



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2004

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Question 1

Answers to this question tended to concentrate on defining marketing communications. Most students referred to the idea of a single voice for all marketing communication. The two most mentioned trends given were cost and fragmentation.. This question sought opinion on the main trends and challenges facing Marketing communication. Few answers addressed the issue of challenges or drew on discussion of trends and how these might present challenges to the marketing communications industry. It was expected that answers would include discussion of integration, interactivity and relationship building, technology impact, media cost inflation and changing audience habits.

Question 2

There was an over reliance on focusing on sport sponsorship and not including any other form of sponsorship in attempting to answer this question. Generally when candidates concentrated only on sport sponsorship much of the time was given to discussing the objectives and describing the event. It was hoped that answers would concentrate on distinguishing between the various types of sponsorship such as event related including sport and arts, and cause related sponsorship.

Question 3

This was quite a well answered question. However, candidates tended to concentrate on theory and there was little application to the retail context. Candidates showed good familiarity with some of the attitude change models particularly the Elaboration Likelihood Model. In most answers students gave equal attention to both the central and peripheral route to persuasion. Very few answers stated why online shopping should be concerned with the central route to persuasion and why. At the other end of the spectrum there were answers that only dealt with online shopping from a personal experience and there was no reference to theory.

Question 4

Answers to the question on how the advertising agency and the client work together to create effective advertising tended to concentrate on the construction of the brief. The construction of the brief was an important aspect in answering this question. It was also expected that answers would include a discussion of how to achieve advertising impact and the importance of creative impact. There is quite a range of literature on the role of advertising in society and on ethnographic studies of agency practice. It is important that candidates are aware of these theories of advertising and how they impact on the work of the advertising agency and the client.

There was good discussion on the importance of good relationships between the agency and the client.

Question 5

This question was poorly answered candidates showed weak knowledge of effectiveness. It was expected that at the outset answers would state that despite numerous studies which have attempted to prove the predictability of advertising effectiveness there is not agreement as to which measure is best. There was no one correct measure to choose in answering this question. What was surprising was that there was very little discussion of recall and recognition measures. Candidates could have referred to the Pact document and the principles suggested for better performance from advertising researchers. Instead many answers referred to focus groups and surveys but not in terms of how they determined advertising effectiveness. Weaker answers to this question simply described what they considered a good ad. These answers tended to rely on describing the content of an ad as opposed to why it is effective.

Question 6

Generally the approach taken in answering this question was to select a trade oriented promotion method and to describe it in detail. The danger with this approach is that it does not answer the question directly. Very often these answers ramble and do not focus in on the question asked. The preferred approach in answering this question was to discuss the range of objectives that trade promotions are trying to achieve and then to outline factors critical to building a successful campaign. Specific methods could be used by way of example.

Question 7

Few candidates answered this question. It was expected that candidates would pick 2 or 3 major stakeholders and apply public relations theory to how best to communicate with each group. A few candidates show good knowledge of Grunig's theories and applied these to different communication contexts relevant to the stakeholder they were targeting. The main communication activities discussed were publicity and event management. Weaker answers to this question focused on crisis management. Instead of focusing on the relevant stakeholder in the specific crisis and devising a communications plan to reach them, the discussion usually concentrated on a description of the crisis.

Question 8

There was a tendency for candidates to confine their answers to descriptions of the advantages and disadvantages of different media. It was hoped that answers would concentrate on comparing and contrasting as opposed to listing advantages and disadvantages. Candidates should use the knowledge they have and apply it to the question. It was expected that issues such as mass communication, interactivity, response measurement, image creation and segmentation would all have been addressed.