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TT05 Marketing in Travel and Tourism

Report on the Examination
2007 examination - June series

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GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the third paper set on Unit 5 Marketing in Travel and Tourism. Overall, candidates' performance was not quite up to the standard seen in the January 2007 series.

What was good:

1. Candidates showed their overall knowledge of the whole specification and there was no apparent area where a majority of centres had neglected to cover the required content. This is encouraging, as it is the intention to set future questions over a period of years on all parts of the specification.

2. Candidates had chosen and studied relevant travel and tourism organisations to illustrate their answers including hotels, airlines, tourist facilities, visitor attractions, etc. However, catering facilities like pubs and fast food chains, which were sometimes used, are here regarded as part of the leisure or hospitality industries. It is the intention always to ask some questions that require candidates to refer to *travel and tourism* organisations that they have studied.

3. Candidates' work suggested that they had spent more time with the pre-release material than for last summer's exam, and frequently showed that there had been thorough study and discussion about it. More candidates appear to have given sufficient time for proper consideration of its content.

What was not so good:

1. Although they were generally attentive to the wording of the questions, many candidates failed to look closely enough at the command word. This explains some relatively low scores, as answers that failed to "evaluate" or "explain" cannot reach the higher levels.

2. Centres should advise candidates to look at the pre-release material in terms of commercial marketing. This means that candidates should disregard whether they personally find a piece of promotional material pleasing or whether they would like to visit an attraction. Instead, they should think about the key target market(s) at which the marketing is aimed.

Question 1
Candidates needed to give a short description of recent changes in visitor numbers, and then offer possible reasons behind the change. While there were some very good answers to the latter task, too many candidates simply omitted to describe the changes that had occurred.

It is acknowledged that a visit to a Cathedral might not appeal to some of our candidates, but how to market visitor attractions of this type is a very real issue for the travel and tourism business. It does appeal to more than a million visitors each year - who are they? Some candidates explained the decline in numbers with sweeping statements, that a Cathedral is of no interest except to 'old people' or that the Cathedral was 'not fashionable'. Only if such statements were substantiated by the pre-release material or were justified could they be credited.

Question 2
Candidates had some difficulty in accounting for the use of a sample, needing to explain that reliable results from the whole population could be found by asking a relatively small representative sample, which saves market researchers a great deal of work.

Centres should prepare candidates to discuss the merits of different methods of market research. In this case the focus group was chosen but candidates often had a shaky understanding of its purpose and were consequently not able to identify distinct strengths and weaknesses of the method.

2(c) required candidates to extract relevant information using the statistics from the survey. A significant number of candidates failed to observe that, as well as gathering information on the duration of the visit, the survey had also related the length of their visit to the visitors' enjoyment. One key message for the Cathedral was that providing visitors with better facilities, which would encourage them to stay longer, should lead to greater customer satisfaction. A small minority of candidates related the short length of visit to the Cathedral being too 'boring', without justifying this. The average 'dwell time' of 73 minutes is longer than to many other visitor attractions.

Question 3
Candidates needed to explain that because the Cathedral does not receive sufficient income from donations, or any grants from Government or the Lottery, it would be unable to pay its bills or invest in improving visitor facilities without charging. Candidates should not expect to receive credit for very similar answers, such as three different kinds of overhead that could be paid for from charging.

Candidates showed a good understanding of the 'textbook' factors that might affect pricing but better answers related decisions on pricing to the actual circumstances of this Cathedral. For example, there is an additional small charge to join the 'behind the scenes' tours.

Question 4
Almost all candidates showed understanding of market segmentation and expressed ideas clearly. Some candidates implied that segmentation is useful mainly to identify new segments and appeal to them However, a travel and tourism organisation with a limited budget needs to understand the needs and wants of its key target customers and to aim its product and promotions at them in order to make its marketing as cost-effective as possible.

A large number of candidates did not associate question 4(c) with visits by groups such as coach parties from cruises or schools and institutions. They misunderstood 'group business', and wrote about how the Cathedral works together with Kent Tourism Alliance or Canterbury Attractions.

Question 5
Candidates had an opportunity to propose ideas to enhance the visitor experience. On the whole these ideas were sensible and appropriate. However, on a limited budget, it seems unlikely that the cathedral would adopt ideas that would appeal to groups other than the Cathedral's target markets as listed in the PRM (empty nesters, educational groups, visitors from abroad). The best answers linked their ideas to the survey or other information given about the Cathedral and cited specific benefits.

Question 6
Here, candidates needed to discuss how well a dual marketing strategy works, and why it is beneficial. Canterbury Cathedral reaches more customers by being marketed alongside the transport providers who bring in its visitors. They in turn feed on its strong 'brand name' to get more people onto their trains or cruises or coach tours. Candidates needed to refer to promotions including discounted price or joint admission campaigns. Alternative examples of marketing with the KTA and 'Canterbury Attractions' could be used. Not many candidates were clear about the advantages to both sides, while very few were able to weigh up the joint marketing strategy sufficiently to show conclusively that it has mutual benefit.

Approximately one-third of the candidates understood the AIDA approach. While it is not the only way to analyse a piece of promotional material, AIDA could be a useful tool for candidates to use in future examinations.

Question 7
In labelling the product life cycle graph, there was occasional confusion with the Boston Matrix but this is a slightly different tool in that it takes into account market share.

For the next part of the question, candidates needed to have studied an appropriate travel and tourism organisation and to describe the strategy by which a new product or service was recently marketed. In doing this, candidates provided some excellent illustrations of promotional methods but were less certain when identifying the significant qualities or values of the product. When outlining 'place' they needed to think about distributing the product, such as online booking or through a travel agent.

Question 8
It was pleasing that candidates largely knew an appropriate travel and tourism organisation well enough to focus on a range of *opportunities* and *threats*. However, many candidates included in otherwise relevant answers the internal strengths and weaknesses of their organisation. What was required were only external factors like the actions of competitors or political decisions or changes in the economic climate etc., which the organisation must take advantage of, or minimise.

The difficulty for most candidates in this question, as in question 6(a), was the failure to include evaluation.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future TT05 candidates:

1. Teachers may obtain insight into the scope of the specification by studying the mark schemes to any of the three past papers. The intention is to cover all parts of the specification in the cycle of examinations being set every three or four years. However, centres should beware of attempting to predict what might be set in any particular exam series.

2. Centres should be careful to provide their candidates with appropriate examples of travel and tourism organisations. They should be guided by the list of sectors in the specification for Unit 1 which includes transport providers, accommodation providers, tour operators, travel agents, visitor attractions, tourism support services. Clearly, shops or catering organisations like fast food chains do not fall into these categories.

3. Teachers should ensure that their candidates have looked at a specific promotional campaign (as well as promotional methods in general) so that they can provide more detail in answers to questions. They should also be able to make a simple evaluation of the campaign.

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