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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Subsidiary
In Business (WBS11/01)
Unit 1 Marketing and People

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Introduction

Question 1a

Most students showed a good understanding of the term 'brand' and gained the full 2 marks. Some students gave an example of a brand and centres must be reminded that marks are not awarded for providing examples for the definition questions.

Question 1b

There was a variety of different answers provided for this question in terms of a potential risk taken by Jack Ma. Many students did not focus on financial risks, as indicated in the mark scheme. However, it must be noted that the mark scheme shows indicative content and other valid answers are of course rewarded. There were few that scored the full 4 marks. This is because two points of application are needed for the 4 mark 'explain' questions and many students were only providing one point of application.

Question 1c

This question was generally answered well with students showing knowledge of factors that shift demand and applying this knowledge well to Alibaba. Some students failed to develop their answers and as such did not get the analysis marks.

Question 1d

This answer was generally not answered well. Students failed to show understanding of Profit Maximisation and confused it with Sales Maximisation. However, many answers recognised that Alibaba had other business objectives such as behaving ethically and many students managed to secure level 2 marks for their holistic response.

Question 1e

There was a notable lack of knowledge of paternalistic leadership. Most students seemed to understand that a paternalistic leader made decisions in the best interest of the workers. However most failed to show understanding that a key attribute of a paternalistic leader is that they consult with employees and gather ideas before making the final decision.

Due to this many students failed to score highly on this question because they gave generic answers about leaders or confused paternalistic with autocratic leadership.

Question 2a

This was well answered with a significant number of candidates gaining the full 2 marks. Again, as with 1a, students were adding examples to answers which are not awarded any marks.

Question 2b

Most students attempted this calculation question and were able to provide a formula for price elasticity of demand. Many students answered this question well and were able to calculate the percentage change in demand. However, some candidates lost marks for showing the change in demand as a minus sign when in fact demand had increased.

Centres should be reminded that students should always be encouraged to show their workings because even if the final answer is incorrect they can be awarded marks for showing correct workings.

Question 2c

The question was quite well answered. Many students were able to suggest valid pricing strategies in the context of Nintendo. Some students confused penetration and skimming strategies. It must also be noted that marks are not awarded for simply listing pricing strategies. Knowledge marks are awarded for showing understanding of the strategy and using this knowledge in the context of the given business, in this case Nintendo.

Question 2d

A very mixed set of responses to this question, with some students showing good understanding of the Boston Matrix. However, it was disappointed to note that many students clearly did not understand how to apply the theory to a business. Too many students confused the Boston Matrix with the Product Life Cycle and gained no marks.

Question 2e

It appears that the majority of students did not understand the term 'matrix structure' which is the creation of project teams to bring together employees from the different functions of the business. Although this was the first time this topic has been examined under the new specification it seemed apparent that most students did not understand the concept. A high number of students wrote about the advantages of merging the two divisions of Nintendo and gained no marks. Some students simply copied paragraphs from the case study and failed to score any marks.

Question 3

The majority of students showed some understanding of non-financial methods of motivation. However too many students did not fully answer the question in terms of how the incentives may lead to improved employee performance. As a result many answers were generic and simply listed the advantage and disadvantages of non-financial methods of motivation. There was no real evidence to suggest that candidates did not have enough time to complete the paper with the majority attempting to answer question 3.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Many students are still copying sections from the source booklet and adding it to answers. It is good to use examples and evidence from the source booklet to illustrate your argument. However, it is not good practise to simply copy evidence from the source booklet without using this information to explain your answer. Stand-alone evidence will not be rewarded if it does not support the points being made.

- It is important that students read the questions carefully and ensure they fully address the requirements of the question. Question 3 in this series is a typical example of this. Do not simply list everything you know about the topic. You must read the whole question carefully to ensure you address all parts of the question.
- Always show workings for calculation questions. Even if the answer is incorrect you can be awarded some marks for correct workings.
- Examples used to answer the definition questions, 1a and 2a, are not awarded marks. Candidates are required to show understanding of the term and should not include examples.

