



## EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2007

### B2B MARKETING MANAGEMENT

#### General Comments

The failure rate for this exam is just over twenty-nine per cent. This is a considerable improvement over previous years; where the average failure rate was around forty per cent. The improvement can be attributed to the candidates following the recommendations in the annual examiner's report: particularly in the context of reading around the subject material. Students are also making more effective use of examples to support their line of argument. The "failed" scripts still demonstrate an inability to get to grips with the specific issues raised by the questions.

#### Question 1

Most of the candidates made a good attempt to address this question. The stronger answers focused on the following issues: managing relationships in the supply chain, managing the concept of value, designing customer-responsive supply chains and above all, emphasising the difference between "demand-pull" and "supply push". Such answers also made effective use of short case vignettes and extra readings to develop the quality and content of the answer. Weaker answers contained a largely descriptive summation of the characteristics and components of the supply chain. Students in this category ignored the fact that this question represents forty per cent of the available marks and thus warrants far greater attention and development than is the case with questions in section B.

#### Question 2

This question produced a strong dichotomy between strong and weak answers. Effective answers focused on the specific concept identified in the question: hypernorms. They emphasised that no one set of ethical guidelines can be established and recognised that cultures have varying practices and customs. Such answers focused on the work of Donaldson and Dunfee (1999). This was referred to extensively in the text-book. Weaker answers, by contrast, provided a general and superficial review of the general concept of ethics and lacked any focus on the specific question.

#### Question 3

Strong answers addressed the following issues: cross-functional teams, new product funnel, project teams, identification of the determining attributes, the use of the internet in terms of helping the process of collaboration. Such answers linked the discussion to the strategic concept of core competencies. Some answers also made use of short case studies. Again, the weaker answers were largely descriptive in content and focused on the different stages of the development process.

**Question 4**

This question was not tackled by many of the candidates. Presumably this was because it focused on a specific approach to pricing B2B products. The effective answers considered the following issues: the need to develop reliable costs, which can be a frustrating exercise – where in some cases, the allocation is often arbitrary. Such allocations should be based not just on the product, but also on the basis of customers. Weaker answers demonstrated a lack of understanding of the concept.

**Question 5**

Again, a dichotomy emerged between strong and weak answers. Quite simply, it was not sufficient to identify the main players in the DMU. Stronger answers engaged in debate on the following issues: attitudes to risk, the relative importance of hierarchy in the corporate structure, how close they are to the corporate boundary, whether they are active in the aspect of cross-departmental communications and so on. Some also made reference to the work of Rochetto (1984). Weaker answers, by contrast, only addressed the roles of the players.

**Question 6**

This did not prove to be a popular question. Those that attempted the question generally had addressed the main issues. These included the following aspects: tariffs, the concept of “Megamarketing” and specifically the work of Dahringer (1991). The latter researcher highlights the importance of embodying services, superior management, customisation, technology and macromarketing.