



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2007

STAGE 3 PROJECT

General Comments

The project brief required students to focus on the Irish soft drinks market. Students were asked to profile the main segments existing in the market and the major players involved. Most students gave a comprehensive account of the major players in the market, but in general the discussion of the principal segments existing in the Irish soft drinks market was quite basic.

The project brief also required students to outline the buyer behavioural factors that have influenced soft drinks consumption in Ireland. This section was poorly answered and most students showed little or no understanding of how cultural, social, personal and psychological factors have affected soft drinks consumption in this country!

Students were also required to choose a soft drinks product, and using both primary and secondary research, evaluate the promotional strategy being used to promote this product. Despite the fact that it was very clearly stated in the project outline, a number of students failed to conduct any primary research at all and merely conducted some secondary research to describe the use of promotion for the product. Even those students who did conduct primary research, failed to recognise that the purpose of the research was to evaluate the product's promotional strategy and not just discover how many people heard of the product, consumed the product etc.

Finally, students were asked to discuss the diversity existing within Europe with respect to the consumption of soft drinks and the different preferences existing. Poorer projects failed to give a comprehensive account of soft drinks consumption in Europe and showed little evidence of any research on this matter.

In general, there still continues to be a real problem with the integration of relevant marketing theory into the project. Students are expected to use relevant buyer behaviour, promotions and international marketing theory and illustrate how this theory applies to the scenario outlined in the project outline. There was a real failure to do so. This is an important omission considering 15% of the marks are allocated for this task!

Referencing also needs improvement. Most students seem unaware of how to properly reference sources of information used to write the report and large sections of most reports still remain unreferenced. Despite these problems, the small number of students who submitted projects obtained a grade D or better. However, there is a concern that many students are just doing what is barely necessary to pass the project and there are very few students who are putting in any real effort to obtain a better grade.