



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2009

MARKETING IN PRACTICE Certificate in Marketing Skills

General Comments

Overall most students made a reasonable attempt at answering the required number of questions. The first question was compulsory and students had the option of choosing a further two questions within Section B from the four available. Candidates should spend time at the outset reflecting on the amount of marks available for each question and section when deciding how to manage time in the exam. Improved time management will undoubtedly have a positive impact on final scores.

Question 1

As required all students attempted this question which was split into two parts each attracting the same number of marks. The first part of the question (i) asked about the New Product Development (NPD) process and all were generally able to recount the process well. Those scoring highly in this section demonstrated the ability to apply the theoretical framework of NPD to the actual case given and also to support their position for or against the development of a new product range with cogent argument. In the second part of the question (ii) some students did not appreciate the requirement to suggest alternatives to the New Product Development approach from question (i). After all, the key issue is not the development of a new cosmetics range but the dramatic fall-off in revenues. It was noticeable that even though each part of the question attracted the same number of marks much greater effort was evident in the responses to the first section.

Question 2

This was not a popular question with students with no-one attempting it. It was a relatively straightforward discussion of the orientations towards the marketplace or the way in which business is conducted and focused in a company. Much of the skill in answering this question would have been demonstrated in the ability to apply the theory to a company of the candidates own choice.

Question 3

Candidates in general attempted this question and answered well. Most were clear on the relationship and differences between branding and packaging but some did not adequately address the functions of packaging. Although results were good in the main they were not as high as they could have been because all sections were not adequately covered and many did not attempt the second part of the question at all.

Question 4

This was a straightforward pricing question about the pricing strategy choices; cost plus, value based or competition based pricing. Most candidates attempted the question at a relatively superficial level. The second part of the question related to the penetration pricing or price skimming options available in the launch of a new product. This was better answered but as it was a shorter section attracting a smaller number of marks the effort put in was somewhat disproportionate.

Question 5

The publicity question proved to be deceptively simple. Despite the fact that it called for a discussion of the concept of publicity being a form of free advertising it is still expected that students will base their discussion on the theory of the course. While there may not be a direct charge for publicity it is far from free given the costs involved in managing and building relationships with the media and other publics.