

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

GCE Applied Business (6921)
Paper 01

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our qualifications website at www.edexcel.com. For information about our BTEC qualifications, please call 0844 576 0026, or visit our website at www.btec.co.uk.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our Ask The Expert email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

Alternatively, you can speak directly to a subject specialist at Pearson about Edexcel qualifications on our dedicated **subject Advisor** telephone line: 0844 372 2187

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

January 2012

Publications Code UA030096

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2012

Report for 6921

The feedback given below is based on comments from all examiners involved in marking this unit.

This paper considered two main businesses for the first two thirds of the marks. The first scenario related to a promotion on *Facebook*. This was clearly a scenario that candidates could relate to but some candidates approached some of the questions on the basis of personal knowledge and not on the basis of the context in which the questions had been set, nor, sometimes, in the context of businesses promoting. The second scenario related to *Clifftops*, a business renting out holiday chalets. Candidates related well to this scenario.

Questions 8 to 10 required an understanding of how specific real businesses actually carry out their promotions. Question 8 was about the use of animated characters in advertising, question 9 about direct marketing with catalogues and question 10 about the element of public relations (PR) in sponsorship. All questions were accessible and well answered by those candidates who had good knowledge of the terms, the actual businesses chosen and who read each part of the questions carefully.

Unfortunately the usual perennial weaknesses remain, despite them being flagged up after every series. They are:

- Not reading the questions carefully enough. This was particularly striking in this series where many marks were thrown away simply because a word or a phrase was ignored by the candidate. Q1(i), Q5(a) and Q6(b) showed clear examples of this.
- Not following the instruction given in the question, for example Q3 'with reference to the information in Figure 1 and Figure 2'.
- Not considering the context of the question in sufficient depth as with Q2(a), Q5(b) and Q7. Candidates must also take in consideration the stem of questions.
- Not understanding some very basic terminologies as with 'cost effective', 'internal constraints' and 'public relations'.
- Not considering the number of marks being awarded for a question.
- Writing to the space provided, especially for candidates with large handwriting.
- Not developing answers, especially where the command word and number of marks awarded indicate that this should be done.

Comments on specific questions

1 (i)

Candidates who read the question carefully tended to give well selected and explained answers, usually relating to job centres or recruitment agencies. However, a significant minority of candidate did not read the question carefully enough and ignored the requirement to examine 'one type of good

or service'. These candidates generally gave answers about businesses looking for employees, such as Tesco, and ignored the need to relate the good or service to people who were currently unemployed.

1 (ii)

Most candidates could give explanations of why the use of the key words 'currently unemployed' might lead to some of the business's target not being reached and gained good marks. There were two main reasons why candidates did not gain marks.

- They gave examples of why people who had 'currently unemployed' in their workplace section would not actually be looking for work, for example they were pensioners or people still at school or university. These people would not have been a specific target for the business.
- They gave the reason that people might not be on *Facebook* which was not about 'currently unemployed' being on the member's page.

2 (a)

Despite the two methods of payment, cost per click (CPC) and cost per thousand viewing (CPM), being explained in the stem to Q2, many candidates found this a difficult question to answer. The main approach was that people might click on the link by accident and the business would then have to pay.

There was very little thought about the business context involved, the fact that a business might use either of these methods as a mean of promotion. There were also very poor assumptions about how the payment of such advertising would take place and many candidates assumed that no payment would be made if less than 1,000 viewings took place or that CPC would automatically be more expensive than CPM, or that the business would be paying for CPC the moment someone clicked on the link.

2 (b)

Most candidates could give a benefit but this was poorly developed to show why the benefit came from having the link. Some candidates ignored the requirement for two benefits and therefore restricted their possible overall mark, even with good development, to just 2 marks. There were also good answers that considered the benefits of the business having a link on the *Facebook* page and of having its own website. The best answers also considered the limitations of what could be advertised on the *Facebook* page compared to what could be advertised on the businesses own website.

3

Some candidates did not follow the instruction to reference their answers to the information given in Figures 1 and 2, but instead wrote about the benefits or drawbacks of using *Facebook* as a method of advertising from their own personal knowledge. General arguments, such as users being more interested in social interaction and some people not having *Facebook* pages, were stated with no reference to *Galt Toys* at all.

Figures 1 and 2 provided a great deal of information that could be used for the discussion and the vast majority of candidates had little trouble of scoring well at Level 2 or low Level 3. Some candidates only considered

benefits or drawbacks and only the very best candidates went on to make clear comparisons in terms of overall importance of the benefits and drawbacks. It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates did recognise the importance of parents, as well as the children, as a target market for the toys and there were well thought references to such factors as the importance of 'pestering' from children when toys are bought and how that might be absent if the age limit of 13 was taken into consideration with reference to *Facebook* accounts.

4

If candidates started by stating the requirements of ASA they tended to give good answers although sometimes examples were weak or absent. There was some confusion as to the exact role of the ASA and often inappropriate Acts, such as The Consumer Protection Act, were stated as requirements or examples. The limitation of the ASA's responsibilities to oversee advertising standards did not seem to be understood by these candidates. They seem to have forgotten that the unit they were studying was Investigating Promotion.

5 (a)

This was another question where a significant minority of candidates did not read the question carefully enough and ignored the fact that the advertisement was being placed in the 'Saturday edition'. Instead they focused on the fact that this was a national paper, which was actually part of what should have been considered for Q5(b).

The majority of candidates did refer to either: the fact that many people would not be working on Saturdays, and would therefore be more relaxed, have more time to read the papers or even more time to buy them, or: the fact that the Saturday edition had the Travel and Holidays supplement. Only the best candidates referred to both of these.

5 (b)

The majority of candidates scored only 2 or 3 marks, mainly because they did not develop their answers. There was often a great deal of assumption that was not then backed up with sound reasoning, for example people would, or would not, want to visit the holiday village because it was close by or far away, local papers would not have colour facilities and people in the North would want to take holidays in the South but not people living in London.

Only the better candidates thought about the wider picture of the situation *Clifftops* was facing in terms of the economic slowdown and its inability to rent all the chalets. These candidates, correctly, argued the importance of reaching a wide target audience and hence the limitations of only advertising in local South of England Newspapers.

6 (a)

Most candidates concentrated on the approach that people asking for the brochures might only be interested in being entered for the prize and might not, therefore, look at the brochure itself. Many then stopped, with no

further development, ignoring the total number of marks available and the need to take the explanation significantly further.

As with other questions some candidates only thought about the question, and not about the details in the stem. These candidates wrote about drawbacks of brochures in general. Others did not note the limitations in the question itself and wrote about the costs of producing or sending the brochures or argued that people would treat the brochures as junk mail because they would not have been expecting them, even though they had requested them.

6 (b)

Unfortunately this was another question where many candidates did not read the question carefully enough. A quarter of candidates scored no marks and this was mainly due to the fact that they did not consider the 'nature' of the prize, as they were asked to do. Instead they wrote about the fact that there was a prize and why that was an attractive feature of the promotion.

Almost another quarter of candidates only managed to gain 1 mark overall. This was mainly due to them not understanding the term 'cost effective', even though they had identified the nature of the prize. Usually they took cost effective to mean 'costly' and wrote about the costs involved in offering a free holiday.

Candidates who highlighted the nature of the prize and understood the term 'cost effect' gave well argued answers, but they were very in the minority.

7

Most candidates had little difficulty getting to Level 2 but only a minority of candidates considered anything other than making selections that would be in budget and cover the four weeks with some general benefits in terms of position, size and colour. There was very little consideration of alternatives so few managed Level 3 and only the best candidates gave a reasoned conclusion that considered a range of factors.

It was disappointing that no candidates really thought about the practical elements of this kind of advertising campaign, for example the costs of having different sized advertisements on different weeks, the complications in terms of content of moving from a half page advertisement to a double page spread. There was also very little consideration of what else might be in the supplement in terms of editorial and competitor's advertisements, although there was some candidates who did consider this.

The main reasons why candidates lost marks were as follows:

- Did not recognise that this was over 4 weeks.
- Miscalculated the budget so their recommendation could not be afforded.
- Made selections that were considerably below budget, ignoring the fact that the business had actually put £100,000 aside specifically for this venture – showing poor understanding of the way businesses actually operate their promotions.

- Made selections that fitted the budget but had very limited justification in terms of why chosen positions or sizes were actually any better than other possible combinations.
- Made unjustified assumptions about the importance of specific sizes or positions.
- Failed to appreciate that the advertisements were being placed in a specific Travel and Holiday supplement and argued, for example, that males would be attracted to the back page because that is where the sports reports would be.

Questions 8 to 10

As required for these questions it must be clear that candidates are dealing with real businesses, but there are some candidates who do not have sufficient knowledge of real promotional campaigns that match the questions. When they are being asked to describe, assess, explain, etc, what actually happened in the campaign they are giving generalised details of what could have happened rather than actual details of what did happen. These questions expect candidates to have studied real promotional campaigns and to use knowledge of these to answer the questions. Without this knowledge, the potential marks will be considerable reduced.

Q8

Most candidates had little difficulty in coming up with a suitable advertisement. There were some candidates who seemed to be confused by the term 'animated', even though examples were given in the stem, and some candidates who saw the animated character(s) as the focus of the advertising, not their use to advertise something else.

(a) This part was mostly well done and the majority of candidates gained both marks. However, some candidates gave very little detail and some candidates gave why the characters were used not how they were used.

(b) Answers were usually fairly basic and lacking explanation about why there would be high costs and hence constraints. There were some very good answers where candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of many aspects, from production to payment for licences and actors to provide voice-overs. Some candidates did not deal with the production of the advertisement but with the media cost of showing them.

(c) Nearly all candidates could give a characteristic of the animated character but few went on to consider the 'type of good or service' being advertised. Some candidates related the character to the name of the business, as with the characters of Churchill and Hastings, but not to the service, of insurance. Other candidates related the characters to the target audience, often children, but failed to explain how this related to the nature of the product.

Q9

Nearly all candidates chose appropriate businesses but lacked knowledge of what decisions were actually made so that the answers to parts (b) and (c) lacked detail.

(a) Most candidates gave a valid explanation, but there were some candidates who muddled up direct marketing with the process of delivering the final product.

(b) Most candidates gave basic method(s) but few developed their answers to explain how the sources were processed and then lead to the catalogues being sent. This was another example of where a significant number of candidates did not consider the total mark and the need to develop their answers.

(c) Some candidates did not understand the term 'internal constraint' and gave external constraints or a mixture of the two. Answers tended to be general and not applied to the actual business chosen, limiting the development marks.

Q10

This was generally poorly answered by many candidates who found it difficult to isolate the PR element of many of the examples of sponsorship. Sponsorship usually includes a major element of PR but candidates often focused only on the publicity aspect of this form of promotion. Candidates who focused on the 'improving image' element of PR tended to give good answers to the whole question.

(a) Some candidates did not know what PR was and gave answers that only related to sponsorship, such as increased publicity.

(b) Some candidates muddled up the sponsor with the business being sponsored and did not give any particular feature about the sponsored business. Others only talked about how the sponsor would gain exposure and not about the image or profile that would be enhanced by being associated with the sponsored business. Where the nature of PR was well understood candidates usually gave good answers.

(c) Many candidates gave answers that either related to the logo or name being displayed at one or other of the locations given in the stem. For businesses sponsoring television programmes or some sporting events candidates did not seem to appreciate that the programme or event was the location of the sponsored business. Candidates who had a wide knowledge of the actual businesses involved and their sponsorship arrangements could provide good examples, well explained.

Issues for future series

The points listed below repeat comments made in previous reports, but they are ones that are still **not** being addressed by many candidates – hence marks are being lost unnecessarily.

1. **The applied approach** – All businesses used in these papers relate to real businesses, either named or with the names changed. Preparation for this paper should, therefore, include as much study of the promotional techniques used by real businesses as possible.

2. **Terminologies** – Candidates need to know all of the terms given in the syllabus **and** common terms that relate to the real world of promotion.

3. **Reading the question/following instructions** – Many marks are still being unnecessarily lost, simply because candidates have not read the question carefully enough or have not taken the context into consideration.

4. **Questions requiring extended answers** – There will continue to be two questions with 11 marks in the future series. Students should be shown how to develop their answers so that they can provide in-depth and detailed answers for these questions.

5. **Questions based on own study** – Students must be able to use knowledge and understanding of a wide range of real promotional situations in order to answer questions on any part of the syllabus. This must be in sufficient depth to show clear details of the promotional campaigns.

Please also note the comments made about online marking in previous reports and the comments made about writing only to the space provided on the paper itself. Centres need to ensure that their candidates are not being disadvantaged simply because of the layout of the paper. Additional work outside of the specified area on the paper, or on additional sheets, is totally acceptable, but, when this is done, it is vital that the candidates **indicate** somewhere on their answer to a specific question that they are using additional paper or completing the answer somewhere else in the actual booklet. Preferably, they also indicate where the rest of the answer is.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467

Fax 01623 450481

Email publication.orders@edexcel.com

Order Code UA030096 January 2012

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

