5.2 Location and break-even analysis

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 22 marks**

KEY WORDS break-even output • contribution • margin of safety • outsourcing • offshoring • reshoring

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **location** decisions, reorganizing production (outsourcing, offshoring, reshoring) and **break-even analysis** .

You must be able to:

- explain quantitative and qualitative location factors
- distinguish outsourcing, offshoring, insourcing and reshoring
- calculate contribution, break-even output, margin of safety and the output for a target profit
- draw and read a break-even chart and show the effect of changes in price or costs
- explain the limitations of break-even analysis

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

■ Location

Quantitative factors can be measured: cost of land and rent, wages, transport costs, government grants and taxes. **Qualitative factors** are harder to measure: quality of infrastructure, skills of local workers, closeness to customers or suppliers, local culture, political stability, the owners' preferences, ethics.

Reorganizing production: outsourcing (subcontracting): another firm does part of the work (e.g. cleaning, IT); **offshoring**: moving work to another country; **insourcing**: bringing work back in-house; **reshoring**: bringing work back to the home country.

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■ **Break-even analysis**

term	formula
contribution per unit	price − variable cost per unit
total contribution	contribution per unit × output
break-even output	$\dfrac{\text{fixed costs}}{\text{contribution per unit}}$
margin of safety	actual output − break-even output
output for a target profit	$\dfrac{\text{fixed costs} + \text{target profit}}{\text{contribution per unit}}$
profit	total contribution − fixed costs

A **break-even chart** shows fixed costs (horizontal line), total costs (starting at fixed costs) and total revenue (from the origin). Break-even is where total revenue meets total costs. A **price rise** makes the revenue line steeper and lowers break-even output; a **rise in costs** raises break-even output.

Limitations: assumes all output is sold; assumes price and variable cost per unit stay the same; hard to use for many products; costs are not always simply fixed or variable.

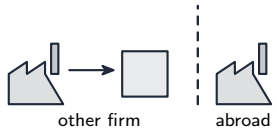
Answer shapes: contribution first → break-even → margin of safety → interpret → limitations.

2 Practice

2.1 Define **contribution per unit**. [2]

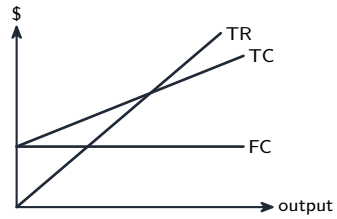
price − variable cost = ?

2.2 Distinguish between outsourcing and offshoring. [2]



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2.3 A firm has fixed costs of $24,000 a month. It sells each unit for $20; the variable cost is $12 per unit. It sells 4 000 units a month. Calculate the break-even output and the margin of safety. [4]



2.4 Explain **two** qualitative factors a hotel chain should consider when choosing the location of a new hotel. [4]



3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Oakline Furniture must choose a site for a new factory. The data for two sites are shown.

Discuss which site Oakline should choose. [10]

	site A	site B
rent per year	$60 000	$110 000
average wage	$2 400/month	$3 000/month
distance to main customers	400 km	30 km
government grant	$150 000	none
skilled carpenters nearby	few	many

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