

Profit Through Accommodation

Specimen Paper

The specimen examination questions contained in this publication are representative of the type of questions used to assess candidates taking the written examination paper for this qualification.

A marking scheme for each of these questions is towards the end of this document.

The examination paper consists of 10 short-answer questions. Candidates are given 1 hour 30 minutes to complete the paper. Candidates can score a maximum of 4 marks per question. The examination paper is marked out of a total of 40 marks and candidates will need to obtain 20 marks to pass.

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Answer *all* ten questions that follow this scenario

The Black Dog is an inn with rooms, situated in the Worcestershire countryside. The Black Dog has been run for several years by business partners Helen and Jayne. Over the years the partners have built up the food trade from a lunchtime sandwich offer to a thriving business specialising in freshly prepared locally sourced ingredients. The Black Dog enjoys an excellent all year round trade thanks to strong local support and benefits from its proximity to Worcester and its year-round tourist trade.

The accommodation is a fairly new venture by the partners, the success of the food trade has enabled them to invest in the eight previously unused bedrooms and to renovate them to the standards that they feel are required to compete in the tough local accommodation environment.

Despite having the money to invest, neither of them has any previous experience running an accommodation operation so this has led to the partners employing a full-time receptionist/administration manager, two part-time housekeeping staff a part-time breakfast chef and two part-time waiting on staff.

The accommodation has been doing fairly well to date. The partners have enjoyed occupancy rates of a higher than expected 60% with the majority of their guests being well-off retired couples. Return visits however are rare and the partners do not have any official method of collecting feedback from customers to establish why this is.

The accommodation offer has also helped to boost the food trade with extra covers being enjoyed during evening service.

The partners have made good use of the internet in marketing their accommodation offer and have had excellent reviews on a number of on-line review sites, until recently. A review has just been posted on one of the most popular review sites:

“We were expecting to stay in a quaint countryside inn with all rooms ‘refurbished to a high standard’. Whilst the rooms were clean and indeed recently refurbished, they lack many of the amenities that my husband and I would expect, especially for the price we paid (£120.00 per night bed and breakfast) The staff were not exactly what one would expect for the price paid, when we arrived we were greeted by a very rude and totally unhelpful receptionist. She slapped our keys on the counter and told us we were in room eight, she made no attempt to give us directions other than “up the stairs” not was there any offer to carry bags, we are not as young and fit as we used to be. I must say that we did enjoy a comfortable night and despite not being able to make a cup of tea had

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a rather excellent breakfast the next morning. Overall the standard of customer care leaves a lot to be desired, the rooms lack what I would say are basic amenities and the price is too high for what you will receive. Would we stay again? Only if they put right all that is wrong.”

Helen and Jayne are horrified at the comments and decide to carry out a review of their accommodation offer.

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1. Briefly evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for The Black Dog's accommodation offer.

[4 marks]

2. The case study identifies the main customer type for accommodation as 'well-off retired couples' however it would appear by the comment posted that the accommodation offer is unsuitable for this group. Explain the importance of different market segmentation.

[4 marks]

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3. Bearing in mind the type of guest attracted to the business, describe the elements that must be present to satisfy their needs.

[4 marks]

4. Identify **two** internal constraints present at the Black Dog which may impact on the development of the accommodation operation.

[4 marks]

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5. The guest who posted the review complained about the price charged for the accommodation, explain the importance of correct pricing to the business.

[4 marks]

6. Explain how the administration function could help The Black Dog to maximise its occupancy rates and revenue.

[4 marks]

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7. Despite this poor review, the partners believe that on-line marketing is the way forward for the business. With this in mind, identify the benefits of computerisation in the administration, marketing and delivery of customer service of the business.

[4 marks]

8. The reviewer criticises the staff at The Black Dog. Explain the skills required of accommodation personnel to ensure customer satisfaction.

[4 marks]

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9. Identify incentive and reward schemes that an accommodation operation can apply to meet its objectives.

[4 marks]

10. Explain the impact, in both positive and negative terms, of new technology in building relationships with customers.

[4 marks]

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Marking Scheme

The answers to Questions 1-10 should be covered by the appropriate Assessment Criteria as indicated below. Examiners are instructed to give credit to valid answers.

Question 1

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 1.1 which states:

Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the proposed operation

Question 2

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 1.4 which states:

Explain the importance of different market segments of guest

Question 3

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 1.5 which states:

Describe the elements that must be present to satisfy a guest's needs

Question 4

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 2.3 which states:

Identify the internal and external constraints in developing an accommodation operation

Question 5

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 2.5 which states:

Explain the importance of pricing to reflect the business' competitive environment

Question 6

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 3.1 which states:

Explain the importance of administration in maximizing occupancy and revenue

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Question 7

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 3.2 which states:

Identify the benefits of computerisation in the administration, marketing and customer service of an accommodation operation

Question 8

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 4.2 which states:

Explain the skills of accommodation personnel on customer satisfaction (e.g. communication skills, selling skills)

Question 9

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 4.3 which states:

Identify incentive and reward schemes that an accommodation operation can apply to meet its objectives

Question 10

This question assesses Assessment Criteria 4.4 which states:

Explain the impact of new technology in building relationships with customers (i.e. internet, social networking sites, review forums)