



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2009

### STAGE 3 PROJECT

#### **General Comments**

The project brief required students to focus on the Irish functional soft drinks market. Students were asked to firstly profile the main segments existing in the functional soft drinks market and identify the main players involved. In general, most students answered this section well and presented extensive secondary research on the functional soft drinks market. The weaker projects presented page after page of figures and tables about this market, instead of explaining what all this information meant.

Secondly, the project brief required students to comment on the buyer behaviour factors that have led to an increase in demand for functional soft drinks in Ireland. In general, this section was well answered. However, weaker projects failed to illustrate how the many cultural, social and psychological buyer behaviour factors outlined had a direct impact on the demand for functional soft drinks.

Thirdly, students were asked to select a functional soft drink brand currently sold in Ireland and to use secondary and primary research to identify the brand's promotional strategy for the Irish market. Despite the fact that many functional soft drink brands exist, the Examiner was amazed at the lack of originality when it came to choosing a brand. The majority of projects focused on either Red Bull, Lucozade or Powerade! Since this section of the project is worth 40% of the project marks, the Examiner expected that considerable attention would be given to this section. However, some students failed to carry out any primary research, even though this was explicitly stated in the project brief! Some students who did conduct primary research, failed to understand its purpose. Instead of using the primary research to learn about how much or how often consumers used the brand, the primary research should have been used to learn more about the promotional strategy used for the brand. Weaker projects presented their primary research findings separately from their discussion of the promotional strategy, instead of integrating both.

Finally, students were asked to outline their chosen brand's international marketing strategy and to comment on the unique challenges facing their brand when marketing internationally. Poorer projects failed to focus on the brand's unique challenges when engaging in international marketing and ignored this requirement completely.

Most students made some attempt to use relevant buyer behaviour, promotions and international marketing theory in completing their project. However, there still appears to be some problem with the *integration* and *application* of this material. Some students still do not appear to know how to reference correctly and a number of projects failed to include an abstract.

On a positive note, the Examiner was impressed with the quality of this year's projects and it was obvious that some students put considerable time and effort into their projects. Over 80% of students obtained a grade C or better, which is an improvement on previous years.