



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2003

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Question 1

In general this was a well answered question. Candidates showed excellent knowledge of the philosophical foundation for the practice of integrated marketing communications. Key features of IMC such as customer focus, forms of contact, achievement of synergy through positioning, building relationships and affecting behaviour were all clearly outlined. These answers could have been much improved by a discussion of IMC as a sustainable advantage. Weaker answers concentrated on a definitional approach to IMC as an organization's coordinated effort to promote a consistent brand message through the use of multiple communication tools by "speaking with a single voice". While this was a useful starting point there was little theoretical in these answers.

Question 2

Candidates appear to be more knowledgeable about the consumer processing model and much of the answer to this question focused on detailing all aspects of the model. Many answers gave much weaker evaluation of the Hedonic experiential model. The weakest aspect to this question was distinguishing between the models, and showing the implications for marketing communications. The distinction between the CPM and HEM affects both the techniques and the creative strategies chosen for each marketing communications campaign. Practical examples should have been used to illustrate how consumer processing determined the creative techniques and strategy.

Question 3

There is a tendency, when candidates see a question on budgeting, to answer the question by outlining methods of setting a marketing communications budget. This is very simplistic and rarely the correct approach to answering a budgeting question. The discussion should have outlined the main theoretical and practical considerations such as marginal cost and marginal revenue, advertising objectives, competitors' expenditure and funds available.

Question 4

This was the least answered question on the paper. Candidates did not appear to know the main media objectives of reach, frequency, weight, continuity, recency and cost. Most attempts to answer this question tended to give definitions of each of the objectives. This was acceptable where the answers showed the trade-off and interdependence between objectives. It is important to show understanding that with a fixed media budget the media planner cannot optimize all

objectives. Trade-offs must be made: optimising one objective requires sacrificing others. Candidates should have explored the trade between different combinations of objectives such as reach and frequency or recency and frequency. Brand examples should have been used to illustrate why particular mixes of media objectives were appropriate to specific circumstances.

Question 5

On the whole this was a well answered question. However, some answers only outlined a sales promotion technique in relation to the brand's objectives and consumer rewards. Answers to this question should have also included a discussion of the brand management objectives and consumer rewards in general. Discussion should have centred on sales driven brand objectives. Three categories of objectives should have been outlined: generating trial purchases, encouraging repeat purchases and reinforcing brand images. Consumer rewards should have been outlined in terms of their utilitarian or hedonic benefits. Practical examples help to illustrate the theory on consumer rewards.

Question 6

The general approach taken to answering this question on ethical and regulatory considerations in relation to alcohol advertising was to concentrate only on the regulatory dimension. Some candidates were aware of the restrictions and codes of practice for alcohol. However, the majority of candidates gave a description of the structure of the regulatory environment in Ireland. Ethical decisions that could have been discussed include: advertising and the creation of stereotypes, offensive advertising, manipulative advertising and deceptive advertising.

Question 7

A definitional approach was taken to the role of databases in consumer marketing. Candidates rarely addressed the issue of data mining and tended to answer the question from their experiences as consumer. There was little discussion of data mining as information extraction and how this can be achieved and used for making strategic and promotion decisions. Candidates should have discussed the recency, frequency and monetary value formula and the opportunities it provides for database manipulation and mail targeting. Too much emphasis in the answers was given to aspects such as advantages and disadvantages of database marketing. The approach expected was of a more strategic nature including a discussion on how to target prospective customers using data mining and creating co-operative marketing campaigns.

Question 8

Candidates answered this question by describing the structure of an advertising agency. There was little discussion on the growing internationalization of the Irish advertising agency and the agency client relationship. There should have been some discussion on selection of agency and critical elements of the client/agency relationship such as creativity, sourcing of services through the agency, maintaining the agency/client relationship and dissolution of the relationship.