



## **EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**AUGUST 2000**

### **BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING**

#### **General Comments**

50 candidates sat for the August examinations; 22 passed.

It should be borne in mind that while some candidates may be taking the examination for the first time, many would have been taking a resit.

Generally, candidates made the typical mistakes that occur year after year. Many were under-prepared for the case study, producing, at best, a simplistic summary of the case. Others mismanaged the time available in the examination and failed to adequately address some of the questions. These reasons accounted for many of the consequent failures in the examination. It was also noticeable that many candidates had not 'read around' the subject matter. This was evidenced by the lack of use of appropriate examples, a reluctance to bring one's own experience and opinion into the answer and a reliance on the basic lecture notes. By contrast, the stronger scripts addressed these issues and in addition, focused on the specific themes raised in the questions.

#### **SECTION A (40%) TORO: INDUSTRIAL FLAVOURS**

It was readily apparent that there was a wide gap between the 'strong' and 'weak' answers to this case study. Many candidates were simply unprepared and showed very little knowledge or understanding of the case. Others summarised the case. The better scripts attempted to address the three separate sections. It was disappointing to see how few candidates addressed the general issue of managing family concerns. Some ignored the question completely. Very few considered the question from the point of view of overall reflection.

Part C – the recommendations were poorly addressed. Many candidates included a few 'one-liners'. Clearly more is expected than this. The stronger answers attempted to justify the recommendations and included a time frame. But overall the standard was weak.

## SECTION B (60%)

### Question 2

Generally this was the most popular question and was adequately answered. The topic is always likely to be a 'live possibility' for an examination question and many had prepared accordingly. The better answers focused on the 'added cost' dimension of the question and achieved a higher mark. Weaker answers ignored this aspect and provided the examiner with a 'prepared answer' focusing on the dimensions of relationship management. This is a good example of 'selective interpretation'. It can lead to situations where the candidate can generate a substantial amount of text with little reward.

### Question 3

Some candidates interpreted this question in the context of MIS and as a consequence, failed to address the specific issue of the Internet. Issues such as 'data mining', mass customisation and 'segments of one' should have featured in the answers. For the most part, they were missing. One or two candidates related their own experiences as a mechanism for demonstrating an understanding of the issues.

### Question 4

A worrying number of candidates appeared to confuse advertising with promotion. This is alarming given that this examination represents the final stage of a professional marketing programme. Others focused exclusively on the basic concept of the Internet and did not address issues such as 'hub sites', portals and so on. It would also have been appropriate to consider the specific objectives that advertising addresses i.e. awareness, increasing visibility and so on. Clearly advertising objectives will differ from sales objectives or those that can be achieved via interactive marketing.

### Question 5

Competently addressed by most of the candidates that attempted this question. Weaker scripts focused on the NPD process and ignored the 'barriers' aspect of the question. Again 'selective interpretation' reared its ugly head! Most candidates however correctly discussed issues such as 'turf wars' and the ensuing conflict that can occur.

### Question 6

This was very much a case of 'hit or miss'. Some candidates confused this topic with the four elements of marketing control. Others correctly examined the various components of the 'marketing scorecard'. This resulted in a major divergence in the marks awarded for this question. In many cases, where the candidate addressed the marketing control issues and nothing else, a mark of zero was awarded.