



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2009

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY

General Comment

Students should note that the Examiner will NOT award marks for answers that do not address the SPECIFICS of the question asked. Despite the Examiner's continuous advice to candidates that they should READ THE QUESTION CAREFULLY, the May examinations were littered with papers in which obviously bright and studious candidates wrote excellent materials addressing things that HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THE ACTUAL QUESTION ASKED or – at best – had only peripheral relevance to the question asked. The majority of failures or barely pass marks in the May examinations were due to no more than just the failure by the candidate to answer the questions asked. In some papers, as many as three out of the five questions answered suffered from this problem.

Question 1

This was a fairly standard question and almost everyone who answered it achieved at least a pass mark. It seemed that one or two students are still using the old Albaum, Duerr and Strandskov text. This is dangerous and students are advised to use only the recommended text only for this subject.

Question 2

Marketers must thoroughly understand how the various methods of payment work and the levels of risk attached to each. The diagram on page 365 of the essential text sums up both the methods and the risk elements attached to each. This is a highly technical area of international marketing and students either know it or they don't – there is simply no room for trying to bluff. Quite a number of candidates did this to their cost. Two candidates even invented two new terms that the Examiner had never heard of and pretty exhaustive research went into making sure that neither of the two invented methods actually existed. A number of candidates also mixed up methods of payment and Incoterms without showing any evidence that they understood either. The candidates who did really well in this question, drew the diagram referred to above and went on to explain how each of the methods worked.

Question 3

It is never a pleasant experience for an Examiner to award zero or very low marks to any question. However, this happened with a number of papers that tackled this question for the very simple reason that candidates went on at length about e-Commerce, e-business, intranets, extranets, the growth of the Internet, etc. without ever attempting the question asked which was about internal integration within the organization which operates an e-Business platform. The Examiner was very happy to award good marks to candidates who made any sort of effort to explain the necessity for and difficulties on internally integrating efforts across all the functions

of the business in order for the web site to operate successfully since there was not a lot of specific information in the reading supplied by the Institute on this topic.

It is very obvious that the website itself must be able to ‘talk to’ all functions within the business and it should not have been beyond candidates to elaborate on this simple theme. Every examination paper for years has contained at least one question on e-Business. The Marketing Institute has made the extra reading available on its website for students - www.mii.ie/304. The questions which have been asked are readily available on past examination papers. The Examiner has stressed again and again the importance which is attached to e-Business for International Marketing Students. So, students who neglect this area of their studies do so at their peril – especially if they try to ‘bluff’ their way through a question by giving just general information based only on their personal use of the Internet.

Question 4

Again this is a technical question which asks about the structure of the international negotiation process and why the structure transcends nationality and culture. The Examiner was hoping for materials addressing the offer, informal meetings, strategy formulation, negotiations and implementation (page 389 of the recommended text) but would have been quite happy to accept submissions based on something as simple as the AIDA model. What was received was endless reams of information about culture and cultural differences around the globe. Just three papers mentioned the textbook model and none the AIDA model. Hence the generally very low marks received by candidates who attempted this question.

Question 5

This proved to be the least popular question on the paper for some reason. The materials are set out in Exhibit 13.13 page 433 of the essential text which lists 32 elements in all. It was not unreasonable, therefore, for the Examiner to require just eight items from the list. In fact, all candidates who attempted this question achieved at least a pass mark. Students should note that at least one question on distributions comes up in almost all examination papers.

Question 6

Again, this question was not very popular with only a small number of candidates attempting it: all but one received very good marks. The candidate who did not receive a pass mark did not answer the question asked. The relevant materials can be found in pages 336 to 344 of the essential text with particularly relevant material on page 343.

Question 7

This was a straightforward question and all candidates who attempted the question achieved at least a pass mark.

Question 8

This worked well for almost all candidates who attempted it. Interestingly, major errors arose in defining the payment related questions – Irrevocable Letter of Credit and Pro Forma Invoice.