



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2003

PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

General Comments

Overall 44% of those who undertook the exam passed. The standard of answer was quite low, with an unsatisfactory level of knowledge or understanding of the basic marketing concepts and terminology. Exam technique and presentation of answers were also quite poor, with many students not addressing the question asked or failing to fully address the subsections within specific questions. The use of examples presented opportunities to demonstrate practical knowledge of the application of marketing theory. However, in the majority of cases the use of examples was inadequate, and failed to illustrate the points being made.

Question 1

This question was attempted by 72% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 65% and the average mark was 41%. The question required students to define the 'Societal Marketing Concept' and suggest how marketing fits with current societal trends. Issues such as; environmental problems; resource shortages; rapid population growth; worldwide economic problems, and neglected social services are well developed in the text and interesting areas for treatment within a marketing context. Unfortunately, few students considered such societal issues and offered very little other than standard superficial answers. The depth and treatment of the answers provided were disappointing.

Question 2

This question was attempted by 34% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 65% and the average mark was 47%. Question two was a standard question at this level, which was attempted by only a small proportion of the students. The answers provided were in general adequate, with students demonstrating their knowledge of the BCG Approach, without any great understanding of how the approach may be used to direct or develop strategy. The use of diagrams was adequate as was the description of each of the quadrants. However, the application of the approach in directing or developing strategic options needs to be clarified.

Question 3

This question was attempted by 69% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 60% and the average mark was 34%. This question was poorly answered by the majority who attempted it. There was a general failure to identify the various approaches to market coverage, and a failure to understand how market, company and competitive factors combine to influence the decision on market coverage. Marks were available for the identification and description of the various approaches; undifferentiated marketing; differentiated marketing; concentrated marketing as well as the identification of factors which affect decisions.

Question 4

Question four was attempted by 50% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 64% and the average mark was 37%. The quality of answer provided to this question was poor, being superficial and brief.

The question provided a very broad range of possible areas for discussion, which students generally failed to address. This was a question, which drew heavily on the student's awareness of marketing and the marketing environment within the Irish context. It challenged them to identify the factors and forces in Irish society that are shaping marketing activity. It is the type of question which tries to link marketing theory with marketing practice and in a context which is familiar to the student.

Marks were available for discussion and evaluation of areas including: Identification of the major trends, including economic trends

- changing income levels, changing income distribution, changing consumer spending patterns, employment trends, world economic confidence social trends
- changes in the family structure & role, changes in leaving patterns, growth of peer influence, decline of religion, improved educational opportunities.

Question 5

This question was attempted by 25% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 46% and the average mark was 35%. Few students attempted this question, and the answers provided justified the decision. Specific knowledge of marketing research seemed quite limited, and with only a few of the students correctly identifying the three research categories: exploratory research, descriptive research and causal research. Those who correctly identified the approach offered only superficial treatment of the topic indicating a general lack of knowledge.

Question 6

This question was attempted by 88% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 64% and the average mark was 39%. Students who attempted this question in general provided an adequate level of answer, with most being able to diagram and discuss Maslow's hierarchy and link it to strategy development. The higher marks were achieved by those who discussed the various limitations of the hierarchy in directing strategy decisions.

Question 7

This question was attempted by 38% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 40% and the average mark was 23%. Perhaps the least productive question for students, with the average mark of 23% indicating a very low quality of answer. In general students who attempted this question were simply unaware of the various possible distribution strategies available to the marketer.

Question 8

This question was attempted 38% of the cohort, the top mark achieved was 40% and the average mark was 23%. This question was poorly answered by those who attempted it. The question sought to evaluate students' understanding and appreciation of the potential of the Internet on marketing strategy in three critical areas of marketing activity: customer acquisition, customer retention, customer growth. In general students failed to adequately appreciate the centrality of these activities to successful marketing or the potential offered by the Internet. Answers were superficial, and very brief.