Cambridge Assessment International Education
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENTERPRISE **0454/11**

Paper 1 **May/June 2019**

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Mari's enterprising food donation idea

Background

Mari works as a waitress in a small café near her home, owned by Krishnan, a sole trader. She enjoys working as part of a team and meeting new people every day.

One day a customer at the café asked Mari what they did with the food that they had not sold at the end of each day. Mari explained that when the café closed the staff ate a meal together; this used up some of the food that would otherwise be wasted. Laws and regulations covering health and safety meant that the café often discarded food.

The idea

Listening to the radio later that evening, Mari heard a reporter describe the poverty in her country. The reporter explained that some people were struggling to afford food for their families. Remembering her conversation with the customer in the café, Mari wondered if there was something she could do to help.

The next day, Mari told Krishnan about the news report. Mari asked if at the end of the day she could take any unsold food to give to families in need. Krishnan agreed that throwing food away when people were hungry was unethical and he wanted to help those in need. He asked Mari which organisation she wanted to give the food to. Mari could not answer the question and she realised that the idea needed more thought.

Krishnan suggested that Mari complete some research and then they could have a discussion about the idea. They agreed to have a meeting in a week's time.

The research

That evening Mari started her research. She found a list of charities that operated in her local area and arranged to talk with the organisers of some of these charities.

Most of the people Mari spoke to were unwilling to consider accepting donations of unsold food from a café. They thought that the collection of small amounts of food would be more of a problem than a benefit to their charities. However, one of the organisers, Lester, was very interested in Mari's idea. Lester's charity provided meals each evening for local people in need. With so many people to help, Lester said he often struggled to provide enough meals each day. Any food from the café would help his charity.

The meeting

At their meeting, Krishnan was impressed with Mari's research. He had not realised that so many local people needed this type of help. Krishnan agreed that unsold food could be given to Lester's charity each day, but he wanted to do more.

Krishnan was a member of a business network in the local area. Many members of the business network also owned restaurants and food stores. Krishnan thought that some of these entrepreneurs would also be willing to donate food to the charity. He said that he would explain the idea at the next business network meeting. Mari thought that the entrepreneurs might be more willing to contribute if they heard about the problem from Lester himself. She suggested that Krishnan ask Lester to give a short presentation at the business network meeting.

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The presentation

Lester's presentation to the business network meeting was successful. Many of the restaurants and food store owners decided that they would also like to donate food to Lester's charity. The entrepreneurs' donations would mean that Lester's charity would be able to help more local people. One entrepreneur was worried. If people were given free food, why would they want to pay for meals in her café? Lester reassured her that since the people he helped struggled to buy food from shops, they certainly would not have been potential customers at her café. He also pointed out that some customers were attracted by a business being ethical. More customers might be attracted to her café if they knew that she was part of this enterprising food donation idea.

Another entrepreneur at the business network meeting owned the local newspaper. She asked Krishnan and Mari if she could write a story about their plans to help Lester. The story appeared on the front page of the newspaper the next week.

The future

When the newspaper was published, people started posting their reactions to the story on social media sites. Many people congratulated Krishnan and Mari on the enterprising food donation idea and some people even offered to help. A limited company with food stores all over the country was one of the businesses that contacted the charity. This limited company wanted to donate food to Lester's charity. They also decided to donate food to similar charities near each of their stores.

However, the reactions to the story were not always favourable. A few people suggested that the food might not reach those who were most in need. Some of the restaurant owners became concerned that their enterprises would suffer as the negative reactions might lead to bad publicity. Mari was sure that she could convince them of the benefits of her enterprising food donation idea.

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