

# **ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS SKILLS**

# **SYLLABUS**

## **Upper Secondary**

## **Normal (Technical) Course**

Implementation starting with  
2014 Secondary Three Cohort



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

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# CONTENTS

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	Page
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
• Desired Outcomes of Education	1
• Syllabus Aims	2
• Syllabus Outcomes	3
• Conceptual Framework	4
• Understanding Business Activities	5
• Understanding Basic Marketing	6
• Understanding Customer Relations	7
<b>2 CONTENT</b>	<b>8</b>
• Learning Outcomes	8
<b>3 PEDAGOGY</b>	
• Cooperative Learning	13
• Experiential Learning	14
<b>4 ASSESSMENT</b>	
• Assessment Objectives	16
• Assessment Grid	16
• Scheme of Assessment	17

## **INTRODUCTION**

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The EBS Syllabus aims to develop in students the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to be productive employees and contributing members of society.

The services sector continues to contribute to Singapore's economic growth and offer employment opportunities. It is intended that this syllabus provides students with opportunities to develop generic employability skills, values and attitudes, and foundational knowledge for work in the services sector, namely in the travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries.

This syllabus is an introduction to business through an understanding of business activities, focusing on basic marketing and customer relations in the travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries in Singapore.

The syllabus also provides students with the foundation to further their studies at institutions of higher learning. Through this course of study, students will also become aware of the prospects and challenges of a career in the services sector.

### **Desired Outcomes of Education**

The Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE) are attributes that educators aspire for every student to have upon the completion of his formal education. These outcomes establish a common purpose for educators, drive our policies and programmes, and allow us to determine how well our education system is doing.

The person who is schooled in the Singapore Education system embodies the Desired Outcomes of Education. He has a good sense of self-awareness, a sound moral compass, and the necessary skills and knowledge to take on challenges of the future. He is responsible to his family, community and nation. He appreciates the beauty of the world around him, possesses a healthy mind and body, and has a zest for life. In sum, he is:

- a **confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively;
- a **self-directed learner** who questions, reflects, perseveres and takes responsibility for his own learning;
- an **active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence;
- a **concerned citizen** who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong civic-consciousness, is informed, and takes an active role in bettering the lives of others around him.

The 2014 EBS Syllabus at the upper secondary level is an elective subject offered at Secondary 3 for the N(T) course. The subject caters to students' interests, provides them with a variety of rich learning experiences and equips them with foundational knowledge, generic employability skills and values, relevant for progression to higher levels of training and learning, employment and for life in general.

### **Syllabus Aims**

The syllabus enables students to develop:

- a basic understanding of business activities in the travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries;
- basic marketing concepts and customer relations skills;
- basic employability skills for work in the travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries;
- analytical and evaluative skills, and the ability to make judgments; and
- self and relationship management, social awareness and responsible decision-making.

## **Syllabus Outcomes**

### (a) Knowledge and Understanding

This syllabus intends for students to develop knowledge and understanding of:

- basic business activities in the travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries;
- basic marketing that focuses on understanding the needs and wants of customers and the marketing mix; and
- basic customer relations focusing on communicating with customers and providing customer service.

### (b) Skills

This syllabus intends for students to develop employability and cognitive skills in:

- personal effectiveness;
- problem-solving and decision-making;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication and relationship management;
- initiative and enterprise; and
- learning and personal development.

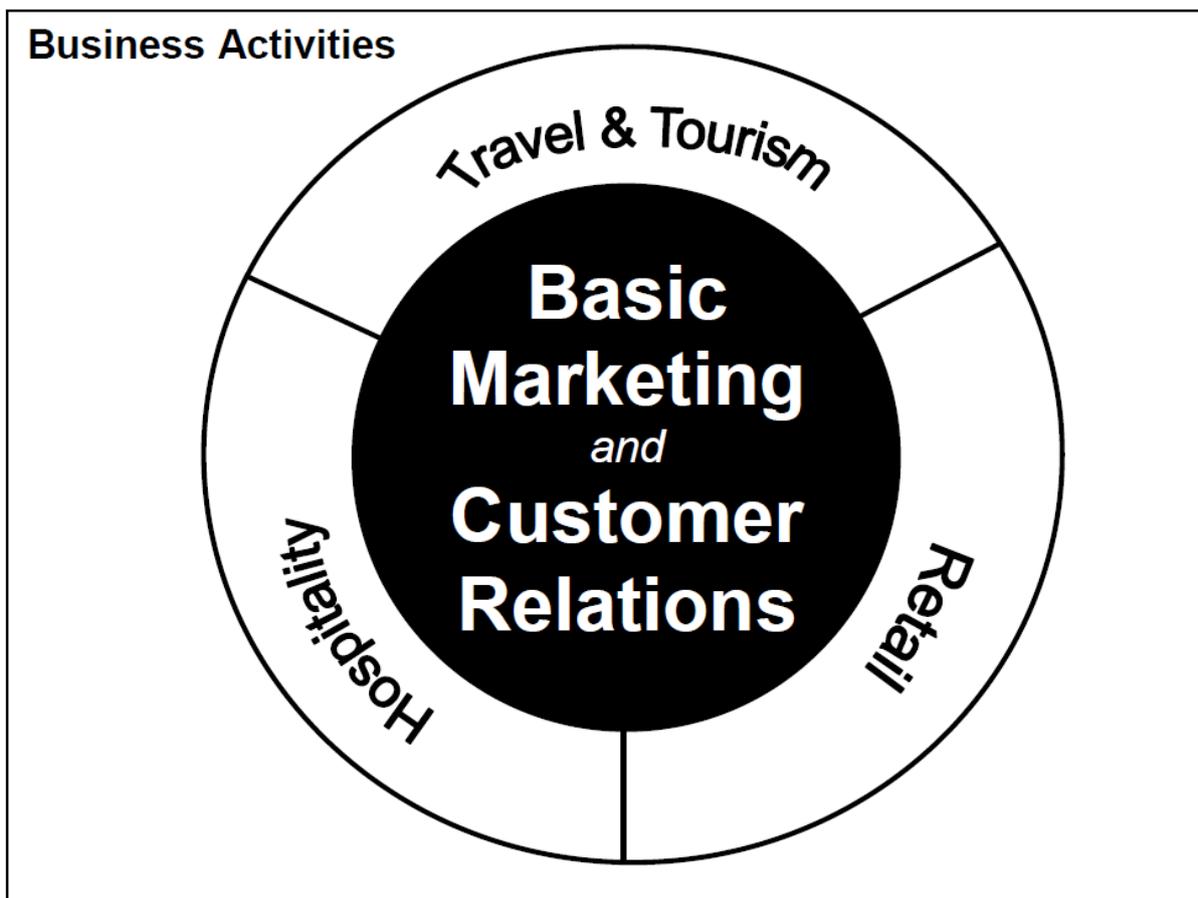
### (c) Values and Attitudes

This syllabus intends for students to develop values and attitudes in the following areas:

- self and relationship management through developing skills in providing quality service and managing service breakdown;
- social awareness through an understanding of the needs of different groups of customers;
- appreciation of the importance of innovation in a competitive environment; and;
- integrity in relating to customers and in handling confidential business information.

## Conceptual Framework

The EBS Syllabus focuses on how basic marketing concepts and customer relations are applied in the three service industries, namely, travel and tourism, hospitality and retail. This conceptual framework is provided in the following diagram.



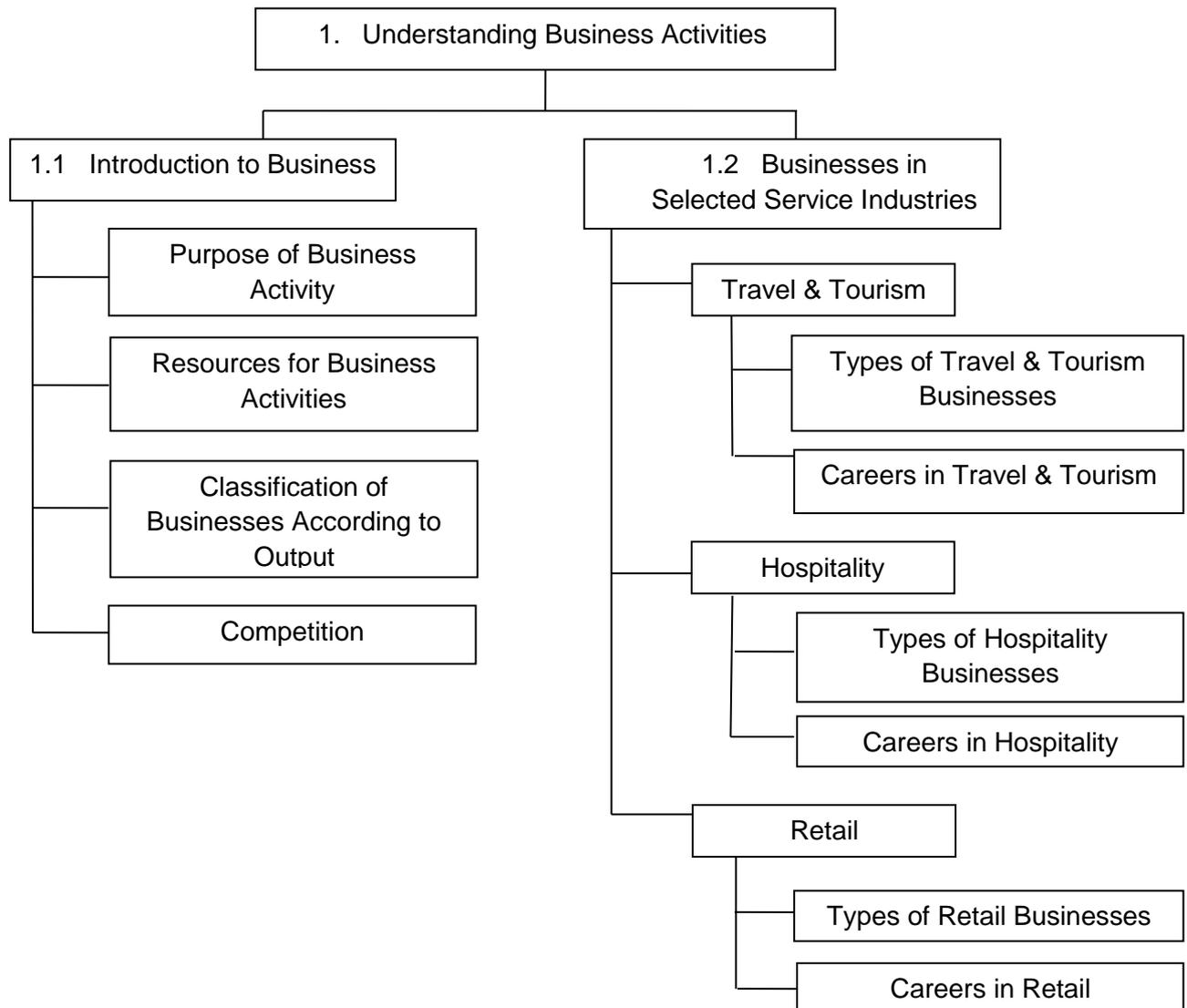
*EBS Syllabus Conceptual Framework*

The EBS Syllabus is organised into three sections:

- (a) Understanding Business Activities
- (b) Understanding Basic Marketing
- (c) Understanding Customer Relations

(a) Understanding Business Activities

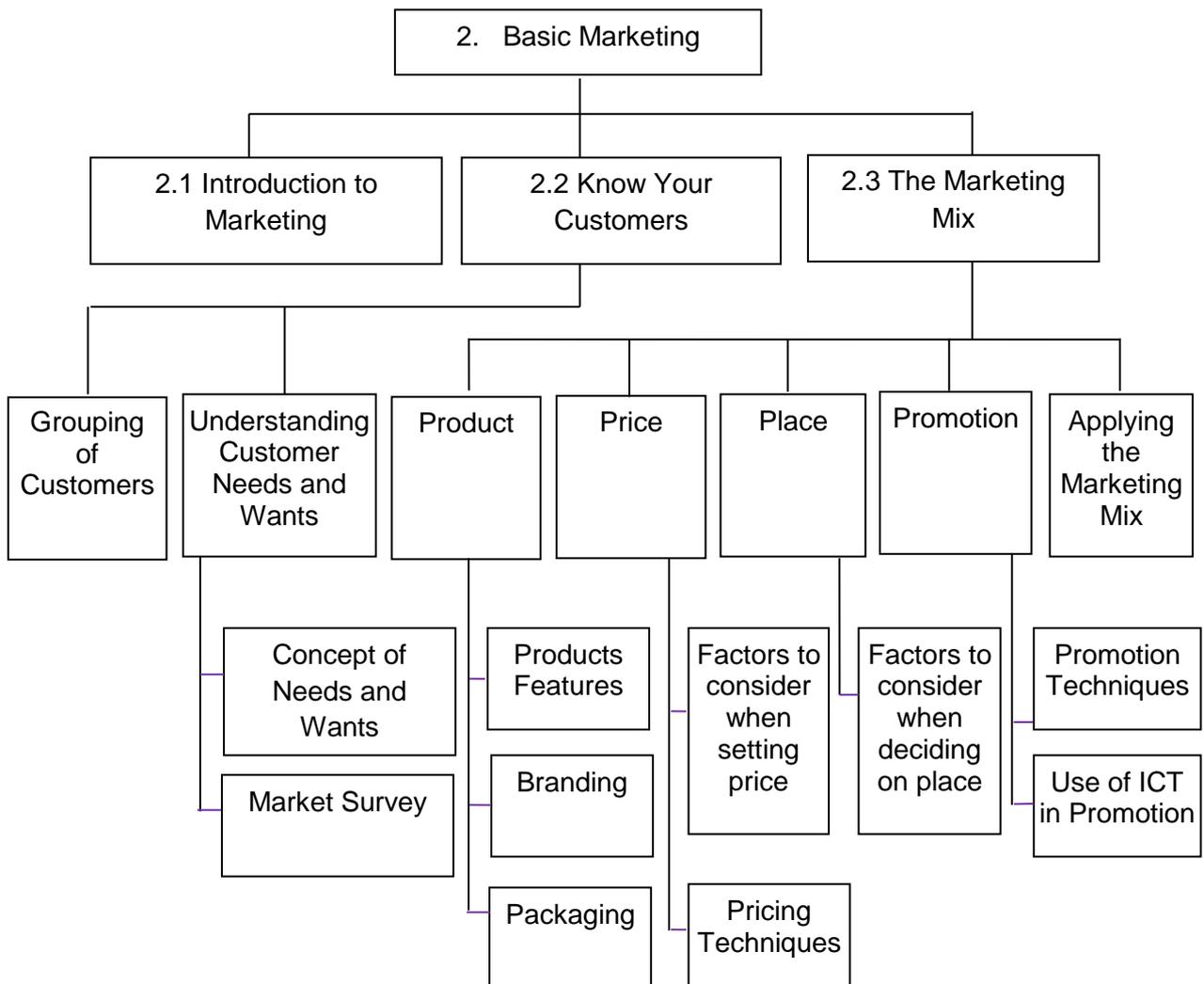
This section helps students to understand the concept of a business and the classification of businesses according to output. Businesses and career opportunities in the services sector, namely, the travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries, are also briefly examined.



*Concept Diagram for Understanding Business Activities*

(b) Understanding Basic Marketing

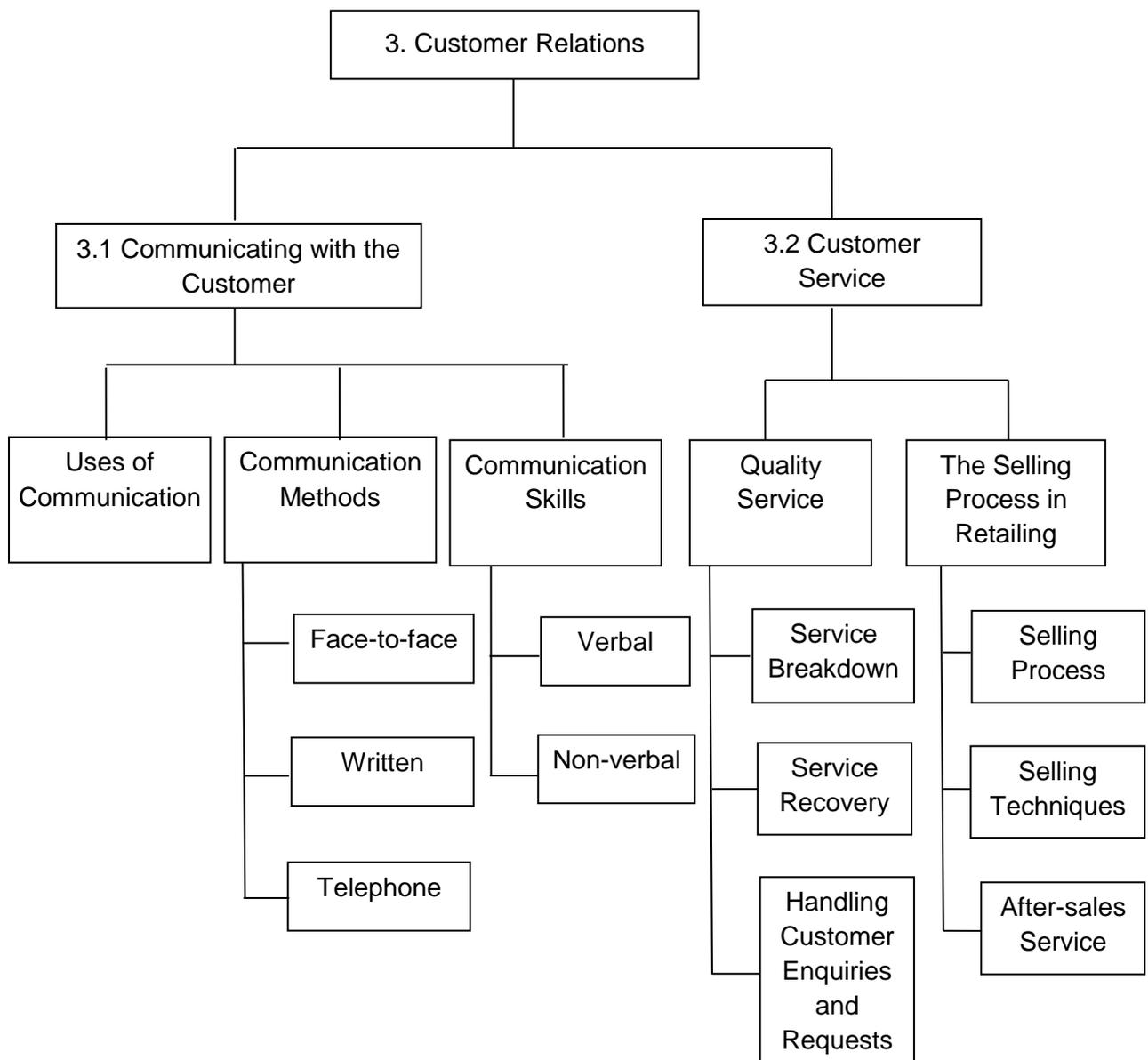
This section helps students to understand basic marketing concepts and how to develop a simple marketing plan. These include the concepts of grouping customers according to their needs and wants and the marketing mix.



*Concept Diagram for Understanding Basic Marketing*

(c) Understanding Customer Relations

This section helps students to understand the need to provide quality service to customers and the importance of effective communication in building customer relations. The selling process in the retail businesses is studied in greater depth.



*Concept Diagram for Understanding Customer Relations*

## CONTENT

Content	Learning Outcomes
	Candidates should be able to
<b>1. Understanding Business Activities</b>	
1.1 Introduction to business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Purpose of business activity</li> <li>▪ Resources for business activities</li> <li>▪ Classification of businesses according to output</li> <li>▪ Competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand that businesses satisfy the needs and wants of customers</li> <li>• identify the resources involved in business activities (e.g. land and labour)</li> <li>• describe and classify businesses in terms of goods producing businesses and service businesses</li> <li>• understand that businesses compete with one another</li> <li>• identify the competitors of a business</li> </ul>
1.2 Businesses in the selected service industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.2.1 Travel and tourism               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Travel agencies</li> <li>○ Tour operators</li> <li>○ Attractions</li> <li>○ Integrated resorts</li> <li>○ Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE)</li> <li>○ Spas</li> </ul> </li> <li>1.2.2 Hospitality               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accommodation and lodging facilities</li> <li>○ Food and beverage outlets</li> </ul> </li> <li>1.2.3 Retail               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Store retailers</li> <li>○ Non-store retailers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and describe businesses in the travel and tourism industry</li> <li>• identify and describe the accommodation and lodging facilities available for guests</li> <li>• identify and describe the types of food and beverage outlets</li> <li>• identify and describe the types of store retailers (namely speciality, convenience, departmental and supermarket/hypermarket) and non-store retailers (e.g. e-retailing, vending machine, door-to-door)</li> </ul>
1.3 Career opportunities in the travel and tourism, hospitality, and retail industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and describe some of the jobs available in travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries</li> <li>• outline possible career paths in travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries</li> <li>•</li> </ul>



Content	Learning Outcomes
	Candidates should be able to
2.3.2 Pricing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Factors to consider when setting price</li> <li>▪ Pricing techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• list the factors to consider when pricing a product</li> <li>• describe, with examples, the different pricing techniques such as: product-line pricing, product-bundle pricing, optional-product pricing, odd-even pricing and promotional pricing)</li> <li>• recommend suitable pricing technique(s) for a given business scenario and give reasons for the recommendation(s) made</li> </ul>
2.3.3 Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Factors to consider when deciding on place (location)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain the factors to consider in determining choice of location</li> </ul>
2.3.4 Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promotion techniques               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advertising                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advertising media</li> <li>- AIDA model</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Sales promotion                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sales promotion techniques</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Personal selling</li> <li>○ Public relations</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Use of ICT in promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and explain how a product is promoted</li> <li>• identify promotion techniques namely advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations and explain how they are used to attract customers</li> <li>• create print advertising materials using the Attention-Interest-Desire-Action (AIDA) model</li> <li>• give examples of sales promotion techniques including discount coupons, contests, gifts, samples, loyalty reward programmes and point-of-sale display</li> <li>• give examples of public relations activities including press releases, sponsorship and special events</li> <li>• identify and describe the use of information communication technology (ICT) in promotion, such as online advertising, social media and e-marketing</li> <li>• recommend suitable promotion technique(s) for a given scenario and give reasons for the recommendation(s) made</li> </ul>
2.3.5 Applying the marketing mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the marketing mix in given scenarios</li> <li>• suggest a plan to market a product</li> </ul>

Content	Learning Outcomes
	Candidates should be able to
<b>3. Customer Relations</b>	
3.1 Communicating with the customer 3.1.1 Uses of communication  3.1.2 Communication methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Face-to-face</li> <li>▪ Written</li> <li>▪ Telephone</li> </ul> 3.1.3 Communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal communication skills</li> <li>▪ Non-verbal communication skills               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Listening</li> <li>○ Writing</li> <li>○ Body language</li> </ul> </li>   <li>○ Personal grooming and hygiene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and explain the uses of communication within a business organisation and with customers</li>   <li>• identify different communication methods and evaluate their suitability for specific purposes such as invitation to a special event or promotion of products</li>   <li>• identify and explain the qualities customer service personnel should possess to communicate effectively and serve a customer</li> <li>• prepare messages and notices, for example, letters, emails and memos, for given scenarios</li> <li>• interpret information from tourist maps, brochures, and other non-continuous texts and communicate information to customers</li> <li>• demonstrate communication skills in making and receiving telephone calls effectively, for example, for taking down sales orders, customer feedback, complaints and enquiries and checking availability of stock at another outlet</li> <li>• record messages from callers accurately</li> <li>• explain the importance of personal grooming in relating well to customers</li> <li>• give examples of good personal hygiene practices at the workplace</li> <li>• identify and explain appropriate dressing for customer service personnel</li> </ul>
3.2 Customer service  3.2.1 Quality service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service breakdown</li> <li>▪ Service recovery</li> <li>▪ Handling customer enquiries and requests</li> </ul> 3.2.2 The selling process in retailing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Selling process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the characteristics of quality service and explain the importance of providing quality service to customers</li> <li>• identify aspects of product knowledge in customer service roles across the services sector and explain the importance of good product knowledge</li> <li>• identify and explain the procedures for handling service breakdown and service recovery</li>   <li>• identify and explain ways of handling customer enquiries and requests, for example, queries, returns of undesired purchase and demand for refunds</li>   <li>• identify and explain the stages of the selling process</li> </ul>

<b>Content</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
	<b>Candidates should be able to</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approaching customers</li> <li>○ Making a sales presentation</li> <li>○ Closing the sale</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Selling techniques</li> <li>▪ After-sales service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and explain selling techniques in handling a sale</li> <li>• identify types of after-sales service and explain their importance</li> </ul>

## PEDAGOGY

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### Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is more than just putting students together to complete an assignment or a project. The learning environment is deliberately structured to promote cooperative interdependence among students. Kagan (2003) used the acronym PIES to denote the key elements of cooperative learning. They are:

**P**ositive interdependence

**I**ndividual accountability

**E**qual participation

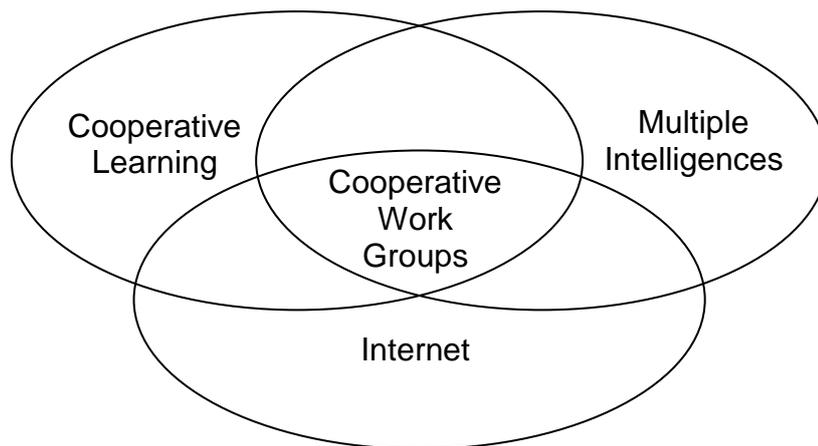
**S**imultaneous interaction

#### (a) Cooperative Work Group

The cooperative work group concept draws important components from the cooperative learning methodologies and builds upon them to construct a new learning environment for students. A cooperative work group is a team of 4 to 5 students working together on a longer term to achieve common goals. The overall learning experience of the group will normally last from a few days to a few weeks, similar to real life in the business world, where most working teams work on projects on a longer term.

The cooperative work group concept shown in the diagram below is adopted from Scott Mitchell Mandel's (2003) book titled *Cooperative Work Groups: Preparing Students for the Real World*. It involves the integration of three components: cooperative learning methodologies, multiple intelligences and the Internet in a learning environment that:

- holistically develops the students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace;
- emphasises the students' individual learning style; and
- integrates the newest technology in the students' work.



*The Three Components of the Cooperative Work Group Concept*

Teachers can design meaningful learning experiences for today's classrooms that utilise the three components: cooperative learning methods, brain research on multiple intelligences and the Internet in preparing our students for the effective living and working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning theory defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience."<sup>1</sup> Experiential learning or learning by doing is recommended so as to help students to understand more abstract knowledge.

## Learning Journeys

A learning journey is a structured learning activity that takes place outside the classroom. Learning journeys are useful in providing students with the first-hand experiences that would not be possible in the classroom setting. They allow students to experience the sights, sounds, smells and textures of the sites. Students are more

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<sup>1</sup> Kolb, David A. (1984), *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*, Prentice-Hall

likely to retain what they have learned through experiencing the sights, sounds, smells and textures of a learning journey.

Examples of suitable learning journeys for EBS are:

- Exploring a tourist attraction in Singapore to learn how it appeals to visitors
- Visiting a shopping mall to learn about the different types of retail outlets and how retailers attract customers

In planning for a learning journey, teachers must be clear about what students are expected to learn from the learning journey. Without preparation and guidance, students will not know why they are going to the place and what they are to observe. Besides planning for the actual learning journey itself, teachers must also plan and carry out pre- and post-trip activities to ensure that students have a meaningful and enriching experience.

Before sending students on these learning journeys, a recce of the places students would visit and explore should be a part of the lesson preparation routine. The recce is to familiarise teachers with the location and enable the teacher to do a risk assessment of the learning journey. Conducting a pre-learning journey activity in the classroom will arouse the interest of students and prepare them for the actual learning journey. A post-learning journey debriefing session is as important. It provides the platform for students to share their learning when they return to the classroom.

## ASSESSMENT

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### Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) describe the levels of skills and abilities demanded of students.

Assessment Objective	Explanation
AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	The examination will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• knowledge and understanding of concepts, techniques and skills of marketing and customer relations in business in relation to the services sector with particular reference to travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries</li></ul>
AO2 Application	The examination will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• application of knowledge and understanding to a variety of scenarios</li><li>• application of effective communication and presentation skills, including the use of IT, in portraying facts and ideas</li></ul>
AO3 Analysis and Evaluation	The examination will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• analysis of data and given scenarios to draw conclusions</li><li>• evaluation of alternatives to make reasoned judgements</li></ul>

*EBS Assessment Objectives*

### Assessment Grid

The assessment grid or specification grid shows the weighting of the assessment objectives, indicating their relative importance. They are not intended to provide a precise statement of the number of marks allocated to each assessment objective.

	<b>AO1 Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<b>AO2 Application</b>	<b>AO3 Analysis and Evaluation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Paper 1	18%	30%	12%	60%
Paper 2	16%	16%	8%	40%
Total	34%	46%	20%	40%

*EBS Assessment Grid*

### **Scheme of Assessment**

The following scheme of assessment provides details on the examination format. There are 2 compulsory papers for the EBS GCE N(T) Level.

<b>Details</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<p><b><u>Paper 1: Written Paper (60%)</u></b></p> <p>There will be 4 to 5 short-response and structured questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. with helping words</li> <li>ii. requiring short answers, not necessarily in complete sentences</li> </ol> <p>Activity type and pictorial questions may be included.</p>	100	1½ hours
<p><b><u>Paper 2: Coursework – School-based Assessment (40%)</u></b></p> <p>The coursework requires candidates to conduct research on a business in one of the three service industries, namely travel and tourism, hospitality and retail industries, in the Singapore context and make recommendations on how the business can improve its marketing mix or customer service. Candidates in a class are required to choose different businesses on which to base their coursework.</p> <p>A total of 20 hours must be assigned during curriculum time to facilitate the completion of the coursework. The 20 hours include in-class research and individual teacher review sessions.</p>	80	20 hours

*EBS Scheme of Assessment*

Please note the following for Paper 2: Coursework – School-based Assessment:

- The Scenario and Task Requirements for the coursework are given in the Specimen Papers.
- The type of industry from which candidates should choose their business will be specified in the question paper in the year of examination.
- Templates to guide the candidates' responses will be provided in the question paper in the year of examination.
- The assessment of the coursework is based on a generic mark scheme provided in the Specimen Papers. The coursework is internally assessed by the schools and externally moderated by the examining authority.