

BUSINESS *Select*

Sample Questions

Interpersonal Understandings

analysis and evaluation of work and other social situations

UNIT 1

Questions 1 – 4

It's the Monday morning meeting of your work group. As leader, it's your responsibility to keep the group operating at maximum effectiveness. As you look around, you note just how varied the members are.

Joanne is trying to explain a new concept to Frank. She is quite excited by the idea (as she often is with her many new ideas) and is pointing at a diagram she has hastily drawn on the back of the agenda sheet. Joanne likes researching new concepts and projects, but tends to be somewhat disorganised, especially where detailed tasks are concerned.

Frank is listening politely, but does not appear all that impressed. He is drumming the fingers of one hand on the table, while entering numbers into a calculator with his other hand, perhaps checking Joanne's idea. He's quite the best worker in his field, and is outstanding at hunting down facts. He is modest about his achievements, however, and often says 'Look, I'm just a number-cruncher, not an ideas person.' He can also be a prickly person to deal with, and prefers to work alone.

Sitting back from the table is **Carla**, the newest member of the team. She is smiling nervously and biting her thumbnail as she listens to Joanne. Carla looks somewhat startled, and looks down at the agenda every now and then, making detailed notations on the sheets, her brow becoming more furrowed with each passing minute.

Also sitting back from the table is **Melanie**, with her frown, and her look of contempt, she is — again — in a bad mood this morning. She is looking closely at the meeting agenda, writing notes in the margin, and looking at her watch. Perhaps she is planning to make some points of order about meeting procedure, as she often does. The only thing she has said so far this morning is a 'That's not funny — that's pathetic!' to a joke told earlier by Joanne. The group simply shrugged it off, each member apparently thinking 'Oh, well, that's just Melanie.' Melanie is very good at what she does, but she seems bored and unchallenged, and she certainly lacks the subtle touch.

1 Carla and Melanie are both described as 'sitting back'.

Of the following, they are most likely to be doing this because

- A Melanie is angry and Carla is bored.
- B Carla is angry and Melanie is bored.
- C both have been rejected by the team.
- D both have made a definite decision to quit.
- E neither has a strong feeling of belonging to the team.

- 2** Someone suggested that you should ask Carla to lead a brainstorming session on this, her first morning at work.

Of the following, this strategy is likely to be

- A** appropriate, because Carla appears to take work very seriously.
 - B** appropriate, because you know that Carla has good university marks.
 - C** appropriate, because Carla would be able to add fresh perspectives to the group's problem-solving.
 - D** inappropriate, because Carla seems to be ill at ease with the group, and her interpersonal skills are unknown.
 - E** inappropriate, because Carla has shown that she has no appreciation of group dynamics.
- 3** Of the following, the most effective strategy to get the best out of Joanne in the next few weeks is likely to be to
- A** have her involvement in freewheeling discussions about a major project that has become stalled.
 - B** ask her to act as the secretary for a technical research sub-group working on a major project.
 - C** commission her to accurately measure trends over a twelve-month period, and use this research to set up a data base which can be used to help solve problems in major projects.
 - D** ask her to lead a group which will tidy up the loose ends of the documentation of a large, complex project which has just been completed.
 - E** have her undergo some training to develop more research skills.
- 4** Of the following, the most effective strategy to get the best out of Frank in the next few weeks is likely to be to
- A** give him a specific, complex problem to solve.
 - B** give him a large, complex project to co-ordinate.
 - C** take him aside and suggest that he should try to be more considerate of others.
 - D** suggest that he take Carla under his wing as an 'apprentice' and show her the ropes.
 - E** ask him to lead a small working group that brainstorms solutions to a particular problem.

UNIT 2

Questions 5 – 7

The following questions relate to a variety of interpersonal issues.

- 5 Before setting up a new project team, which one of the following should be the first question to be considered?
- A Who should be on the team?
 - B What is the purpose of the team?
 - C How will we know if the team is successful?
 - D What methods will the team use during the project?
 - E How can we make the team flexible enough to deal with the unexpected?
- 6 Which one of the following is likely to be **least** useful for the effective functioning of a team working on a project?
- A Being selective about who works on the team.
 - B Having social meetings as well as formal meetings.
 - C Dividing the project into parts and assigning responsibilities.
 - D Giving feedback that says exactly what you think, irrespective of people's feelings.
 - E Having regular meetings to discuss progress, rather than only meeting when there are problems.
- 7 In a situation in which one person confides about a personal problem to another, the most appropriate response in the initial stages would be a response that
- A offers advice or solutions.
 - B invites the speaker to speak freely.
 - C implies that the speaker ought to consider other views.
 - D suggests that the listener has a different perspective from the speaker.
 - E implies that the listener has unusual insight into the speaker's problem.

UNIT 3

A factory manager has called a meeting to talk to three section supervisors about safety problems. There have been several accidents in the past year. At the meeting, the manager tells the supervisors that some of their staff will be observed in their jobs and then asked questions. Each staff member will lose about two hours of work time.

- 8 One of the section supervisors says:
- ‘Two hours work time lost each! We are really short staffed. We can't afford to do that.’
- Which of the following responses by the manager is most likely to ensure this supervisor's active participation?
- A ‘Stop complaining.’
 - B ‘If it's really hard, we might be able to put things on hold. I'll check with my boss.’
 - C ‘Those are the orders I got. I'm just passing on the message. You work out the details.’
 - D ‘We are all busy but you need to be more concerned with safety. Get back to me when you have arranged a timetable.’
 - E ‘I understand it is difficult but we cannot afford to have accidents. We will need to work out a suitable timetable.’

Answers

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|---|----------|
| 1 | E |
| 2 | D |
| 3 | A |
| 4 | A |
| 5 | B |
| 6 | D |
| 7 | B |
| 8 | E |

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