be considered an issue for Citru Ltd. This may not always be the case so centres should spend time working with their students to consider what is an issue and what is a benefit of the change that has taken place within the case study.

One way of achieving Level 2 was to accurately calculate the movement of the KPIs presented within the data. Whilst some candidates did this well there was clear evidence that a number of candidates did not understand the percentage increases shown within the data table. For example, many candidates stated that labour turnover had increased by 3% when in fact it had increased by 200% or doubled. Whilst candidates correctly stated that this was an increase for Level 1, they then did not access the Level 2 marks because of inaccurately calculating the movement.

Centres should develop with their candidates the skill of once achieving Level 2 responses to move these into Level 3 through writing about the impact of the identified issue on the business in the case study material. This by definition will need to be contextual as an answer which talks about 'productivity' in a retail outlet would not necessarily be contextual. Contextual development in terms of the effect of an issue will achieve a Level 3 response and on this, and other occasions, two Level 3 responses are required to access Level 4. This is because a selection as to which is the most significant issue cannot be made unless a choice has been made from a number of issues available.

Relatively few responses achieved Level 4. When accessing Level 4, candidates will be expected to justify the choice of issue as being the most important. Candidates should not repeat information that they have put in previous sections of their answers to achieve this level. Candidates should ensure that new information is added to the response, usually in the form of consideration of the significance of their chosen issue as being the most important. Again as with other Level 4 responses, some contextual information is required to ensure that the achieved mark is maximised.

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