Standards that create the outstanding

BCS Practitioner Certificate in Agile
Specimen Paper A Marking Guidelines

The Information in Scenario 1 is required to answer questions 1 to 2

1 In Delivering Early and Often, we describe 6 'prisms' that can be used to break down an idea and decide what should go into a first increment. Select the **two MOST** appropriate prisms and then apply them to the scenario above, explaining how you would use them to help create the increment which delivers the greatest value to the customer and to Hello Me!

(10 marks)

Marking Guidelines:

Answers should include two of the following:

Value - where the student identifies which market to tackle first and what features would be relevant (Christmas/wedding/other events). Questions should be related to information missing in the scenario - expected number of customers, level of confidence etc and then seek to choose the most valuable features aligned to the customer choice. Similar to urgency, but should understand that it might be wise to avoid smaller obvious money making opportunities and instead focus on the most valuable markets.

Risk - where the student has identified assumptions in the scenario (e.g. 'Hello Me! believes that their is a special advantage in that customers will have an unrivalled selection of designs, another big area of potential will be', 'handling delivery will mean we need to set up multiple courier companies and APIs to them'). Question should relate to challenging the assumptions and then working out which one is the most important. For example, why multiple couriers and therefore multiple API work.

Urgency - where the student discusses the relative merits of differing areas of urgency. This should not be limited to just Christmas (the obvious item), but also note other potential urgent matters mentioned in the scenario. For example, such as paying for printing capacity, and when would wedding invitations become urgent. Similar to value, but should have more focus on time, rather than size of market.

Necessity - where the student discusses the identification of core elements of Hello Me's offering and limits features initially to that core offering rather than additional features for generating higher value. This should be based on a simple customer journey through the system allowing somebody to complete an order (a Christmas card). Additional features which may well deliver value, are held off till later. For example, multiple card orders, APIs to multiple couriers, search engine features)

All the answers must contain information on why they think they could use the prism to break down the problem described in the scenario demonstrating the student's knowledge of how to use the prism.

Stakeholder - Not suitable, no specific information around customers or stakeholders is provided such that the problem can be divided. (No Points)

Geography - Not suitable, there is no benefit to be gained by limiting the customers/features to a location such that the problem can be divided. (No Points)

2 The scenario above contains several fundamental business hypotheses. Select the one which you feel is the most crucial, and explain what type of feedback loop you would set up to test it in advance of launching your first increment. State which question(s) you need to ask to validate the hypothesis and explain why the results might help Hello Me!

(10 marks)

Marking Guidelines:

Fundamental Business Hypotheses - 1 mark for selecting one of the ones from this list

a) Customers want a large number of standard designs and carrying 2000 is a competitive advantage
b) Personalisation is a desirable attribute for greeting cards that customers will pay extra for and which will create marketing stand out
c) Additional gifting or specific markets are desirable and produce specific extra returns (any of the markets is acceptable: wedding invites, additional gifting, Christmas, unusual events

a) Set up exploratory feedback loop to test:

Do customers want a large choice or are they just as happy with a smaller selection?

If they are happier with a smaller selection then this will reduce overhead of stock, warehousing and the search functionality and website complexity etc and therefore cut risk. If the larger selection is necessary they should try to quantify its value - ie how much is it worth to customers?

b) Set up exploratory loop or possibly v. limited functionality concept-to-cash loop

Does personalisation add value? Are customers prepared to pay £1 extra for it? Do they feel it is new, exciting or different? Are they able to use our customisation software?

The company is building its marketing on personalisation - delivering this requires significant software investment. If it is not valuable then this investment would be wasted.

By discovering in advance how important and valuable the feature is to the customer, Hello Me! will reduce its risk.

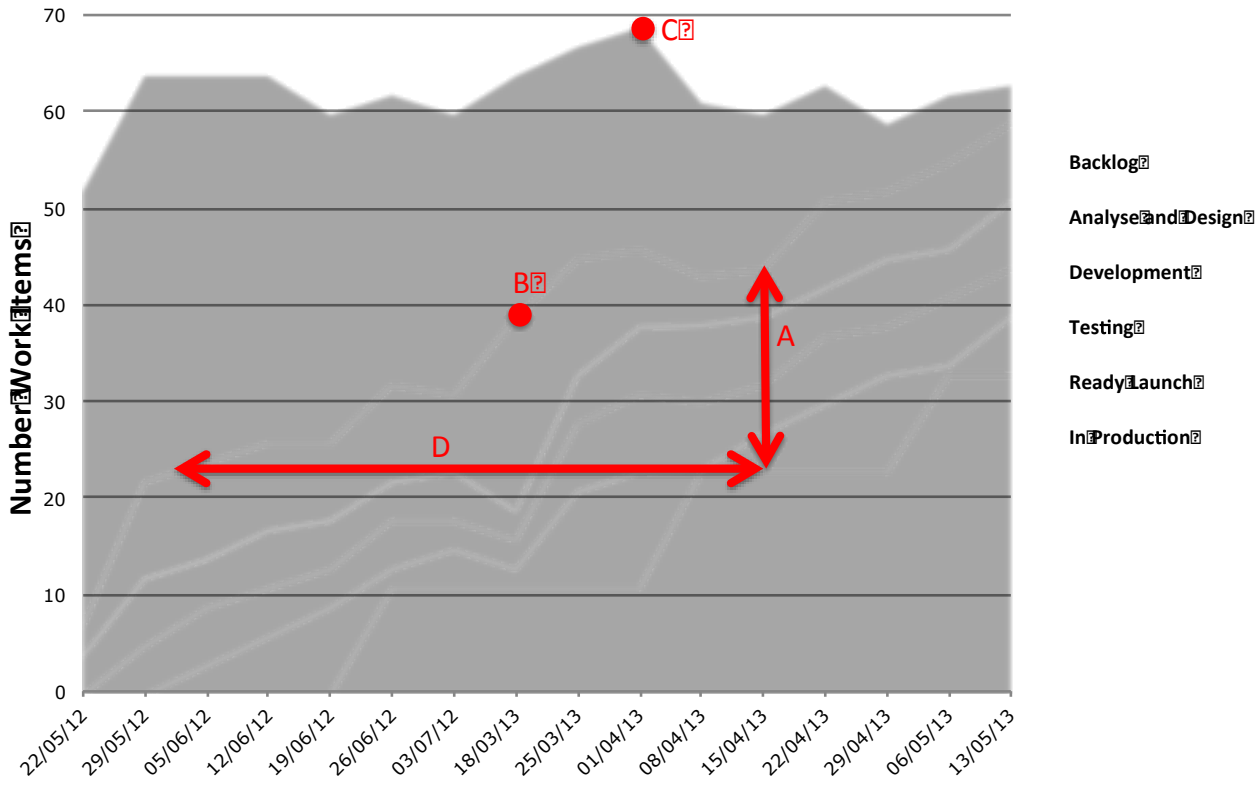
c) Testing markets requires limited concept-to-cash loop testing or you could answer exploratory testing, BUT point out that this will not provide reliable quantifiable value data

Is there value and if so how much in specific markets? Are these markets dependent upon our core product (defined as greeting cards or personalised cards), or can they survive independently?

In order to decide which add-on feature to launch, or whether to go for them at all, we need to know whether these financial assumptions are valid. Some of them may be possible to do independently - for example wedding invites. Some, however, only work if a card is purchased as well. For this there will be extra complexity to fulfill the orders (delivery and multiple items in basket, for example). These will be costly features to build and knowing whether they are necessary reduces risk. There could also be workarounds that permit us NOT to build the functionality in the short term. For example, test a limited market and don't worry about scale, but fulfill orders by hand rather than automating the API etc.

The information in Scenario 2 is needed to answer questions 3 to 4

3 As part of the Kanban initiative, the team have produced a Cumulative Flow Diagram showing their progress.



Various points or lines have been marked on the graph, circle the letter which appears to reveal a bottleneck. How would you apply WIP limits to improve flow in this scenario?

(10 marks)

Marking Guidelines:

Answers should include:

- Identify point B as the bottleneck
- Set a limit for at least one process, preferably each process
- Identify a WIP limit based on the number of people dedicated to working in that process or no higher than the current work in progress
- Adjust the WIP limits over time
- Respond to bottlenecks and queues (buffers) as they emerge

4 Management have not seen the cycle time improvements they were hoping for and are worried that the team will not achieve the launch date. The team are working towards their six month deadline, although they know there is an element of contingency in the plan. The Sales Director has suggested that someone from his team could sit with the developers in order to prioritise the elements required for the Primary Care Conference launch. The IT Director feels this would be a distraction. The team need to go faster in order to hit the initial deadline (he would rather they didn't know about the contingency at all) and to that end, he feels their sole focus should be reducing cycle time.

To this end, the IT Director has suggested that a motivation programme could help. He has found the budget to offer the team lead a 10% salary bonus if cycle time is reduced by 10%. If this reduces further to 15%, then he will buy iPads for all of the team. This should be a popular move, because the team have been complaining for some time that they would like better equipment.

Evaluate the scheme in 300 words or fewer, suggesting one criticism and one possible consequence of the IT Director's idea and why they are negative. Then recommend any one improvement that might be likely to motivate the team to reduce cycle time and why it is effective.

(10 marks)

Marking Guidelines:

Answers should include:

- **Criticisms (one from each)**
  - extrinsic incentives decrease natural motivation
  - if then rather than now then incentives also demotivate
  - is the deadline realistic
- **Consequences (one from each)**
  - individual motivation against team motivation might have negative consequences (lower motivation for the team, reduction in quality etc)
  - iPads may have negative consequences (extrinsic and if then) as well as failing to meet original problem.
- **Improvements (one from each)**
  - anything which mentions explaining the real need of cycle time reduction to the team (the sales launch) as a compelling goal.
  - anything which asks for the team's own solutions on how to improve (meeting, planning, self-organisation).
  - anything which might remove blocks or make this natural motivation easier (permission to spend money, slack to undertake improvement initiatives, extra equipment etc).
  - buy them the necessary equipment as this will remove a demotivating factor

-End of Paper-