

Thursday 26 January 2012 – Morning

A2 GCE BUSINESS STUDIES

F296/01/RB Business Production

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 upon one or more real businesses.
- This document consists of 4 pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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The Thai Moon Restaurant (TMR)

The Thai Moon Restaurant (TMR) is a large Thai restaurant located in the West Midlands. It has the capacity for 145 customers, although this is very crowded, and targets its food at the 'middle to expensive' end of the market. It is able to do this partly because of its superb location overlooking a large country park. Selling a huge variety of Thai dishes, it also specialises in an extensive and top quality dessert menu, a fine range of wines and beers, and is renowned for its 'exclusive' atmosphere. Kanya, the owner, is wise enough to offer quality English food as well, particularly fish, thus catering for most tastes. All of these advantages mean that Kanya can charge a premium price, particularly as many of her customers are wealthy, regular customers and/or are celebrating an event. Indeed, TMR can be hired out for weddings and other celebrations and this is a significant source of income. The scale on which TMR operates also gives it some advantages over its much smaller local rivals.

Kanya believes that, year on year, TMR can improve. Each year she sets herself informal 'targets' – things which she wants TMR to achieve, such as new products, new customers, new ideas, improving logistics and so on. By late summer she wants to:

- increase the number of customers 'early evening' (5:30 pm – 7:30 pm)
- introduce a small range of Vietnamese and Cambodian dishes.

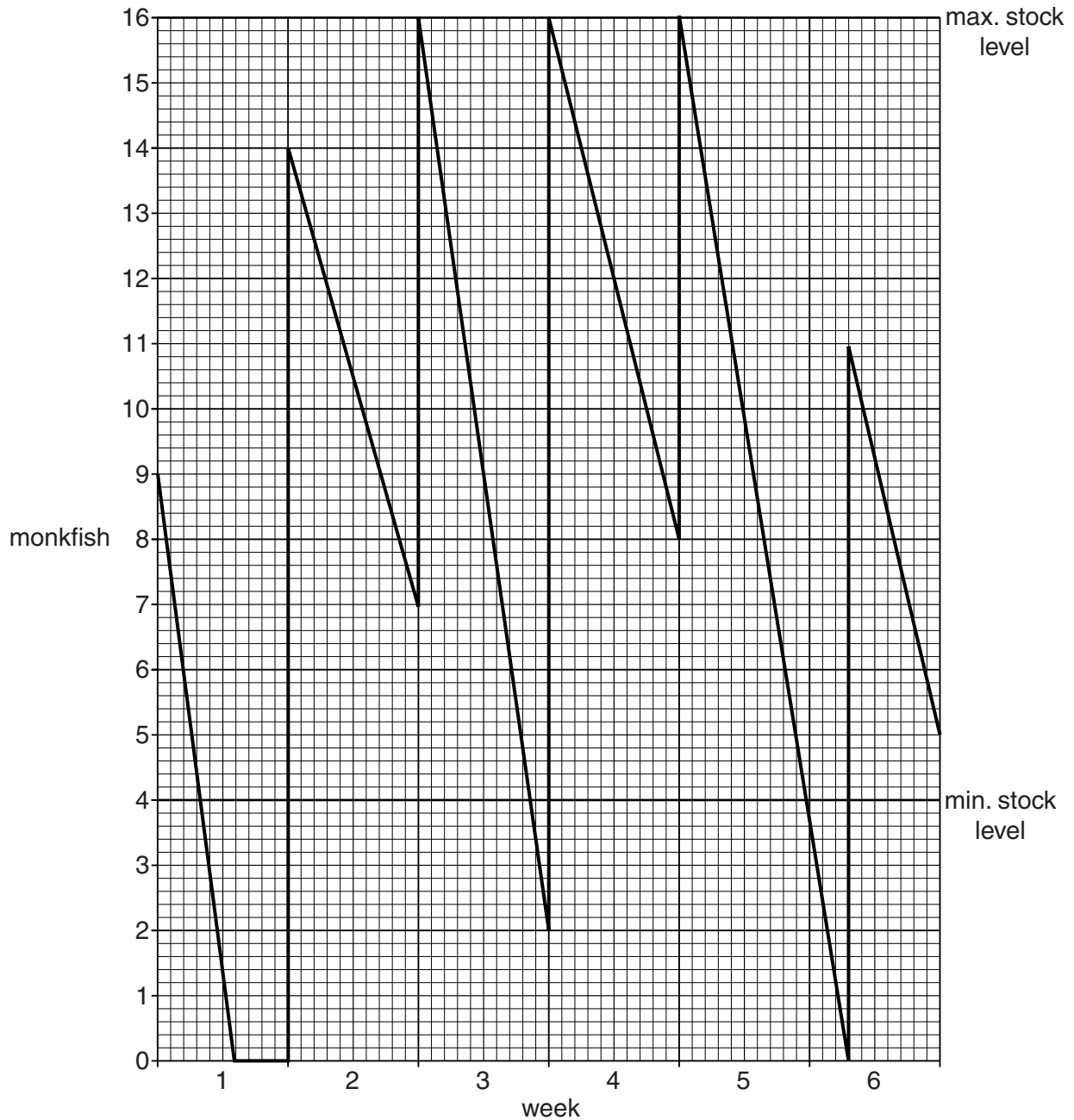
These, Kanya realises, will raise a number of production, marketing, financial and human resource issues, but she is keen to drive them forward.

Instrumental in much of what happens at TMR is Kanya's eldest daughter, Malee. Malee essentially runs the entire 'food operation' from meals being ordered to them being served at the customer's table. In total there are 12 different chefs and kitchen assistants at TMR, although they seldom all work on the same shift. The kitchen is a highly organised production area where everyone knows their job and quality food is prepared quickly. A number of soups, crackers, sauces, etc. are all pre-prepared, but most of what comes out of the kitchen is cooked to order from raw ingredients. There are also 15 waiters and three bar staff.

Given the range of duties and, in the kitchen the range of dishes which TMR produces (and plans to in the future), there is considerable division of labour. Part of TMR's unique appeal is that the chefs will cook just about any request made by the customer and this takes considerable skill and knowledge. This means that Malee ensures that the best chefs do not get involved in the more 'minor' tasks, such as warming up a simple starter and that these are left to the kitchen assistants. The kitchen assistants are very efficient at a straightforward range of tasks, whilst the waiters and bar staff specialise in their discrete areas. This division of labour is applied to other areas of the business as well. Kanya employs her son, Lek, as the sole buyer of supplies. His job is to source the finest ingredients as cheaply as possible, and if the kitchen and bar are not well stocked then he is responsible. Given TMR's 'output' this job is challenging, but Lek has many contacts and is in touch with a large number of suppliers on a daily basis. This leaves Kanya herself as overall manager. She also employs her brother, Ben, to take charge of all financial matters.

One of Lek's greatest difficulties is stock control. TMR prides itself on top quality cuisine made from high quality, fresh ingredients. 'Quality' is not the problem, but 'fresh' most certainly is. As Lek increasingly sources new ingredients from new suppliers and specially imported wines and beers, delivery does not always happen on time. Added to this is the fact that by the very nature of TMR's dishes, there can be sudden demands for particular meals which can lead to stock running out. Lek works with Kanya and the kitchen staff to try to predict demand and keep enough of everything in stock but, with, for example, certain types of fresh fish, this is generally impossible. Indeed, Lek has had particular problems with the stock control of monkfish (see Fig. 1) which has run out twice in the last six weeks. Kanya does not take kindly to customers not getting what they ask for and does not always appreciate the fact that stock, such as monkfish, is not easy to get in regular supply or store for any period of time. Kanya also hates to see waste.

Fig. 1 Stock control chart for monkfish



Both Lek and Malee have recommended to their mother that she consider moving the business to a place called West Canal, 10 miles away in Birmingham city centre. West Canal is part of a regenerated canal network and is an ideal site for many wine bars and bistros and, as such, has much to offer in a marketing sense. It is popular with young to middle-aged people and is adjacent to a number of theatres and clubs. Vacant restaurant premises have just become available which are considerably larger than TMR's current building in terms of seating area for customers, but the kitchen is much smaller. It does, however, contain a very expensive and sophisticated purpose built grill which Malee thinks would improve food quality still further and increase efficiency. Space is also an issue in terms of vehicular access. Kanya reckons that deliveries would have to be more regular and in smaller quantities. West Canal would also involve changing from customers who park next to the restaurant to ones who now walk there and possibly spend the evening in the area.

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