



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2002

PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

Question 1

Question 1 was attempted by 23% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 70% and the average mark was 31%. The question required students to demonstrate their understanding of the need for organisations to maintain a fit between their goals and capabilities and the changing marketing opportunities. Marks were available to students for a wide range of elements to accommodate different possible approaches to the question. The essential elements which attracted marks were: the definition of the strategic planning process; identification of the steps in strategic planning; description of each step in the strategic planning process; understanding the role of the process in determining and directing organisational activity; examples to illustrate the answer.

Question 2

Question 2 was the second most popular question attempted. It is a standard question at first year level, providing plenty of material for the student to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, both through description and example. Knowledge of the significance of the macro environment is critical for any student of marketing who is required to adopt a customer orientation. Marks were available for: the definition of macroenvironment; identification of macroenvironment forces; understanding the need for continual environmental scanning; linking environmental awareness with customer value; examples to illustrate the answer. This question attracted some of the highest marks in the exam with a number of students scoring in excess of 75%. The question, however, was not well answered by the majority of students attempting the question, with a large cohort achieving only a pass mark. The main problems demonstrated in this question revolved around the difficulty in linking the various elements identified as part of the macroenvironment to marketing activity. Students were able to identify and describe the macroenvironment forces but did not or could not indicate how such knowledge could be useful to marketing.

Question 3

This question achieved the top mark in the examination with 86%. The question sought to evaluate students' understanding of marketing research as a structured approach to the collection, analysis and presentation of marketing data. It is a standard first year marketing level question where students are expected to be aware of the role of research in providing the customer, market and environmental knowledge required for successful marketing. Marks were available for the definition of marketing research process; an outline of the marketing research process; the description of the four stages within the process; the application of the research process to the design of a research programme. The distribution of marks reflects a difficult question for students, with many failing to identify correctly the research process as outlined in

the course text. There was also a tendency to describe in general terms the four stage process, with the higher marks achieved by students who identified and described the types of decisions faced by the researcher at each stage of the research process. Few students applied the research process adequately to the 'new concept toy', failing to recognise the need to adjust the data collection plan or method.

Question 4

This question sought to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of an important marketing concept which has implications for the development and implementation of marketing activities to assist customers move through the various stages of product choice and decision making. Marks were available for the definition of adoption process; the identification and description of the adoption process; description of the link between innovation and adoption; the innovation adoption diagram; the marketing implications of the concept; examples to illustrate the answer. The question was answered adequately by the majority of students, without demonstrating a real understanding of how the concept could be of benefit to the marketing manager. Students were content to describe the various stages identified and in many cases did not take the opportunity to offer examples to illustrate their answers.

Question 5

Question 5 was the most popular question among students and offered the opportunity for students to address some of the most fundamental concepts in marketing. The majority of students had little difficulty defining and describing the concepts, however only a small minority showed the understanding of how these concepts are linked and fundamental in developing a marketing strategy. Marks were available for the definition of 'Market Segmentation', 'Market Targeting', 'Market positioning'; the description of each concept; the understanding of how these concepts fit together; the link to Marketing Strategy.

Question 6

This is a standard first year marketing question which seeks to evaluate the students' understanding of the various types of 'product' with which the marketing manager may have to deal. The classification consisting of 'Convenience', 'Shopping', 'Speciality' and 'Unsought Goods' are a long established classification used in the course text. The type of product has direct relevance for the nature of the marketing programme which can be used. The marks in this question were available for the identification of the four classifications; the description of Convenience goods, Speciality goods, Shopping goods, and Unsought goods; the understanding of the significance for marketing strategy; and examples with which the student could illustrate their answer. In general the question was not well answered, with many students failing to identify the correct classification. It was evident in a significant number of cases that the content of the question was unknown to the student. There was also an apparent lack of familiarity with the course text.

Question 7

Question 7 was the most successful question attempted with the joint highest mark and highest average mark achieved in the exam. The product life cycle is a well rehearsed question on a first year marketing programme, and students did well in identifying and describing the various stages. The quality of diagrams and examples were below expectation as was the students' ability to show and explain the variation in strategy in the different stages of the life cycle. Marks were available for the description of PLC; the diagram of PLC; understanding of the PLC model; the use of the model to guide marketing strategy; examples to illustrate the answer.

Question 8

This question sought to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the promotional mix within the marketing mix and, specifically, how marketing communications have to be considered as an integrated decision area. Marks were available for the definition of IMC; the Identification of IMC tools; the description of IMC tools; the factors which may affect the choice of IMC tool. In general this was a well-answered question by the students who attempted it. There was little difficulty in identifying and describing the various IMC tools. However, there was a significant problem for students in addressing the second part of the question which required students to understand the concept of 'integration'.