



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2009

STAGE 2 PROJECT

General Comments

The overall standard of the May Stage 2 project was satisfactory and in line with previous years. The brief required candidates to conduct an investigative study into the operation of Irish Credit Unions – the subject was particularly topical in light of the recent turbulence in financial markets.

Year on year Examiners' Reports have laid out practical guidelines on the treatment of the Stage 2 Project. A noticeable skew towards either end of the marking continuum suggests a clear division between those who have heeded the Examiner's advice and those who have not.

Students are perennially urged to review past Examiner's Reports prior to embarking upon their project and this advice was clearly brought to their attention on this year's project brief. Whilst the project brief will vary from examination to examination, the treatment of underlying marketing concepts remains very much the same. The first rule of marketing is to know your customer. What better starting point than reviewing the Examiner's comments over the past three to four years?

The Stage 2 project is designed to challenge the student to adapt the marketing concepts and strategies they have learnt towards a practical business problem. Consider this report as you would a brief sent by a client. Every client expects a professional standard of presentation and most are capable of downloading corporate information from the internet for themselves.

Whilst cognisant of the value of the internet to secondary research, the Examiner will only award marks to information which is referenced in a manner that includes: the author, title, publisher and date. A string of www's will not suffice. Candidates should desist the desire to cut and paste unedited information from corporate websites. This year one student "compiled" six consecutive pages of "quotations" taken verbatim from the internet, using only five lines of their own work to string the lot together. References and quotations should be used to provide weight and support to an argument, not to replace it. The candidate was duly marked on the content of their six-sentence contribution.

Over the years the Examiner has observed a distinct lack of marketing terminology or concepts in many of the submissions and a bland level of analysis that one would only find in a coffee table publication. The Examiner will not award marks where the information is not pertinent to the marketing function or where plagiarism is suspected.

In conclusion, use the project to display the knowledge that you have gained throughout Stage 1 and 2. Integrate as many diagrams, graphs, models and concepts as possible and couch them in marketing terminology. Be careful not to over emphasise the role of promotion in your recommendations. Use PEST, SWOT, BCG, and PLC etc to provide a stronger structure to your answer.