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Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 17 June 2015 – Afternoon

A2 GCE BUSINESS STUDIES

F295/01/RB People in Organisations

RESOURCE BOOKLET

To be given to candidates at the start of the examination

Duration: 2 hours



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- The information required to answer questions 1–6 is contained within this Resource Booklet.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The information contained within this Resource Booklet is based on one or more real businesses.
- This document consists of 4 pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR

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Rest Upon Ltd (RUL)

Rest Upon Ltd (RUL) is based in the South of England and employs over 400 people. RUL manufactures beds and mattresses and it started as a family business in the 19th century. It has always considered quality as its main asset. Its beds and mattresses are advertised as 'hand made by experts for over a century'. RUL has continued to expand and the directors are keen that the business should continue to grow, with the possibility of exporting within the European Union (EU). 5

Much of the manufacturing process for the mattresses is done by hand. The coiled springs are the key component within many of the mattresses and they are tied together with string by hand. The lengthy processes of sewing the mattress covers and the edging of the mattresses are very time consuming. The edges of the mattresses are then protected by pieces of cardboard placed in position by hand, before being covered in polythene ready for distribution to the retailers. 10

Machines are used within the factory, particularly for the cutting of the fabric covers for the mattresses. The machines also cut the foam for a different range of mattresses. Conveyor belts are used to move the beds and mattresses between the different workstations within the factory.

Skilled workers undertake a large proportion of the production process. Some semi-skilled workers operate mainly within the packaging and distribution sections of the factory. RUL employs its own drivers to drive its fleet of vehicles which are used to distribute the beds and mattresses throughout the UK. All of RUL's employees are employed on a full-time basis. 15

Stella Davis, the Production Director, is keen to ensure that the business remains competitive and thinks that the best way forward is to reduce the workforce by introducing more machines throughout the production process. 20

"This would mean a flatter organisational structure and think of the benefits this would bring", she stated at one of the weekly Board of Directors' meetings.

Stella is also keen to ensure that she has the right people doing the right tasks. She has researched the value of Training Needs Analysis (TNA), and she now wants to introduce this process at RUL. However, several directors are more concerned about the amount of time which would be involved. George Monroe, the Personnel Director, considers that Stella's ideas would be better if they were linked to an appraisal scheme. He has suggested that an appraisal scheme would be an ideal way of involving the employees, especially with so many proposed changes. 25
30

George's idea has been well received by many of RUL's other directors. They are keen to see a growth in sales within the EU, given the instability in the UK economy and, in particular, the housing market over the last decade or so. One of the other directors stated: "Our borrowings are low, so we should be able to get the funds needed to meet our expansion plans, especially as our profits, although lower than expected, are still within target. We can afford to spend significant amounts of money on all of these proposed changes if they will help increase production levels." 35

However, Michael Wood, the Finance Director, has raised concerns about Stella's proposed changes.

"What about the disruption to production during the changes and what will happen about retraining time? I would prefer the money to be used elsewhere!", he has said. 40

George Monroe is more concerned about the level of lateness among the staff. He had shown the lateness figures (**see Table 1**) to Stella and was quick to explain that possible changes to the job tasks within the factory and retraining time may make lateness even more of an issue.

Department	Number of employees in department	Total number of days late March 2015	Total number of days late April 2015	Total number of days late May 2015
Sewing	48	43	42	44
Packaging	12	23	32	51

N.B All departments worked for 21 days in each month.

Table 1 2015 Lateness (In two departments out of eight departments)

There is a more pressing concern which is to be discussed at the next weekly Board of Directors' meeting. Bob Downs, the Distribution Manager, has dismissed one of the drivers, Jessica Nash, without first informing George Monroe. 45

After receiving a letter from Bob telling her she was dismissed, Jessica has written to George to tell him that she intends to take RUL to a tribunal on the grounds of unfair dismissal. Bob is convinced that he was right to dismiss Jessica, even though she claims that she has been unfairly dismissed. 50

In a subsequent e-mail to George, Bob listed the following points:

- Jessica has had sufficient warnings about her lateness and poor work attitude
- I have spoken to her on several occasions, asking her to improve – but I don't know when or exactly how often I spoke to her, formally or informally 55
- the driver records show quite clearly that Jessica was late on numerous occasions and that some of her work was below the normal standard expected
- each time Jessica met with me, she made the excuse that her son was ill and needed constant supervision while receiving treatment – so she was often late
- we've been over the points many times without solving the problem. 60

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