



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2001

### INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY

#### General Comments

The standard of answering in these repeat examinations was extremely low and the majority of candidates showed little or no grasp of even the fundamentals of International Marketing theory or practice. It was painfully obvious from the answer papers that most candidates had only a passing acquaintance with the essential text and even less acquaintance with the information given in previous Examiner's Reports. The generally poor performance was added to by the fact that many candidates did not read the questions properly. Consistently, answers made only casual or passing reference to the actual questions asked on the examination papers. Many candidates made the pass mark only because they had obviously spent some time on the E-Commerce notes and this had given them a small 'cushion' of marks in the Question 8.

#### Question 1

(a) Much of the material required for a good answer to this part of Question 1 is contained in pages 1 to 7 of the essential text.

The Examiner had hoped that candidates would perhaps mention some of the of the following:

1. The strengths of Dunnes as a strong and capable contender in the home market with enormous skill in positioning and maintaining their brand.
2. The weaknesses of the domestic market in terms of increasing competition and limited opportunities for growth.
3. Opportunities for at least modest growth overseas in an increasingly integrated EU.
4. The opportunities overseas for Dunnes to obtain the experience necessary to cope with the threat of increased competition from the EU.
5. The increasing emphasis on economies of scale among existing EU retailers.

(b) Most candidates who attempted this part of the question made a good job of it by drawing on the principles of international marketing especially by mentioning the enormous problems posed by having to adapt to a completely new cultural, legal, business and supply/distribution environment.

(c) The Examiner had hoped that candidates would recognise the limited potential for Wal-Mart in a small country such as Ireland, especially as none of the large multiples or franchised independents such as Musgrave SuperValu/Centra would be likely to respond favourably or easily to a take-over bid. Also, the problem of Wal-Mart finding a viable position at the top, middle or lower end of the price/service continuum in Ireland would be considerable. Few candidates attempted this part of the question and those who did earned good marks provided they showed any sort of reasonable understanding of entry and competitive strategies from Wal-Mart's perspective. Those candidates who showed a basic understanding of defensive strategy from Dunne's perspective also earned extra bonus marks. Traditionally, this type of three-part question has featured in all examination papers for a number of years and has served the students very well. The organisation or topic has always been of sufficient prominence as to be well within the general business knowledge of any marketing students who watch news bulletins on TV or read the newspapers. The answers required have been largely descriptive and call for an adequate rather than an in-depth knowledge of international marketing. Any candidate who could show even a rudimentary ability to apply international marketing theory or practice to the topic or

the organisation was guaranteed a good pass mark in the question. Students might like to bear these issues in mind for the future.

### **Question 2**

Almost all of page 483 in the essential text is taken up with this topic of contract enforcement in the section on “Handling the Export Order”. The actual quote comes from the first sentence in the paragraph. It was, therefore, disappointing that only three papers referred to the arbitration clause and only one paper mentioned the International Chambers of Commerce as an arbitration body. Many papers waffled on at some length about Export Credit Insurance and Distribution Agreements neither of which topics have much more than a very peripheral bearing on the question.

### **Question 3**

The topic of overseas market research and the need for information is covered quite well in Chapter 5 of the essential text. Apart from this, it is difficult to understand how candidates could have reached Stage 3 without a fairly sound knowledge of the structure and procedures attached to market research – even outside the International Marketing field. Nevertheless, it gave the vast majority of candidates all they could do to achieve a bare pass mark in the question. Market research is a basic field of endeavour in International Marketing and Export Management and candidates are expected to have a thorough knowledge of the topic.

### **Question 4**

Generally, this was a reasonably well answered question with most candidates majoring on the effects of price transparency on competition.

### **Question 5**

This question was one of the least popular of all the questions on the paper. The topic is well covered throughout Chapter 14 of the essential text. The question was marked very leniently in the August examination. Despite this less than 45% of candidates who attempted the question got a pass mark or better. This is a topic which is becoming an increasingly important one in view of the increasing pace of change towards globalization. It can be expected to come up again in future papers and students are advised to read both the Chapter and the accompanying cases.

### **Question 6**

All those who attempted it handled this question reasonably well. Chapter 12 in the essential text covers the topics in detail especially section 12.5 from which the quotation in the question was taken. However, it highlighted the need to read questions properly. About 20% of candidates who attempted the question made no mention whatever of advertising and insisted on discussing standardisation v. adaptation in the context of product rather than advertising.

### **Question 7**

As usual, this question came to the rescue of many candidates who were verging on borderline pass marks. Almost all candidates attempted the question and most did just enough to obtain extra marks to boost their overall totals. Students might like to note that 120 words are required in answer to each part of the question and that anything less could be costly unless the materials submitted are of good quality.

### **Question 8**

Little needs to be said about this question, as almost everyone who attempted it did very well if they had read the notes on E-Commerce. Only 3 candidates failed to get at least a pass mark (it was obvious they had not read the notes and were trying to bluff their way through) and many papers achieved considerably more than a pass mark.