



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2006

MANAGEMENT FOR MARKETERS Certificate in Marketing Skills

General Comments

Overall the standard of answering was good. 18% of candidates achieved an 'A' grade with a 75% pass rate overall. Almost 60% of candidates achieved grade 'C' or better.

The learning outcomes for the certificate required candidates to be able to list, describe, and discuss the points asked of them. In that regard the majority of candidates were able to do this. However I would make a number of points concerning examination technique.

1. The instructions on the paper were explicit. All questions carry equal marks. This also applied to part (a) and part (b) of the questions. Candidates were inclined to give very brief answers to part (a) of the question and write far more on part (b). In future where it is stated that all parts carry equal marks the answers should be roughly the same length.
2. Answer the question asked. Read the question carefully and be sure about what is required before you start to write.
3. Time management was generally not an issue as I think there was sufficient time allowed for the paper. A small minority of candidates wrote the customary 'out of time' remark but it was very few.
4. This course is about reading, understanding, and applying the concepts discussed in the manual. The examination therefore expects students to have read and considered each individual topic. Candidates cannot expect to do well if they are attempting to answer the question based on general knowledge only.

SECTION A – CASE STUDY

Ryanair was chosen as a company with which candidates would be familiar. Overall the standard of answering was good however I would like to emphasise that answers should be based on the case as given.

Part (a) was well answered with most candidates discussing the low cost model.

Part (b) was about customer service. The case contained specific information on customer service standards. The question led candidates to this information but yet many students chose to answer the question based on general knowledge rather than the case study. Students who obtained high marks used the information from the case study.

Part (c) was on leadership. Many candidates only discussed Michael O Leary's personality rather than the type of leader best suited to such a company.

Part (d) of the case study question asked candidates to write a set of SMART objectives. Many students obviously had not studied the text to the extent of knowing what SMART represented and so scored low marks on this area.

SECTION B

Question 2

- (a) The vast majority of students answered this question without any difficulty.
- (b) This part of the question asked candidates to apply the practice of management to their workplace. This did not cause any difficulty with some students offering very well thought out examples.

Question 3

This was not a popular question but most of those who attempted the question scored highly.

- (a) Students offered the expected list of structures, e.g. geographic, functional, product based, etc.
- (b) This question did not pose any difficulties.

Question 4

This was a very straight forward question on time management. Many students made a good effort at part (a) and then omitted part (b) altogether or else offered a list of two or three items without any comment.

- (a) There were two elements to this question. Firstly candidates had to distinguish between 'important' and 'urgent' and secondly discuss why it is important to prioritise activities. Candidates who scored poorly only discussed one element or the other.
- (b) The second part of each question is designed to allow candidates discuss their own job. Asking for a to-do list for a person's job is a very basic question. I was surprised at how poorly many people attempted this element as examples are given in the manual.

Question 5

This question was the least popular question on the examination. Less than 10% of candidates attempted this question. This was surprising as it was very similar (deliberately) to a question on the 2005 paper. I would have expected candidates to have practiced using the previous paper and so expected this to be a very popular question. Obviously I was wrong!

- (a) The question asked how service delivery can breakdown. Answers would include the process breaking down, raising customer expectations beyond the service offering, problems between customers and staff, etc
- (b) This section raised some interesting points about customer service in Irish companies. As with last year many of the examples had negative outcomes for the customer. This demonstrates the importance of customer service to a course like the certificate in marketing skills.