



EXAMINER'S REPORT

AUGUST 2008

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY

Overall Comments

The overall results of the August examinations were very acceptable in that there was an unusually high pass rate. However, the vast majority of passes were in the D category which was somewhat disappointing in view of the high number of A's and B's in the May examinations. There is still a problem with candidates not studying the questions properly and this resulted in a small number of failures. This is a pity because these candidates would probably have achieved a pass mark had they addressed the actual question rather than just the broad topic.

Question 1

This question proved to be completely beyond the competence of most candidates and it was probably fortunate that only a small number attempted it. The question asked in what ways does the global marketing mix differ from the multidomestic marketing mix. Most answers went on about the marketing mix in general terms and little attempt was made to show how one differed from the other: there was a wealth of waffle in most answers and little else. Hence the poor marks earned. The global marketing dimension of the syllabus is now firmly established and students must expect that at least two questions on every examination paper will be based on some aspect of global marketing. (Note Question 3 in the May examinations). Questions that ask students to contrast global marketing and domestic, international/regional marketing are the obvious ones to expect on papers and it should be anticipated that this will be the case in the future.

Question 2

This was a very popular question and it worked reasonably well for almost everyone who attempted it. Many candidates were able to quote examples from the text or from general marketing knowledge in support of their answers and this earned them good marks. The summary of Chapter 6 in the essential text provides the basis of a good answer to this question.

Question 3

This topic is well covered in Chapter 4 of the essential text which goes to some length to spell out in very practical ways how marketing strategy and management varies according to the level of economic development in various regions and countries around the globe. The various economic variables are spelled out in the text. Most candidates mentioned income, inflation and monetary stability as being the only variables in the economic environment. Few mentioned population, income distribution, consumption patterns, investment, infrastructure, economic integration, debt problems or natural resources as economic factors. This was disappointing because to understand the economy of an overseas market or economic region, is to understand in large measure how marketing operates in those regions. Nevertheless, all candidates achieved at least a pass mark. Examination of past papers will show that questions on the marketing environment crop up quite frequently in examination papers and students should be prepared for this.

Question 4

A question on methods of payment is almost a standard on every examination paper and this has been the case for many years. These questions are seldom very complex and it has been a long time since candidates were asked about the intricacies of letters of credit and how they operate. (This is not to say that such a question might not crop up in the future). Mostly, the question asked is a very practical one as was the question asked in the August Examination – How can the exporter minimize the risk of not being paid for an export transaction? The expected answer to this sort of question would simply demand a diagram such as that on page 365 of the essential text. Such a diagram, properly drawn up would probably earn the candidate at the very least 50% of the available marks. No paper contained an attempt at the diagram and, once again, most papers contained a wealth of wishful waffle. The section in the essential text beginning on page 369 would also apply. An understanding of the export marketing mix is fundamental to the academic achievement of students and questions about the mix are standard on every paper. Because of this, these questions will always demand a high standard of answer and students should prepare for this.

Question 5

This question was based on Chapter 18 of the essential text and particularly around the pages just before and after page 589. Answers were acceptable but – again – the depth of answering strongly indicated that a real understanding of the differences between global and international or domestic marketing are failing to register. This is a weakness that will always let candidates down badly in the examination situation.

Question 6

The quote comes from page 249 in the essential text which then goes on to support the contention that good objectives result in good research. The question was designed as a chance for candidates to tackle a fundamental aspect of marketing that didn't necessarily demand in-depth knowledge of international marketing research. Few candidates tackled it for some reason and those that did do so, did not make a great job of it. It should be enough to state that Chapter 8 in the essential text is an important one.

Question 7

Almost all candidates attempted this question and all except one achieved at least a D mark. The candidate who did not pass had obviously not studied the reading on e-Business or the section in the essential text beginning on page 442. e-Business is becoming more and more important to international marketing each day. There is a case to be made for putting a second essential text on the syllabus to cover the topic but, apart from the cost to the Student, there doesn't seem to be a suitable text available at present. Therefore, students should note the continued importance of the MII essential reading.

Question 8

As usual, this question brought quite a few marginal students over the pass line. The topics were typical of those asked in previous papers. The numbers in brackets below show where the topics featured in the essential text.

1. High context cultures (54)
2. Back translation (59)
3. Core, tangible and intangible product dimensions (327)
4. Nearshoring (98/420)
5. Cause related marketing (577)
6. Channel configuration (415)
7. Non-verbal language (59)
8. Blood free diamonds (627)