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Edexcel

Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Business (WBS11) Paper 01
Unit 1: Marketing and people

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Report on individual questions

Question 1a

Many students showed a good understanding of the term 'market share' and gained the full 2 marks. Some students confused market share with shares sold by limited companies.

Question 1b

On the whole this question was not answered well. The students were asked to provide a demand factor that may have impacted the electric scooter market. Demand factors such as trends, income or price of substitute are clearly listed in the specification. Many failed to provide a specific demand factor and simply copied sections of the extracts that provided data on the electric scooter market. Many students started their responses with a definition of demand. Students and centres must note there are no marks awarded for a definition in an explain question. There were few candidates 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 context.

Question 1c

There were some good answers for this question with students recognising the 3 elements of the design mix. Many students were able to use the source booklet to contextualise their answers and develop a consequence to the business to pick up full marks. Some students however confuse economic manufacture/cost with price which caused some to lose out on marks.

Question 1d

This question was generally not answered very well. Students were told in the stem of the question the meaning of B2B and B2C and many simply copied this information into their responses. This is a waste of the student's valuable time. The reason why many students failed to answer this question well was because they focussed on the advantages and disadvantages of selling B2B and B2C. This is not what the questions asked. The question asked about the differences in the marketing strategy when selling to B2B or B2C. This is a good example of students not reading the question carefully. This topic had not been examined before in this specification and it appeared that students were not well prepared on this topic.

Question 1e

There was reasonable knowledge of entrepreneurial risks, and many students used the evidence well to provide context to their answers. However, many candidates failed to include a counterbalance in their arguments. All assess questions require a balanced argument, Due to this many students failed to score high marks.

Question 2a

This was well answered with a significant number of candidates gaining the full 2 marks.

Question 2b

Most students were able to construct a supply and demand diagram. Many students were awarded the full 4 marks. Some lost marks for not correctly labelling the equilibrium points on the axis or for showing a shift in demand rather than a shift to supply. Some students showed both a shift in demand and a shift in supply, and therefore were not awarded the application mark for the correct shift or the mark for the new equilibrium.

Question 2c

Most students were awarded some marks on this question, and some answered it very well. Many students were able to suggest reasons why consultation with employees brought benefits to the business. Some lacked valid application and simply copied sections from the extract without integrating the context into their response. Standalone evidence which is simply copied from the source booklet and not used to explain or develop the point will not be awarded.

Question 2d

There was a very mixed set of responses to this question. The question asked about the benefits of using focus groups for Birkenstock. Unfortunately, many students wrote generic points that could apply equally to any method of primary research and showed no specific understanding of focus groups. Students needed to convince the markers that they understood specifically what a focus group is and what advantages and disadvantages the use of small discussion groups may bring to a business.

Question 2e

It appears that the majority of students understood the term 'Product Life Cycle'. This topic has been examined a number of times previously. However, a high number of students did not utilise the extracts provided on the product portfolio of Birkenstock to provide context to their arguments. Some students simply copied paragraphs from the case study but did not use the evidence to explain or develop their points. Some students confused the Boston Matrix with the Product Life Cycle and gained no marks.

Question 3

The majority of students showed basic understanding of a centralised structure. Many students were able to provide an argument for and an argument against a centralised organisational structure, but the points were not wide ranging and many failed to show the significance of competing arguments or provide a recommendation. Students should practise providing a detailed conclusion which does not simply rely on repeated points but show the ability to weigh up competing arguments to propose a solution or recommendation.

Paper Summary

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

- It is important that students read the questions carefully and ensure they fully address the requirements of the question. Question 1d and 2d in this series are typical examples of this. Do not simply list everything you know about the topic. You must read the whole question carefully to ensure you specifically answer the question given.
- 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 points. Standalone evidence will not be rewarded if it does not support the points being made.
- Students should ensure they have covered all areas of the specification. This is the first time the topic of marketing strategies for B2B and B2C was asked, and many students failed to answer this question well.
- Many students are still failing to provide counterbalance in their answers. For discuss, analyse and evaluation questions students must always provide a balanced assessment. The answer must not simply provide a one-sided view.

