

UNIVERSITE PARIS 1 PANTHEON - SORBONNE
UFR 06 / SGEL
LICENCE DE GESTION ET ECONOMIE D'ENTREPRISE, Semestre 3

Partiel d'anglais appliqué à la gestion

Enseignant responsable : J.T. Pindi

Maître de conférences

Date : 18 janvier 2011

Durée : 2 heures

No documents allowed. Write your answers on the official answer sheets provided.

PART I: Reading

*A. Read carefully the text below entitled **For Sushi Chain, Conveyor Belts Carry Profit** and address the ensuing exercises.*

For Sushi Chain, Conveyor Belts Carry Profit

SAYAMA, Japan — The Kura “revolving sushi” restaurant chain has no Michelin stars, but it has succeeded where many of Japan’s more celebrated eateries fall short: turning a profit in a punishing economy.

Efficiency is paramount at Kura: absent are the traditional sushi chefs and their painstaking attention to detail. In their place are sushi-making robots and an emphasis on efficiency. Absent, too, are flocks of waiters. They have been largely replaced by conveyor belts that carry sushi to diners and remote **managers** who monitor Kura’s 262 restaurants from three control centers across Japan. Absent, too, are the exorbitant prices of conventional sushi restaurants. At a Kura, a sushi plate goes for 100 yen, or about \$1.22.

Such measures are helping Kura stay afloat even though the country’s once-profligate diners have tightened their belts in response to two decades of little economic growth and stagnant wages.

Many other restaurants and dining businesses in Japan have not fared so well. After peaking at 29.7 trillion yen in 1997, the country’s restaurant sector has shrunk almost every year as a weak economy has driven businesses into price wars — or worse, sent them belly-up. In 2009, restaurant revenue, including from fast-food stores, fell 2.3 percent, to 23.9 trillion yen —20 percent below the peak, according to the Foodservice Industry Research Institute, a research firm in Tokyo. Bankruptcies have been rampant: in 2009, 674 dining businesses with liabilities of over 10 million yen went under, the highest number in the last five years, according to Teikoku Data Bank, a credit research company.

Along with other low-cost restaurant chains, Kura has bucked the dining-out slump with low prices and a dogged pursuit of efficiency. In the company’s most recent fiscal year, which ended on Oct. 31, net profit jumped 20 percent from the same period a year earlier, to 2.8 billion yen. In the last two months alone, Kura has added seven stores.

“If you look at the restaurant business, **consumers** are still holding back because of employment fears and falling incomes, and there are no signs that will change,” said Kunihiko Tanaka, Kura’s **chief executive**, who opened Kura’s first sushi restaurant in 1995. “Amid

these worsening conditions, our company feels that consumer sentiment matches, or is even a tail wind” to the Kura business, he told **shareholders** earlier this year.

With wages weak — average annual private sector pay has fallen 12 percent in the last decade, to 4.05 million yen, or about \$49,300, in 2009 — the Japanese now spend less on eating out. Meanwhile, Japanese companies have cut back sharply on their entertainment expenses, further hurting restaurant sales. Total corporate spending on dining and entertainment has halved from a peak of 9.5 trillion yen in 1991 to 4.8 trillion yen in 2008, according to data from the National Tax Agency.

In the depths of the slump, in 1995, Mr. Tanaka started a company based on serving quality sushi on the cheap. Instead of placing **supervisors** at each restaurant, Kura set up central control centers with video links to the stores. At these centers, a small group of managers watch for everything from wayward tuna slices to outdated posters on restaurant walls.

Each Kura store is also highly automated. Diners use a touch panel to order soup and other side dishes, which are delivered to tables on special express conveyor belts. In the kitchen, a robot busily makes the rice morsels for a server to top with cuts of fish that have been shipped from a central processing plant, where workers are trained to slice tuna and mackerel accurately down to the gram.

Kura spends 10 million yen to fit each new restaurant with the latest automation systems, an investment it says pays off in labor cost savings. In all, just six servers and a minimal kitchen staff can service a restaurant seating 196 people, said a company spokesman, Takeshi Hattori.

Traditional sushi chefs have not fared so well, however. While the overall market for belt-conveyor sushi restaurants jumped 42 percent, to 428 billion yen, in 2009 compared with 2003, higher-end sushi restaurants are on the decline, according to Fuji-Keizai, a market research firm.

“It’s such a bargain at 100 yen,” said Toshiyuki Arai, a delivery company worker dining at a Kura restaurant with his sister and her 3-year-old son. “A real sushi restaurant?” he said. “I hardly go anymore.”

Adapted from: Hiroko Tabuchi, *The New York Times*, December 30, 2010

B. Vocabulary (5 points)

a) Definitions: *Define or explain the following concepts in English as they are used in the text. Do not translate them into French.*

1. managers (paragraph 2, line 4)
2. consumers (paragraph 6, line 1)
3. chief executive (paragraph 6, line 3)
4. shareholders (paragraph 6, line 5)
5. supervisors (paragraph 8, line 2)

b) Synonyms: *Find equivalent terms to the following ones in the text. Give the paragraph and line references of the terms you have identified.*

6. recession: _____

7. closedowns: _____

8. shops:_____
9. factory:_____
10. workforce:_____

C. Comprehension (5 points)

Answer the following questions in your own words using complete sentences. Do not copy sentences from the text.

1. What is Kura's specificity?
2. What is the current situation in the Japanese restaurant sector?
3. How can this situation be explained?
4. How does Kura operate?
5. How well do belt-conveyor sushi restaurants perform on the market in comparison with traditional ones? Say why.

PART II. Grammar (5 points)

Make correct sentences using the following elements. For each sentence, choose between the simple past and the present perfect.

1. Japan's economy / shrink / since the mid-1990s.
2. Traditional restaurants' profits / peak / in the early 1990s.
3. Workers' wages / shoot up / about 30 years ago.
4. How long / households' budget / decrease?
5. The Japanese market / not yet rally.
6. Companies' entertainment expenses / plummet / for several years.
7. When / the Japanese restaurant sector / start shrinking?
8. The dining-out sector / not recover / recently.
9. Kura / expand / since 1995.
10. The bottom-line of traditional restaurants / get worse / in 2000.

PART III. Writing (5 points)

On the basis of insights gained in reading the text above on the one hand, and drawing on your experience as both a consumer and a business scientist on the other, *discuss*, in a minimum of 250 words, *the organisational structure of an automated fast food restaurant compared to that of a traditional one.*

Your discussion should include the job positions you would expect to find in both structures as well as the advantages and drawbacks of operating one type over the other.

Write coherently in continuous paragraphs. When you finish, count and write the number of words you have used in your essay. You lose 1 point if you fail or forget to do so.

Key to answers and guidelines for marking

Part I. B: Vocabulary (5 points)

a) definitions

Answers

1. *managers*: executives who are in charge of a company's resources
2. *consumers*: buyers of goods and services who use them to satisfy their needs
3. *chief executive*: person who is at the head of a company, also called CEO or managing director
4. *shareholders*: people who own part of a company's capital, also called stockholders
5. *supervisors*: employees who monitor the work of other employees

Marking

0.25 point for a satisfactory content of the definition the student has provided. Another 0.25 point if the definition is worded in correct English. Nothing to be awarded if otherwise.

b) synonyms

Answers

6. recession: slump (paragraph 5, line 1 or paragraph 8, line 1)
7. closedowns: bankruptcies (paragraph 4, line 6)
8. shops: stores (paragraph 8, line 3)
9. factory: plant (paragraph 9, line 4)
10. workforce: staff (paragraph 10, line 3)

Marking

0.25 point for a good answer. Another 0.25 point if the student has provided the correct text references. Nothing to be awarded if otherwise.

Part I. C: Comprehension (5 points)

Expected Answers

1. Kura is an automated sushi restaurant chain in Japan in which food is cheap as it is mostly prepared and served by robots and conveyor belts.
2. The current situation in the Japanese restaurant sector is a dire one as dining-out has been on the decrease for a number of years and restaurants suffer from a lack of customers.
3. This situation can partly be explained by the broader economic situation in Japan which was hit by a recession in the mid-1990s. This has resulted in a decrease in salaries and corporate spending which has affected demand.
4. Managers work in three remote centres from where they can control what happens in the chain's sushi restaurants in which only a limited number of workers are employed. Fish is cut

in advance at a single central factory that supplies all the chain's 300 restaurants throughout Japan.

5. Belt-conveyor sushi restaurants have been doing better than traditional ones as they have reduced operating costs to a minimum. This enables them to offer cheap meals whereas traditional sushi restaurants have been hit harder by the recession as their costs and prices have remained high and they have found it difficult to adapt to the drop in demand.

Marking

Up to 1 point for a good answer, divided as follows:

- 0.5 point if the substance of the answer is satisfactory.
- 0.25 point if the answer is written in good English.
- 0.25 point if the answer is not a word for word reproduction of the text.

Nothing to be awarded if otherwise.

PART II. Grammar (5 points)

Answers

1. Japan's economy has shrunk since the mid-1990s *or* Japan's economy has been shrinking since the mid-1990s
2. Traditional restaurants' profits peaked in the early 1990s.
3. Workers' wages shot up about 30 years ago.
4. How long has households' budget decreased *or* How long has households' budget been decreasing?
5. The Japanese market has not rallied yet.
6. Companies' entertainment expenses have plummeted for several years *or* Companies' entertainment expenses have been plummeting for several years.
7. When did the Japanese restaurant sector start shrinking?
8. The dining-out sector has not recovered recently.
9. Kura has expanded since 1995 *or* Kura has been expanding since 1995.
10. The bottom-line of traditional restaurants got worse in 2000.

Marking

0.5 point for a correct answer. Nothing to be awarded if otherwise.

PART III. Writing (5 points)

Part III. Writing

Marking

1 point to be systematically awarded for adequate minimum essay length (**250 words**). Please make sure that the student has counted the number of words used in the essay and that the word count is genuine or accurate. This point is to be withheld if the essay is not long enough or if the student has failed to provide the word count.

Up to 2 points to be awarded for satisfactory substance. The breakdown of points is as follows:

- up to 0.5 point for a satisfactory description of job positions in a traditional or in a traditional fast-food restaurant.
- up to 0.5 point for a satisfactory description of job positions in an automated fast-food restaurant
- up to 0.5 point if the student discusses the advantages of operating an automated fast-food restaurant compared to a traditional (fast-food) one.
- up to 0.5 point if the student discusses the disadvantages of operating an automated fast-food restaurant as opposed to a traditional (fast-food) one.

Up to 2 points to be awarded for the standard of English. The breakdown of points is as follows:

- up to 0.5 point for a good sequencing of ideas (*coherence*)
- up to 0.5 point for a good use of link words (*cohesion*)
- up to 0.5 point for good spelling and for a good choice of words, especially for adequate use of specialist terms (*vocabulary*)
- up to 0.5 point for good sentence construction (*grammar*)

Note: *up to* means that you should feel free to award less if warranted: a quarter of a mark instead of half a mark for example.