



## **EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**AUGUST 2008**

### **SERVICES MARKETING MANAGEMENT**

#### **Question 1**

The importance of service employees and consumers and their relative roles in service delivery is a key part of the syllabus. As a result this was reasonably well answered. There was an over emphasis on the recruitment and HR areas and not enough on the role of the employee roles in creating customer satisfaction and service quality. Good answers used the service profit chain to illustrate an answer and also discussed the dimensions of service quality. A discussion of the customer's role included issues such as customers as productive resources, customers as contributors to quality and satisfaction, and customers as competitors. A criticism would be the tendency for some candidates to over focus on the introduction "Providing services is a people business" and spend far too long on a general discussion of services marketing and not enough time on the specific question.

#### **Question 2**

Students at this level in their marketing studies should have a good understanding of marketing research. The initial discussion should have been on the criteria for an effective services research programme as in Chapter 6 of the text (Listening to customers through research). The pros and cons of different approaches should be discussed in addition to a description of the various techniques. I was surprised that the question was not more popular given it was an area of marketing familiar to all candidates through their other studies and it was a general question rather than a very specific question on a particular topic.

#### **Question 3**

This was a very straightforward question on the application of blueprinting. The question asked students to discuss how blueprints may be used e.g. for marketing, human resource and operations decisions. Therefore issues such as customer involvement in the process, employee roles, service redesign, and productivity could have been mentioned. Generally candidates answered this question well and it was a very popular question. The examples given were very basic and that is to be expected in an exam situation. The purpose of the question was to assess whether candidates could apply the theory from the chapter and as mention the majority were able to do so.

**P.T.O.**

**Question 4**

This was a basic question on a topic well covered in the text in the chapter entitled Customer Perceptions of Service (chap 5 in the most recent edition; chap 4 in older editions). The factors to be discussed would be;

- (i) product and service features,
- (ii) consumer emotions,
- (iii) attributions for service success or failure and
- (iv) perceptions of equity or fairness.

**Question 5**

The issue of pricing of services has taken on a new importance in the Irish economy recently. A number of service sectors are now regulated and so there is more discussion of pricing issues in the media. Because of that I decided to ask a very basic question on pricing this year in both summer and autumn. Chapter 17 articulates three key ways that service prices differ. These are;

- (i) customer knowledge of service prices,
- (ii) the role of non-monetary costs and
- (iii) price as an indicator of service quality.

**Question 6**

This question required students to discuss the distribution channels applicable to services. A number of students spent a considerable time discussing the characteristics of services. While this was an introduction to the answer the question did ask candidates to describe the specific strategies used to manage service delivery through intermediaries. A study of the text will highlight three specific intermediaries electronic channels, franchises, and agents & brokers.