



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2005

### B2B MARKETING MANAGEMENT

#### General Comments

Only twenty-six students sat for this examination in the August diet. As a consequence, it is dangerous to draw too many conclusions from such a small group. This cohort included people sitting the examination for the first time as well as resits. Overall, the standard of the papers was poor. The main reasons for this could be summed up in two areas: poor examination technique and lack of knowledge of the relevant topics. It reinforces the need for proper preparation and reading.

#### Question 1

There was a significant polarisation in the standard of answers to this topic. The better answers demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the relevant concepts and frameworks. They tended to structure the discussion around these concepts. Weaker answers, by contrast, dealt with the question in a superficial and general manner. They specifically failed to get to grips with the assertion made in the question. For a question that is worth 40% of the available marks, this demanded that students allocate significantly more time to it than the other questions on the paper. Two and a half pages does not allow for a meaningful discussion or debate on this topic.

#### Question 2

Weak answers demonstrated a hazy understanding of the various steps in the research process: a significant weakness at the final stage of this programme! Other answers did not get to grips with the specific challenge of conducting research in a B2B setting. Stronger answers made an effort to relate the discussion to the situation as portrayed in the question.

#### Question 3

This was not a popular question. Most candidates who attempted it demonstrated a basic understanding of the challenges of trying to gain customers in the public sector and referred to the need for knowledge of relevant gatekeepers and the challenges involved in developing a tender.

#### Question 4

This question was designed to encourage students to focus on the importance of customer involvement and engagement in the new product development process. Surprisingly, this was not an issue that was explored by all candidates. Some answers focused on the importance of supplier involvement and this of course, was a relevant issue.

#### Question 5

Stronger answers focused on the importance of price transparency. Companies operating in such an environment also have to demonstrate a flexibility in their pricing structures in order to respond to competitive activity in this area. There is also a strong need to have a clear understanding of the cost dynamics and the price elasticity of the existing and potential customers. Weaker answers focused on general aspects of e-business.

### **Question 6**

Although the issue of control appears regularly in this paper, many candidates did not adequately explore the issue of feedback and how it fits into the control and monitoring process. Too many answers rehearsed the standard forms of control and did not go any deeper into the question.