

Answer all the questions.

1. Dissatisfaction at Benton and Son

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John Benton had built up his industrial blinds business over the last 25 years and now employed over 100 people in his factory and 20 fitters out on the road, who were managed by his son Michael.

John had just received a letter of resignation from his Production Manager, the content of which shocked him:

'I can no longer work in an environment where the only viewpoint that matters is yours. There are many talented people in this organisation who are afraid to speak their mind and are very unhappy in their jobs. It is little wonder that staff turnover at Benton's is so high and I am glad to be joining Walton's Furnishings, an organisation where my ideas and efforts will be appreciated.'

John showed the letter to his son Michael, who managed the fitters. 'I knew this would happen, Dad', he said angrily. 'In the 21st century you simply cannot treat people in such an **autocratic** way as you do. If you carry on like this, we will have no one left to manage at all in the factory. Walton's Furnishings have employed at least ten of our staff in the last eighteen months and they have not gone there for better pay. We should get the Human Resources Department to carry out a **benchmarking** exercise to see how we might improve the motivation of our staff. The **quality circles** initiative Human Resources put in place with my fitters has worked wonders, increasing productivity by at least 20%.'

- (a) (i) What is meant by *benchmarking*? [2]
- (ii) How would the Human Resources Department carry out a *benchmarking* exercise? [4]
- (b) What are *quality circles* and how might they benefit Benton and Son? [6]
- (c) To what extent do you agree that John Benton's *autocratic* management style is likely to have a negative impact on the business? [8]