



## **EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**AUGUST 2001**

### **PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING**

#### **General Comments**

While the overall standard of scripts was up slightly on previous years, many candidates were careless in their approach to answering questions. It is a great pity that some students who apparently have enough knowledge to answer a question adequately, fail to elaborate sufficiently on key points to achieve a pass mark. Lists and headings do not provide sufficient evidence that the candidate knows the subject area being examined.

The examiner would recommend that the student read and reread a question before jotting down the main points s/he wishes to cover in the answer. If a question has two parts, then it is important to ensure that both parts of the question are adequately answered. The use of diagrams and tables to summarise points is very useful and can both save time and gain the student additional marks.

#### **Question 1**

A question on the management philosophies underpinning an organisation's marketing activities produced a wide variety of answers that seemed to be responding to an imaginary question: 'Write all you know about marketing'. There are five alternative concepts which may influence how an organisation conducts its marketing activities: the production, product, selling, marketing and societal marketing concepts. The societal marketing concept seeks to balance the needs of the consumer, the organisation and society.

#### **Question 2**

This question was primarily about the business buyer behaviour process. The student needed to deal adequately with this part of the question before drawing a comparison with consumer buyer behaviour. However, some answers focused mainly on consumer buyer behaviour. Students who introduced comparative tables showing how business and consumer buyer behaviour differ tended to score very highly.

#### **Question 3**

A question on the macroenvironmental forces proved to be one of the most popular questions on the paper. Surprisingly, many students were not able to identify and describe all six forces. The second part to the question which asked how the technological changes in the environment had impacted on marketing was often ignored or inadequately answered.

#### **Question 4**

Very few students were able to provide a marketer's definition of a product. The examiner does not expect the student to be able to reproduce any definition verbatim from the text. However, it

should be possible to provide a good description of the scope of products and services that can be defined as products, from physical products (bread) and places (Discover Ireland) to organisations (a political party) to ideas ('Conquer cancer'). The three levels refer to the core, actual and augmented product.

#### **Question 5**

A question on the extended marketing mix for services required the student to discuss the special marketing challenges that arise from the nature and characteristics of services, namely intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability. Students who were able to comment on the specific marketing strategies for service firms scored highly.

#### **Question 6**

There are a number of key design decisions which must be made when designing a distribution channel, including analysing customer service needs, setting channel objectives, identifying the major alternatives such as direct marketing versus using an agent or distributor and deciding on the number of marketing intermediaries. Many answers focused solely on the channel options rather than considering the wider issues, such as the needs of the final consumer.

#### **Question 7**

A question on personal selling was well answered. However, there is a significant minority who associate personal selling with domestic door-to-door salesmen. Those students who discussed the particular advantages of the personal selling process, especially in the business to business environment and compared those advantages with the other elements of the mix attained high marks.

#### **Question 8**

Pricing proved to be a popular question. It was gratifying to see how many students were able to produce good answers, by separating the internal and external factors and showing their influence on the pricing decision process.