



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2006

PRACTICE OF SELLING

General Comments

This paper was very well handled by most of the students who attempted it. Candidates appeared to have been more engaged with the material from the core text than previous cohorts and this in turn impacted positively on the results. Many drew very appropriate examples from their own personal sales experience to support the theory and this enhanced the answers. Ability to make connections between the marketing subject and this syllabus was also welcome. As in earlier examiner's reports, counsel regarding examination technique is still relevant with some students doing themselves a dis-service through lack of attention to answering style, referencing and poor allocation of time.

Question 1

This draws from the opening chapters of the text and all students had some proposals that were common across the answers and some offered unique perspectives. There was consensus that integration led to better communication, market strategy fulfilment and customer-centred operation. Structures to achieve these outcomes were often based on personal experiences and observation.

Question 2

A very popular question which was based on Chapter 5 material and was generally well handled. The possible options meant a consideration of the approaches and the choosing of the most appropriate ones as opposed to listing all possible routes to market. Some wisely advised to use the offices of our State bodies such as Enterprise Ireland and An Bord Bia to guide the decision. Key issues for such a scenario (need for refrigeration, chill chain, storage etc) were proposed as very influential on the decision also.

Question 3

This question needed to be closely read so as to avoid superfluous material, the requirement was that the product or service was considered a "new task" by the customer. This has particular implications as laid out in Chapter 3, and ultimately has a major influence on the size of the DMU and the length of the decision-making process. Most candidates opted for using a specific example to illustrate their answer.

Question 4

A very straightforward question, taken directly from a recommended reading and very competently handled by the candidates. Many started out their answer by talking about dispelling the myths

associated with selling and its increasing professionalisation. Then an understanding of the five stages: provider, persuader, prospector, problem-solver and procreator was necessary, coupled with an explanation of the characteristics of each. Some very good examples were used to illustrate each type.

Question 5

This question is always a popular one but this year some candidates made the mistake of not paying enough attention to the scenario and went off down the road of describing the stages of the Relational Development model and not much else. It needed to be handled in the first person singular and treated as a sales training session for participants who would be considered to be relatively unknowledgeable about the concept.

Question 6

Selling a service is clearly dealt with in Chapter 4 and candidates needed to expressly deal with the key distinguishing characteristics of intangibility, inseparability, variability, perishability and ownership.

Question 7

Again this answer needed to be framed in the response of a sales representative and include the content of parts of Chapter 12. No candidate had any real problem with this answer, most drawing heavily on their own personal experience to frame their answers. Some clever candidates took the opportunity to frame the benefits in sales management terms in the belief they could be more persuasive for the recipient!

Question 8

This was a relatively unpopular question but those who attempted it were fairly ad idem with regard to what the opportunities and threats were. Interestingly, most stated that their personal beliefs were that the advantages outweighed the drawbacks and that e-business was here to stay.