



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2003

STAGE 2 PROJECT

Marketing Innovation

The project brief required students to profile a company that had been involved in new product development, giving details of the company's market(s) and competition and providing an understanding of the new product offering. The brief additionally required the student to employ appropriate primary research techniques to assess the market's reaction and on the basis of this analysis to make recommendations for the marketing of the product.

The range of market sectors investigated was quite diverse. Some popular ones selected were telecommunications, alcohol, food, pharmaceuticals and financial products. Some students selected very specialised market niches such as material handling and recruitment agencies.

Whichever market was investigated, many students relied solely on information generated from company web sites. For some submissions, the bibliography, if there was one, listed a couple of company websites along with a marketing research textbook. In many cases corporate material from websites was included verbatim without any interpretation or evaluation. Nor was the source of the material acknowledged or referenced in an appropriate manner. In some instances it was obvious that the students hadn't even read the material thoroughly themselves. The better reports showed evidence of reading where students attempted to access more objective sources or tried to provide information from a variety of sources so as to attain a more balanced view of the market. Referencing by and large was ignored by most students. In some cases diagrams or charts were inadequately labelled.

In the first part of the project, students needed to demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the product/market sector. Many students provided a superficial analysis of the target market, and the competition confronting the company in question, with many submissions relying solely on corporate product descriptions. Projects acquired better marks if they used marketing models, tools and frameworks such as SWOT or Porter's Five Forces, or PEST to help in their analyses.

For the second part of the project many students felt obliged to include their marketing research lecture notes wholesale or vast quantities of material from a marketing research textbook. The reader was presented with lectures on what is marketing research, what types of research are used, the advantages and disadvantages of differing question types, the ten things you must do in

carrying out a focus group along with, in some cases, a history of the market research industry in Ireland. All of this was unnecessary, not relevant to the assignment brief. What was asked for, were details of how the research project was designed and implemented and in some cases this was omitted.

A number of assignments failed to identify objectives for the study, or did not specify an appropriate population or demonstrated an inadequate understanding of sampling terminology or showed no appreciation of any limitations of research undertaken. In many instances where questionnaire instruments were employed, they were poorly developed and the results inadequately analysed.

Many of the weaker submissions invested very little effort in the third part of the exercise with some making recommendations that were not derived from any previous analyses.

In order to encourage a professional presentation, a percentage of the marks was awarded for issues such as bibliography, structure, grammar and spelling. In too many projects it was apparent that the author did not even proof read the work before submission.