

Candidates must attempt **FOUR** questions, **ONE** from each of the **FOUR** sections.

EACH QUESTION IN PART TWO CARRIES **30** MARKS

Section 1 Communications and the Working World

Answer question 1 or 2

1. Read the following article about telephone skills necessary in the work place and answer the questions that follow.

Top Tips When Making and Taking Telephone Calls at Work

- ☎ Answer the telephone promptly** – In any business it is vital to answer the telephone promptly. A customer, or potential customer, may choose to take their business elsewhere if kept waiting. Time is money!
- ☎ The greeting** – Always clearly state the name of the business when answering the telephone. Use your greeting to warmly welcome existing and potential new customers. Your tone of voice is important when using the telephone. A friendly greeting can encourage customers to do business.
- ☎ Telephone manners** – What you say and how you say it truly matters when you are dealing with customers. It is essential to be pleasant and polite to all callers. This is true even if the caller is difficult or making a complaint. The relationship a business has with its customers can be helped when its employees have good telephone skills. Poor telephone skills, when employees are rude or unhelpful, can damage relationships with customers and lose business.
- ☎ Handling an unhappy caller** – It is important that employees remain calm when dealing with an unhappy caller. Bad language, personal insults or the use of sarcasm is never appropriate in a business situation, even if provoked.
- ☎ Dealing with customers** – Every telephone call is potentially an opportunity to do business. Employees should always be as helpful as possible when speaking to anybody on the telephone. When answering a question from a customer or potential customer, supply as much information as you can and remember to seek the assistance of a more experienced employee if you need more information.
- ☎ Taking & leaving messages** – When taking a telephone message for other employees gather all the necessary information and make sure that the message is delivered promptly to the appropriate person. When leaving a message, speak clearly and provide all of the necessary information, including contact details, so that a customer or potential customer is more likely to get back in touch.



(a) Why is it important that the telephone be answered promptly in a business situation? (2 marks)

It is important that the telephone is answered promptly in a business situation as customers
or potential customers don't like to be kept waiting. They may become impatient or
frustrated and take their business elsewhere.

(b) (i) Give **two** reasons why employees who answer the telephone at work should be provided with training to develop their telephone skills. (4 marks)

It is important for employees who answer the telephone to have been provided with training
as they are the first port of contact with customers/potential customers. Therefore, they
need to have a good telephone manner, be polite, be clear and informative. They must be
able to record clear and detailed messages for other employees/managers.

(ii) Many companies do not allow employees to make or take personal telephone calls while at work. Explain why you think this is the case. (4 marks)

Many employers don't allow their employees to make personal calls whilst at work because
the phone line is engaged and potential customers/customers may not be able to get through.
This may result in a loss of business. Also, the employee might be distracted if they are
always on the phone. They are less likely to be focused on their work.

(c) A friend of yours on work experience is having trouble dealing with difficult customers on the telephone. Give **two** pieces of advice you would offer your friend in this situation. (8 marks)

I would advise them to refer the matter to the relevant personnel. I would tell them to
remain calm. I would advise them not to raise their voice. Speak clearly and slowly and
ascertain all the facts. Do not engage in personal insults or sarcasm. Do not engage in any
kind of confrontation. Remain business-like and professional. Don't take it personal.

(d) Read the telephone conversations in the pink and blue boxes below and in each case answer the question that follows.

Telephone rings.

Employee: Yeah.

Caller: Is this Good Value School Supplies?

Employee: Yeah.

Caller: Do you have scientific calculators in stock?

Employee: No.

Caller: Will you be getting them in?

Employee: Don't know.

Caller hangs up

(i) Outline **two** problems you can identify with the employee's telephone skills evident in the above conversation. (6 marks)

The first problem that I can see is that the employee is not very polite and welcoming on the telephone. They do not greet the customer in a friendly manner. They strike me as someone who is bored and the customer is annoying them by having a query. This kind of response is not good for business.
Secondly, the employee is not very informative. They are not very enthusiastic. They are not very helpful towards the customer. They don't know when there is a delivery due for the scientific calculator nor are they interested in finding out. They don't take the customer's details so they can ring him back when he/she has this information to hand.
As a result, the customer hangs up and probably takes his custom elsewhere. It is hardly surprising though because the employee was very rude and not very helpful. They clearly did not appreciate the importance of having a good telephone manner.

- (ii) Imagine you work for the Good Value School Supplies Company. At the moment the company is out of scientific calculators, but expects a delivery in the next few days. **Fill in the lines** left for the employee's responses in the telephone conversation in the blue box, below. Your responses should be courteous to the customer and clearly demonstrate good telephone skills. (6 marks)

Telephone rings.

Employee: Good morning, Good Value School Supplies Company, Lorna speaking.

Caller: Hello, do you know if you have any scientific calculators in stock at the moment?

Employee: Unfortunately we are out of stock at the moment but we have a delivery due within the next few days. Can I take your details and I will give you a call as soon as the delivery is made.

Caller: Thank you very much for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Employee: You're very welcome sir. I will call you as soon as we have them in stock again. Have a nice day. Goodbye.

OR