



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2001

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Question 1

There were some very good answers to this question with many achieving A and B grades. Candidates showed good understanding of the marketing communications process and were well read on theory and practice. Most answers used Shimp's model of the marketing communications process showing clearly the integration of the various components. The model outlined contained four general components: marketing structure, environmental monitoring and management, a brand level marketing communications decision process and brand equity enhancement. This was the best-answered question on the paper.

Question 2

The key point in this question is that there must be a commonness of thought developed between sender and receiver if communication is to occur. A small number discussed shared meaning in terms of semiotics and gave very good answers showing how people have meaning for signs and that meanings are internal responses people hold for external stimuli. Examples were then given of how different message users interpret the significance of meaning through the use of signs, symbols and text. These answers showed how consumers read advertisements and the importance of considering interpretation in the design of all communication. Weaker answers outlined a communication model and gave definitions for each of the elements without really addressing the question asked.

Question 3

The role of endorsers in advertising was clearly outlined with many discussing the importance of match-up between a celebrity and a product. Selection of celebrities was well outlined with plenty of practical examples such as Gary Lineker and Walker crisps. Endorser attributes were either poorly discussed or not discussed at all. It was expected that answers would include an examination of attractiveness; the process of identification and credibility; the process of internalisation.

Question 4

This was a question on setting advertising objectives for a new family car. It was poorly answered with more attention given to discussion of the car than objective setting. In many cases there was a brief discussion on categories of objectives. However there was little or no mention of hierarchy of effects and the need to move a target audience from one goal to the next

or the implications of objective setting. Objective setting for marketing communications depends on the pattern of consumer behaviour and information that is involved in the particular product category. It was expected that answers would include a discussion on both of these variables.

Question 5

Means end chains focus on the linkages between attributes of products, the consequences of these attributes for the consumer and the personal values that the consequence reinforce. It is critical to examine the means end chain from the consumer point of view. The understanding of what consumers value when choosing among brands in a given product category is essential in the creation of effective advertisements. In some cases answers only included definitions of the components of the Meccas Model without reference to the creative process. Better answers clearly linked by way of theory and examples the creative process and consumer values

Question 6

This question on how a business might use public relations to its advantage was approached mainly from a proactive or reactive perspective. Most answers concentrated on these two perspectives and ignored other critical components in public relations that can assist a firm. Few candidates looked at Grunig's theory of Public relations and how it can be used in a wide range of circumstances. In addition there was very little discussion of the importance of publics and how they impact on an organisation and how they should be handled.

Question 7

There were some very good answers to this question that included a full analysis of how marketers are using both direct advertising and database marketing. The role of the database in planning the campaign was fully outlined including a discussion of lifetime value analysis. In showing the use of direct advertising there was a clear description of the overall objective of direct advertising followed by use of direct media. Weaker answers concentrated on one half of the question asked and examined briefly either direct advertising or database marketing.

Question 8

The regulatory environment in Ireland was fully explained by most candidates. This included a description of ASAI and the legal environment. Really good answers addressed ethical violations and how they are dealt with by the voluntary codes of practice. There was good discussion of the regulatory framework in Ireland including sources and objectives of regulation and how they protect the consumer.