



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
June 2012

## Travel and Tourism

**TT05/PM**

Unit 5 Marketing in Travel and Tourism

### Preliminary material

To be issued to candidates on or after 1 May 2012

#### Instructions

- This material **must** be kept unmarked for use in the forthcoming examination.
- You **must** take this material with you into the examination.
- Do **not** contact the destinations and facilities mentioned in this material for more information.

#### Advice

- You should read the information contained in this booklet and become familiar with the data provided.

## MARKETING A VISITOR ATTRACTION

### SEA LIFE CENTRES

Sea Life Centres are marketed to families seeking a short, entertaining, educational experience. They are marketed as being an environmentally-concerned and expert guide to thousands of extraordinary occupants of the seas and oceans. By combining modern display technology, biological expertise and entertainment techniques, each centre provides themed journeys through temperate and tropical waters, as if on an undersea voyage. Exhibits are displayed in mocked-up habitats offering a close encounter with sealife, including sharks, seahorses and stingrays.

Sea Life Centres champion the cause of marine conservation, through education, raising awareness, and direct action.

It was in 1979 that the first Sea Life Centre (SLC) was opened in Oban, Scotland. David Mace started the Sea Life Centre chain, and a further seven SLCs were soon opened across the UK. He oversaw the business expansion throughout Europe until the 1990s when the SLC chain became part of Vardon plc, and then, in 1999, Merlin Entertainments. The current group was created in 2007 from the merger of Merlin, which consisted largely of the Legoland, Sealife and Dungeon chains, with the Tussauds Group, whose visitor attractions included Madame Tussauds and Warwick Castle. A £2 billion company was created. It is now the world's second biggest visitor attractions operator after the Walt Disney Group.

Merlin Entertainments, which also owns theme parks such as Alton Towers and Chessington World of Adventures, has built up a portfolio of recognised global brands, including Legoland and Madame Tussauds. These chain brands are transferable across borders. Of 28 SLCs, 10 are in the UK and the remainder abroad. One of its recent openings was at Gardaland theme park in Italy.

Merlin's Sea Life Centre brand is now being exported to America, with significant investment in imaginative new attractions, shows and guest services. Equally successful have been some of Merlin's cross-attraction marketing initiatives like the attractions-within-an-attraction idea, such as a Sea Life Centre inside its California Legoland; its strategy of 'clustering' attractions in major cities like London and Berlin to obtain maximum organisational and marketing benefit; and initiatives such as the Merlin Annual Pass, launched in the UK in 2008, which provides unlimited entry to all Merlin attractions for 12 months.

There have been difficulties. Lottery projects such as free entry to museums have hit the commercial sector, including Merlin, hard. Exchange rates also have an important effect, such as when the weak dollar was having an impact on US tourists. However, the recession boosted the number of visitors from the UK by encouraging more domestic tourism.

As the world's second largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now has 60 attractions in 12 countries. The company operates the following Sea Life attractions.

<b>Sea Life Centre locations in UK</b>	<b>Sea Life Sanctuaries</b>	<b>Sea Life Centre locations outside the UK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birmingham (national SLC)</li> <li>• Blackpool</li> <li>• Brighton</li> <li>• Great Yarmouth</li> <li>• Loch Lomond</li> <li>• London</li> <li>• Scarborough</li> <li>• Weymouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gweek, Cornwall</li> <li>• Hunstanton, Norfolk</li> <li>• Oban, Scotland</li> </ul> <p><b>Sea Life Centres at UK theme park resorts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea Life, Chessington World Of Adventures</li> <li>• 'Sharkbait Reef' by Sea Life, Alton Towers</li> </ul>	<p>Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, United States</p>

## OBJECTIVES



**Merlin Entertainments' vision:** To become the worldwide leader in branded location-based entertainment.

**The strategy:**

- 'chainable' brands, such as Legoland, Dungeons, Madame Tussauds and Sea Life Centres
- international growth - brands transferable across international borders
- shielded against external factors such as weather or localised market conditions.

This can be achieved by:

- making acquisitions in the highly-fragmented visitor attraction market
- identifying, securing and building 4 or 5 'midway' attractions every year (such as Dungeons or Madame Tussauds, that can be visited in a few hours, rather than the big theme parks which require day or even weekend trips)
- introducing 'second gate' attractions from the midway portfolio – like the recently opened Sea Life Centres within Legoland, California, and Gardaland, Italy
- clustering these new attractions in certain cities so people can buy combination tickets

and always with the **number one priority:**

- monitoring visitor satisfaction constantly, in order to deliver a continually improving visitor experience.

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## ADMISSION PRICES TO SEA LIFE CENTRE

**General Admission Prices** – Tickets cost £17.50 per adult; students & concessions £17; children £14.00; under-3s free.

**Family Saver** – Online tickets are £40 for 2 adults + 2 children (3–14 years).

**Online Saver – 2 For 1 Tickets** – for a limited period when you book online.

## SCHOOLS

**£5.00** per pupil for primary schools; **£6.00** per pupil for secondary schools.  
Free teacher places and free pre-visit tickets when teachers make a provisional booking.

**GROUPS** (Scouts/Guides, language schools, etc) **£5.00** per head and free leader admission.

### SEA LIFE ANNUAL PASS



12 months' unlimited free entry into all UK Sea Life Centres and Sanctuaries from **£30** per adult and **£25** per child.

Additional discounts for annual pass holders: 20% off gift shop; 20% off hot drinks in the café; half-price guide book; £5 off entry into York and Edinburgh Dungeons; special events on-site for pass holders.

### MERLIN ANNUAL PASS



12 months' entry to the UK's top attractions with a Merlin Annual Pass. Prices from £76.80 per person.

The Merlin Annual Pass gives entry to: Sea Life Centres; Thorpe Park; Alton Towers; Legoland Windsor; Legoland Discovery Centre Manchester; Chessington World of Adventures; Madame Tussauds London; Warwick Castle; London Eye; London, York and Edinburgh Dungeons.

The Merlin Annual Pass also gives additional benefits, including 50% discount at international Merlin attractions, 20% off eating and shopping, renewal offers, monthly eNewsletters.

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**EXAMPLES OF JOINT MARKETING**

londonmidland

**2 FOR 1** entry to the National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham, allowing you to make a big saving when you travel by train. The National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham, is a popular tourist attraction within easy walking distance of Birmingham New Street, Moor Street and Snow Hill stations.

To get these great savings, simply complete the voucher on the London Midland *Attractions and Offers* webpage and hand it in to the attraction on the day you visit.



Smartsave is a market leader in providing reward and loyalty programmes direct to the consumer. Smartsave offers savings at thousands of participating attractions, restaurants, leisure activities, hotels, entertainment venues and shopping outlets.

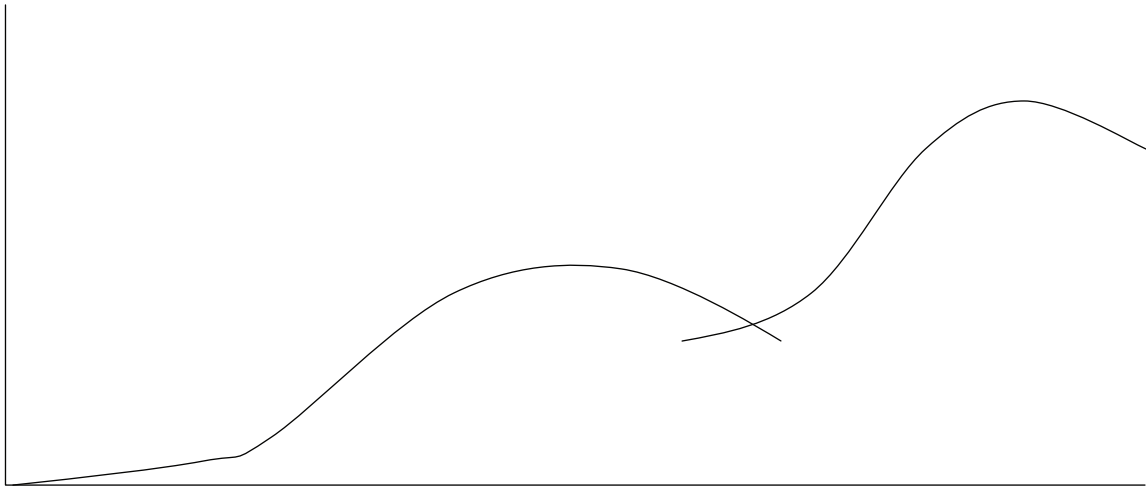
Smartsave offers discounts to consumers through a variety of distribution channels, including guide books, street maps, directories, websites and mobile apps. The Smartsave programme offers discounts to families and individuals. By simply presenting the Smartsave code, users are able to save up to 20% off the entrance ticket or total food and drinks bill for up to 6 people at any of the participating merchant partners, including the Sea Life Centre that you would like to visit.

Print the 20% discount code and hand it to the cashier when you visit and you will receive the discount. Other organisations, like [www.daysoutguide.co.uk](http://www.daysoutguide.co.uk), operate a similar discounting business.

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## THE PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE

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In the 1990s, attendance levels at UK Sea Life Centres remained under pressure partly because of the strength of sterling. The strong pound made it cheaper for British people to go abroad and more expensive for foreigners to come here.

The highly competitive market of the early 1990s necessitated improvements to existing attractions to make them more appealing.

Vardon plc, which was then the SLC's parent company, was focused more on developing its booming health and fitness operation. The company's money was going towards building up that side of the business. Vardon attractions, including the Sea Life Centres, were not getting the capital investment they needed.

The business was in decline until a management buyout in 1999 turned it round and revitalised it. After that, some technically obsolete or less profitable assets were sold off: for example, in Southend, Weston-super-Mare, Rhyl, and even the head office in Oban. The remaining Sea Life Centres received significant capital investment, with the introduction of major new feature exhibitions.

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## SOME INITIATIVES AT SEA LIFE CENTRES

**Glass bottom boat** – look directly down at marine inhabitants of the tropical ocean - without getting wet!

**Walkthrough underwater tunnel** – amazing views all around, see sharks circling overhead!

**Touch Pools** – hands-on contact with living sea creatures: feel a bit more interactive!

**New arrivals** – like the **Japanese Spider Crab**, believed to be the biggest ever seen in Britain! It has front-feeding limbs more than one-and-a-half metres long, ending in large claws!

**Birthday Parties** – celebrate your special day beneath the waves!

**Informative talks** throughout the day, or tailor-made for schools – with otters, penguins, seals and other friendly animals joining in!

**Feeding demonstrations** – there's a Seal Feed, a Shark Feed or a Penguin Feed, depending on which Sea Life Centre you're at, accompanied by commentary from the staff!

**SOS (Save Our Seas)** – since 2001, the conservation work of each Sea Life Centre has had a headline campaign which changes on an annual or twice-yearly basis. In the past, these have called for increased protection for Loggerhead Sea Turtles, and restrictions on the practice of shark-finning.

**4-D Cinema** – with films that you can feel and even smell!

**Pirates** – Sharkbait Reef is a pirate-themed aquarium with 300 species of fish. Pirate Ship play area!

**Shark Breeding Centre** – two Zebra Horn Sharks were 'married' to launch the new breeding centre with a 'wedding ceremony'!

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS EVENTS

**'Shark Week'** – a number of fun, interactive and educational activities to raise awareness of the threats to these endangered creatures.

**'Beach Clean'** – volunteers are provided with equipment to help clean local beaches.

**'Walk for Whales'** – a fun family five-mile walk to help stop commercial whaling. Prizes for those raising the highest sponsorship.

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## MARKET RESEARCH SURVEY

Each Sea Life Centre continually gathers the views of its visitors. In the past, guest feedback was obtained from a customer survey where visitors were asked to write onto a paper questionnaire and hand it in. Now there is a touch screen terminal in every attraction, to present the customer questionnaire.

Additionally, a 'mystery shopper' programme is conducted across all Merlin attractions. Every Merlin attraction is rated using a league-table system.



### Touch Screen Questions

What type of ticket did you buy today?

How did you hear about the Sea Life Centre before your visit today?

How satisfied are you overall with your visit today?

Would you recommend a visit to your family and friends?

How would you rate the value for money from your visit today?



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**PRESS RELEASE**

From Merlin Entertainments Group Ltd

To All Editors

**19-11-2007**

**SEA LIFE CENTRE OPENING AT CHESSINGTON WORLD OF ADVENTURES & ZOO – EASTER 2008**

A Sea Life Centre is opening at Chessington World of Adventures & Zoo at the start of the 2008 season, with over 20 marine life displays housing species ranging from tiny shrimps and starfish to magnificent sharks and stingrays.

The 250 000 litre aquarium, which will be located within Chessington Zoo, will bring kids of all ages almost nose to nose with a wide range of sea creatures, creating the illusion that the visitor is on display while the fish swim freely around. Interactive 'touchpools', fun exhibitions and a walkthrough ocean tank will offer a final 'wow-experience' as the fish swim overhead.

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## PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN



A fast-food restaurant is offering vouchers for half-price entry tickets to a range of top UK attractions free with every adult meal, in a deal with theme park and visitor attraction operator Merlin Entertainments.

The vouchers will be available from the fast-food restaurant between 30th March and 30th May and will be valid at selected Merlin attractions until the end of the season in November.

## THE SHOP AND RESTAURANT



Every Sea Life Centre includes a shop and a restaurant. They are positioned in the foyer of the Sea Life Centre between the street and the entrance to the exhibits. Customers are exposed to the merchandise on sale both when they arrive at the Sea Life Centre and when they come out of the display hall. Before leaving the Sea Life Centre customers have to walk through this gift shop, which encourages browsing. The position ensures maximum coverage to persuade visitors to stop and look, and to consider buying a gift or using the restaurant.

### **A SEA LIFE ADOPTION SCHEME**

A Sea Life adoption makes a unique gift as well as supporting valuable conservation work. There are four creatures to choose from: a turtle, shark, seal or penguin.

**Each adoption is valid for one year and includes:**

- Reusable Bag (100% Cotton)
- Presentation folder
- Welcome letter
- Cuddly toy of your creature
- One complimentary ticket to visit any UK Sea Life Centre
- Notepad & pencil
- Photo of the creature
- Fact sheet about the creature
- Car or window sticker
- Information sheets.

**After registration of adoption you will receive:**

- Personalised e-certificate
- Two e-updates about your creature.

## SWOT ANALYSIS FOR SEA LIFE CENTRES

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recognised brand</li> <li>• A chainable brand</li> <li>• Open every day of the year, except at Christmas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility of serious incidents or accidents</li> <li>• High SLC staff turnover</li> <li>• Price may be perceived as high</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More 'staycations' in the UK</li> <li>• Joint marketing with other facilities and services</li> <li>• Links to films such as <i>Pirates of the Caribbean</i>, <i>Jaws</i> and <i>Finding Nemo</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falling disposable income of customers</li> <li>• Weather conditions</li> <li>• Competition from other attractions</li> <li>• Exchange rates</li> </ul>

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