



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2002

PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

Question 1

This is a standard type question at this level, evaluating the student's knowledge of the marketing philosophy and its precursors. Marks were available for the identification and description of the five philosophies, identifying the key differences between the five philosophies and the students understanding of the merits and limitations of each philosophy. Most students correctly identified the five philosophies and proceeded to describe each. The level of description varied considerably, and in a number of cases was quite superficial, indicating a significant question mark over the student's understanding of the philosophies and the rationale for marketing as an optimum approach for organisations. The extent to which comparisons were drawn was minimal with students content to simply describe each concept without reference to the other philosophies. Marks were also available for answers which related the business philosophy to the existing business and market conditions facing a particular organisation. Only a few students attempted this element of the question.

Question 2

The answers were disappointing given the basic nature of the question and current high profile of both the technological and natural environmental influences of business and marketing. Students tended to describe both the environmental influences to some degree, but generally failed to adequately develop the connection between these influences and the practice of marketing. Where examples were used these tended to be merely stated with little explanation or rationale. Marks were available for defining the environmental forces, describing the natural and technological environments, identifying the key trends in each area and demonstrating an understanding of the impact on marketing strategy.

Question 3

This question presented a difficulty for most students who attempted it, with the clear impression that the term 'MIS' was unknown to the student. From this general lack of knowledge flowed the generally low mark achieved by students for the question. While students did equate the term 'MIS' with information, it was evident that their knowledge was informal and superficial. In many cases the identification of the components and description of an MIS was of a low standard. The clear impression was that students had not adequately read their prescribed text. Within the question marks were available for the definition of Marketing Information System, the identification of MIS Components, the description of MIS Components, a diagram of an MIS and a commentary on how an MIS might be used by the Marketing manager.

Question 4

This question was answered reasonably well by the majority of students, with a clear indication of good knowledge of the topic. Students had little difficulty in defining, identifying and describing the decision process. However, students performed less well in the applied element of the question where there was a requirement to demonstrate their understanding of the implications for marketing strategy. Students at this level would be expected to have a knowledge of how marketing strategies are used to move a decision maker along the decision process towards purchase and reinforcement. Although most students did attempt to apply the decision process to the travel industry, their attempts were not well developed. Marks were available for the identification and definition of the 'buyer decision process', the description of the buyer decision process and a demonstration of the student's understanding of the implications for strategy particularly as it may be applied in the travel operator business.

Question 5

Question five was disappointing, as it was a very basic question dealing with a fundamental concept in marketing theory. Students did demonstrate an understanding of the term segmentation, but clearly had not understood the use of segmentation in any practical sense. Students did not have a knowledge of either the characteristics of a good segment or how these characteristics enable segmentation to be operationalised. Marks were available for the definition of a market segment, the identification and description of the characteristics of a good segment and demonstrating how a market segment is evaluated using the characteristics.

Question 6

This was another disappointing question where students did not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the characteristics of a 'Service'. Where the characteristics were identified the description was generally of a low standard with little use of examples to assist the description. In the majority of cases students failed to draw a comparison with the marketing requirements of a physical product and so failed to answer an important part of the question. Marks were available for the definition of a service, the identification and description of the characteristics of a service, the comparison between the marketing of a product and a service.

Question 7

This question was answered well by the majority of students who attempted it. Most students had little difficulty in distinguishing between the three approaches, however there were individual cases which demonstrated a wonderful lack of knowledge of the course text. While students were able to adequately describe the different approaches to pricing, a significant lack of understanding of their application was demonstrated in their choice and rationale for pricing a 'totally new product'. There is an expectation at this level that students have a knowledge of marketing theory and a basic understanding of how this theory is applied in practice. Marks were available for the definition of each approach, the description of each pricing approach, the choice of approach for a totally new product and the rationale for their choice.

Question 8

This question attracted the least number of students, and was answered at a very low standard. The question required the student to identify and elaborate upon the basic concepts of 'Push & Pull' strategies. However, credit was given to students who dealt with the tools and techniques of promotion. The level of description was very poor and basic with little attempt to provide a rationale for the promotional elements chosen or how they would be used as part of an integrated marketing strategy. This was particularly evident in the application element of the question relating to the SME entering a new market. Marks were available for the identification and description of Push & Pull strategies, and the development of a promotion strategy for an SME entering a new market.