
APPLIED GENERAL L3

APPLIED BUSINESS

1830/ABS4 Managing and Leading People
Report on the Examination

1830/ABS4
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General Comments

It was pleasing to see students using the knowledge and skills gained throughout their course to produce a variety of responses for this paper. Time was not an issue as nearly all students completed the paper. Students did not use the extra pages for 3-mark questions, and this aided their time management overall.

Students who focused on the emboldened terms within questions performed well. In particular for the 3-mark questions students should demonstrate an understanding of the bold term for their first mark. Students who gained all three marks put their response in the context provided within the question eg a skilled workforce for Q5 or a new leader for Q6. For Q8 students who did well analysed the emboldened term force field analysis within their response, for Q9 it was matrix organisational structure and communication, and for Q10 students who scored highly analysed the emboldened terms power and ability to lead.

For the 20-mark question it was pleasing to see some students showing evaluative skills to reach L5, however these did tend to be one sided. For top marks a balanced response evaluating whether or not empowerment would overcome all the factors resisting organisational change is required.

Multiple choice questions

Question 1 and 2. It was pleasing to see a large number of students demonstrating an understanding of non-financial factors affecting motivation and organisational structure.

Questions 3 and 4 were based around pairs of statements While most students understood organisational change, most students struggled ADKAR.

Question 5

Some students demonstrated understanding of decentralisation in that decisions would be made 'down the hierarchy' or 'away from HQ'. Most students gave a reason for improved performance as employees would have a greater role in decision making. Students who used the context eg that employees with more qualifications and/or training would have the ability to make these decisions gained the third mark. However, there were a large number of students who instead focused on motivation, rather than decentralisation.

Question 6

Students who answered this question well demonstrated an understanding of the Johnson and Scholes cultural web as a tool to understand organisational culture or at least an understanding of one of its elements. There were however a significant number of students who had a gap in their knowledge of this part of the specification. A large number of students did not show understanding of the Johnson and Scholes cultural web nor how a new leader might make use of it. Several students responded about organisational culture in general without specific reference to the Johnson and Scholes cultural web.

Question 7

The most common response here for the first mark was 'the way the business is run' or 'beliefs/attitudes'. Students gained the second mark for eg giving a reason explaining employees would be motivated, but this response needed to be linked with how organisational culture might influence the performance of the company's employees rather than a generic 'motivation would improve' response.

Question 8

This question asked students to use force field analysis to help a business make a decision. Good responses for L3 demonstrated an understanding of force field analysis as a decision-making tool by comparing driving forces for and resisting forces against change. These students used the information to weigh up these driving and resisting forces to analyse why AES plc decided not to use organic ingredients in manufacturing their ready meals. Top marks were awarded to students who analysed why the two resisting forces of higher costs of organic ingredients and uncertainty over common rules would outweigh the one driving force of rising demand for organic products. At L2 students showed an understanding of a decision-making process and described reasons for and against the decision. However, there were a high number of students who did not reference driving and/or resisting forces but instead described making a decision in general terms such as pros and cons or for and against. A number of students rewrote the item without describing or analysing the decision-making process.

Question 9

This question asked students to analyse how a move to a matrix structure might affect communication within the company. Students who answered this question well at L3 used the information from Pat and Kasey eg as there are fewer levels of hierarchy communication will be more direct or as employees will be working in cross functional teams it means the quality of communication improves. Some students also analysed how communication may get worse within a matrix structure as cross functional teams may be unfamiliar with each other, uncertain who to communicate with so the quality of communication could reduce. L2 responses described a matrix organisational structure and/or a hierarchical structure in context. Weaker responses copied quotes from the information but did not use the information to describe or analyse how communication was affected. A small number of students focused on motivation levels or decision making with organisational structures rather than communication. Some students ignored the item and gave theoretical responses re hierarchical and matrix organisational structures. To achieve L2 students need to use the item to describe communication within the organisational structures.

Question 10

This question asked students to analyse Ramon's use of power with his ability to lead his team. Good responses for L3 used the item to link power with Ramon's ability to lead his team. Some students analysed Ramon's use of reward and referent power, eg as his team members are highly skilled, they are more likely to respond to these types of power. At L2 some students gained marks by using the item to describe Ramon's ability to lead his team eg his lecturers responded well to Ramon's praise or recognising them in the College's monthly newsletter. There were a number of students who did not demonstrate an understanding of any type of power.

Question 11

At L2 students presented knowledge in context by describing empowerment and/or factors resisting organisational change. This may have been that employees would be consulted in the change eg by making their jobs more interesting or that employees wouldn't trust Jan to implement promised changes such as pay rises. Some students also described the use of ADKAR without focusing upon the question requirement of empowerment.

For L3 students built upon their answer from L2 with an explanatory response of the benefits of empowerment and/or implications of factors resisting organisational change. Students explained how empowerment may help to make employees feel like they are being listened to eg for production efficiency and/or how employees like Mousa have little trust in managers which means they are expected to resist the organisational change because they will not benefit from it.

Students at L4 developed an analytical approach eg analysing that empowerment would benefit employees as they have suggestions re production levels that have been ignored in the past. So, empowerment made them feel they are being listened to and have a voice. However, employees may not be skilled enough or want this authority so could be less motivated with empowerment and therefore resist this organisational change. Empowerment may not help as Cyril says people were intolerant of change and resisted changes in the past, eg promised pay rise never happened, so even if given empowerment don't believe it will deliver pay and production changes employees want, so won't accept this organisational change. It was pleasing to see students using the item to develop a variety of analytical responses.

Students who reached L5 evaluated whether or not empowerment would overcome all factors resisting organisational change. Those who obtained top marks presented a balanced evaluation putting forward that empowerment will overcome all resistance to change as it satisfies the employees' complaints Jan gathered from survey, but also arguing that it will take time to prove change is going to happen and be sustainable with a pay rise etc., so employees are still likely to resist changes proposed.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.