



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

# AS Level Business

H031/01 The local business environment

Case Study

**Thursday 18 May 2017 – Afternoon**

**Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes**



## **INSTRUCTIONS**

- This Case Study is required for **Section B** only.
- You should refer to it when answering the examination questions, which are printed in a separate booklet.
- The business described in this Case Study is a **real** business.

## **INFORMATION**

- This document consists of **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

## The Cabin

The Cabin is a transport café located on a major A-road near Crawley in West Sussex. The business has been serving fried breakfasts to lorry drivers for more than 80 years. The 42-seat transport café is currently owned by Mark Webber, the founders' grandson. The transport café now serves a range of meals throughout the day, not only to lorry drivers but to any traveller in need of refreshment. The Cabin also offers fixed-price overnight parking facilities for lorry drivers.

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Pulling up at the transport café on a wet weekday, you would not think it would be the home of award-winning menus. Bumping over the rain-filled puddles in the car and lorry park, there is nothing remarkable about the single-storey building. Even once inside, with the hiss of steam from an industrial kettle and that unmistakable smell of frying food, you could be in one of any number of transport cafés up and down the country. However, The Cabin has just won a major award from 'Truckstop News' for the quality of its food.

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The Cabin's award-winning breakfasts are named after lorries and trucks. The Twin-Axle breakfast is the most popular meal on the entire menu. Other popular breakfasts include the Scania, the Man and the DAF (see Fig. 1).

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### Popular breakfasts at The Cabin

<b>SCANIA £5.40</b>	<b>TWIN-AXLE £6.60</b>
1 x egg	2 x egg
1 x fried bread	2 x bacon
2 x bacon	2 x sausage
1 x sausage	hash browns
beans or tomatoes	beans
2 x bread and butter	2 x toast
free tea or coffee	free tea or coffee
<b>DAF £6.10</b>	<b>MAN £7.40</b>
1 x egg	1 x egg
1 x fried bread	2 x bacon
2 x bacon	1 x sausage
2 x sausage	beans and tomatoes
beans or tomatoes	mushrooms
2 x bread and butter	bubble and squeak, or chips
free tea or coffee	2 x bread and butter
	free tea or coffee

Fig. 1

The transport café is open Monday to Saturday. It serves meals as follows:

- Monday to Thursday from 6.30am to 8.00pm
- Friday from 6.30am to 2.00pm
- Saturday from 7.00am to 12 noon.

The Cabin's longest serving member of staff is Jean, Mark's mother. Jean was brought up at The Cabin, the business her parents founded. It was only natural that she would work at The Cabin when she left school. It is hard to imagine anyone working as hard as Jean, who still works a 12-hour shift most days. Jean reckons she has cooked one million eggs during her time at the café. She remembers the 1950s when the café was so busy that her mum would fry 1,000 doughnuts a day.

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Mark, now in his late 50s, was also brought up at The Cabin. Mark has fond memories of the business from his childhood in the late 1960s when many lorries would stop at The Cabin.

"There were BOAC lorries and British Gas trucks, and I would just hop in and go for a ride. The drivers would let me know if they were coming back that day and then we would be off. It was great", said Mark. Unsurprisingly, Mark eventually became a lorry driver.

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At the end of the 1990s Mark took over the family business. Since then it has been booming – though Mark and his mother admit that they face challenges from so many other rivals, such as garden centres, farm shops and global fast-food restaurant chains. The business uses Facebook as a promotional tool and customer reviews on third party websites are extremely positive (see Fig. 2).

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### Typical customer reviews for The Cabin

<p><u>Facebook</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always a friendly and smiley face. The food is great, the prices match the pocket.</li> <li>• Parked up, well fed and now to bed.</li> </ul> <p><u>TripAdvisor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free wi-fi, service with a smile and clean premises.</li> <li>• My wife and I have just returned from The Cabin after a really good breakfast. The food was with us in less than five minutes.</li> </ul>
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Fig. 2

The Cabin's fixed-price overnight parking facilities for lorry drivers have proved a particular success.

"Lorry drivers can park here overnight for £20," explained Mark. "They get a hot, freshly cooked meal, free teas and coffees and a shower. They can watch TV in the place after we've left and lock up when they go to bed. We do it on a trust basis and it's worked. We'll get some people driving 40 miles out of their way to come here. One driver who was here last night came all the way over from his last delivery in Guildford – and that's a fair distance. I suppose they can tell their bosses that they can get a meal that's worth the long drive."

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Both Mark and Jean believe that the secret to keeping the place a success is pretty simple – giving the customers good food at a decent price. Mark commented, “I can keep the costs down because we use about 150lbs of bacon, a thousand sausages and 120 dozen-egg boxes a week.” In addition, Mark says they have introduced many new ideas to the breakfast menu, as even lorry drivers do not live on a diet of fried breakfasts all the time these days. Healthy options are available. For evening meals they have introduced curries, chilli con carne and spaghetti bolognese. “Salads are also popular”, Jean said. “But some people seem shocked when we bring them out. I don’t know why.”

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