

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

Applied GCE

GCE Travel & Tourism (6996)
Unit 10: Promotions and Sales in Travel and
Tourism

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General Comments

The paper followed the format of a question and answer booklet. Candidates were required to respond in the spaces provided. There were 6 questions and 90 marks were available.

The questions only related to the travel and tourism industry. All questions linked to the information under 'what you need to learn' in the qualification specification.

The questions were linked to the assessment objectives. Candidates therefore needed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and skills in vocationally related contexts. Candidates need to apply knowledge and understanding of the specified content and of related skills in vocationally-related contexts. Candidates need to use appropriate research techniques to obtain information to assess vocationally related issues and problems. Finally candidates were required to evaluate information to make reasoned judgements, draw conclusions and make recommendations about vocationally related issues and problems.

Most candidates attempted all questions and consequently they picked up marks across the paper.

Question 1.

Q1(a)

There were six marks available for this question and on average candidates scored four out of the six marks. It is an AO1 question and candidates who had studied the stages involved in the sales process as outlined in the specifications scored well on this question. A response that scored full marks can be seen below;

Overcoming objections

This is when you either find an alternative that will suit the customer and resolve the customer's objection or you give reasons why the customer's objection is not valid.

Closing a sale

This is when you finalise the sale by the customer agreeing to purchase the holiday and you receive a deposit

After-sales service

This is a service which happens once the product is bought. For example flowers in the hotel room when the customer arrives showing the company care.

Q1(b) This is an AO2 question so application as well as knowledge is what is being tested. All too often candidates could come up with a relevant skill but then gave a generic explanation rather than referring specifically and consistently to the customer type provided. Or in other instances they come up with 'be friendly' which in this circumstance is a weak skill to then explain.

One response that did score 6 marks:

The young Greek woman

- Good communication skills
- So that Amit can help the young Greek woman by simplifying what he is saying so she can understand and he can help book her another flight

The journalist

- Good IT skills
- The journalist knows where she wants to fly to and wants it to happen quickly. Amit needs good IT skills to be able to make a quick and easy booking.

Question 2.

Q2(ai) This question was asked in a slightly different format than previous papers. Candidates were required to apply their knowledge on market research methods to a specific scenario. Most candidates scored well and could provide two different types of market research relevant to the scenario of Links Railway. Occasionally there was repetition which could not be fully credited, for example written questionnaires and telephone questionnaires.

One response that gained full marks:

Method 1

Primary Research: focus groups which involve taking a group of people (potential customers) to discuss openly ideas and objections to the new plan. Any queries will be those of a potential customer and therefore vital for the project and overall customer satisfaction.

Method 2

Secondary Research: internet. Researching what organisations are already offering will show Links Railways if there is a gap in the market and what they could offer.

Q2(aii) Following on from Q2ai) this was a well answered question where the majority of candidates scored well. One good answer chosen out of a number was the Internet.

The internet should be the first thing Links Railway look at when creating the product/service. This is a quick, cheap and easy way to gain an insight into what is already on the market including prices and locations.

Most relevant information can be found on the internet. This is also a place to observe existing advertisements from competitors and could be extremely helpful to Links Railway.

However although secondary research is good to use it might not provide information specific to Links Railways requirements. Using this form of research will only show what is already on offer and will not give advice and ideas on future development

plans. The focus group will. Some websites are created by amateurs and cannot be trusted as being factual.

Question 3

Q3(a) This question tended to divide candidates. Often candidates slipped into description of SIA against the four Ps listed. If they did not explain and merely described, this limited the number of marks that could be awarded. Other candidates talked about what the airline could do rather than what it does do or have and again this restricted the number of marks that could be awarded.

However compared to previous series candidates did score better on this question. Candidates could present the case either for or against as there is no right or wrong decision. However the amount of explanation and reference to the information given and reference to the objectives was key.

For maximum marks candidates needed to refer to the SIA objectives outlined. Below is an answer where the candidate scored full marks.

Product

The product works for SIA as it travels between major business destinations and business travelers can afford the business and luxury fares. It also offers comfort on long haul journeys which will help increase profits and the luxurious standards will help achieve being number one for customer service.

Price

The price works for SIA as people are willing to pay for more comfort and luxury especially as people would be using company money if they travel 'in a class above first'. It also offers a reasonable price for customers travelling in economy class which will increase profit.

Place

This works for SIA as Singapore, London, Tokyo, Paris and Sydney are all major business destinations of the world so by offering a luxury airline which companies will be paying their workers to travel on it will increase profits. The seats can be booked through a number of distribution channels too which is good for customer service.

Promotion

This works for SIA as business workers who have used the airline and travel a lot will be able to use the frequent flyers loyalty programme and will use SIA preferably to other airlines as they have used it before. By advertising in business magazines it will also attract more business customers and help increase profits.

Q3(b) In contrast to Q3a) this was a poorly answered question with many candidates just lifting sections from the stem and repeating the information again. They were generally able to refer to the importance of competitors who charged lower prices but few were able to link the situation to the recession. In fact the economic analysis was very poor with few referring to the poor timing of this launch given the swift turnabout in world affairs. Technology was largely ignored and if referred to, was often a generic type answer referring to different marketing media.

However some candidates did score MB3 marks:

'Due to the current economic climate many businesses now have less money and are having to cut back so now people who go on business trips travel in economy class as this is all their business can afford.

The new advances in technology now mean many people don't need to make the trips they did before. Web chat now means you can hold meetings on line seeing everyone's face and hearing people talk. Many businesses now use this to save on time and money.

If the competition of SIA are selling first class seats for 60% less than them but still offering amazing service and facilities people will choose the other airline. Most working and middle class people cannot afford £10,000 for a flight so now SIA will have a very small target market.'

Question 4.

Q4(a) This is a question that has appeared on several past papers but it was disappointing to see how few candidates took the opportunity to gain an easy 5 or 6 marks here.

One answer that did score maximum marks can be seen below:

Displays

Visual information stands often used near the point of sale to attract customers, for example placed in the window of travel agents

Sponsorship

A company will pay a sum of money to have somebody promote their company often displaying their logo for a lot of people to see

Public Relations

Creating a positive public image and maintaining communication with the public through the use of the media e.g. press releases

Q4(b) This question was used to test the most able candidates. It tests the real understanding of what marketing is all about and also the ability of candidates to think through something for themselves. Many candidates did struggle but some did provide excellent explanations. For example:

'Marketing communications such as television adverts and direct mail are used to increase sales of products, they are there to make people want (demand) them more. For example Thomson creating the Perfect Beach made many people think and want their perfect holiday.'

Q4(c(i) & c(ii)) This was generally a well answered question. Candidates could empathise with the situation and generally could describe two different promotional techniques or materials that could attract the two different target markets. Weaker candidates did not describe techniques or materials which meant they did not gain marks here. One weakness candidates do need to watch out for is the tendency when justifying to provide more description rather than to justify.

One answer that scored maximum marks:

Q04(c)(i)

Description

Advertising the product on TV between children's TV programmes

Justification

Children will be watching TV and see the product. They will be attracted to the images of attractions and other children having fun. This will influence children to want to go there so they can experience the same fun as what they have seen the children on the advert have

Q04(c)(ii)

Description

Sales Promotion Kids go Free! (under the age of 15)

Justification

If parents see the offer of children going free it is more likely to influence them to book that holiday. The parents will feel as if they are getting a good deal/bargain. The price of a holiday has a huge effect on adults because they search for the cheapest deal.

Question 5

Q5(a) This was a question where the vast majority of candidates scored at least three marks. They were all very capable of explaining the effectiveness of the design, images and content of the advert. However few looked at the additional information such as the fact that it appeared in a local paper, or who the target market was likely to be. Candidates should be advised that they look at all available information provided to them.

One response that scored the full 6 marks available is below.

'The advert is effective as there are clear pictures showing the rooms and the hotel itself, there is a catchy slogan 'Eat, drink and relax'. It describes your stay in the Bell Hotel. It gives the impression their target market is older couples rather than families with small children. The advert is detailed as it says what you experience about the food, drink and how you can relax. But it hasn't made it too wordy therefore not boring the reader, it has just made it simple. It has also made the contact details clear to read. All these points make the advert effective as it catches the reader's eye.

One negative I would say is that it is advertised in a local paper not really the target market as people wouldn't want to stay in a hotel in their home area. The positive in the paper is they can rip it out and give it to a friend or family member who may be interested if they are visiting. But the target market isn't in their area. They would be better putting leaflets in shops about 2-3 hours drive away or in adverts or papers

with a regional target market. This would be seen by more of the target market as a couple may be looking for a short break/weekend away which isn't too far so not a lot of travelling.'

Q5(b) Candidates did struggle with this question. Many suggested a local newspaper advert for 5bi) despite being told to suggest a different promotional technique/material.

Candidates appeared to struggle with the fact that the hotel would have two different types of target market; the locals who would come in for a drink or a meal and those living further away who would require the accommodation. One response that did gain maximum marks

Q05(c)(i)

Suggestion

They could have leaflets in local newsagents and cafes

Justification

This would attract local people perhaps for a meal. Leaflets are an effective means of promotion as they can be displayed in many areas and are easy to pick up and take with you.

Q05(c)(ii)

Suggestion

Buy 2 nights and get a third night free

Justification

This appeals to people who live further away perhaps in a busy town looking for a few days away. A long weekend with a night free will appeal to those with a smaller budget that wants some luxury at a smaller price.

Question 6

Q6a)

This is a question that appears regularly. However this time to help candidates the question was structured. First of all the candidates were asked to name the promotional campaign. No marks were awarded for this but it allowed candidates to outline fully their campaign. If candidates refer to just one piece of promotional material or to all of the marketing undertaken by an organisation, then this restricts the number of marks that can be awarded to two.

The question then asked the candidate to name two of the promotional techniques that the organisation used. The candidates who did this scored two marks. However some did not name any promotional techniques whatsoever and therefore lost marks. Candidates were then asked to name two promotional materials used in the campaign. This really divided candidates. Those who had researched their campaigns were able to do this well. However some just named two materials not connected to the promotional techniques they had given earlier. For example a candidate said sponsorship and direct marketing, then under materials said TV advert and newspaper advert.

Describing when and where the promotional materials were used was usually better answered and candidates usually gained the available marks here.

Generally this question was much better answered than in previous series. One answer that scored maximum marks:

Tourism Ireland

The promotional techniques used were advertising through different medians, direct marketing, public relations and also sales promotions.

The promotional materials used were the TV adverts which showed animated characters of Ireland to make the destination stand out. They also showed a sense of fun and spontaneity. There was also the internet where they had 41 websites in 19 languages and they used Facebook and Twitter. Also they did 180 consumer and trade promotions as well as radio adverts.

The promotional materials were used throughout Britain, North America and Europe as these were where many tourists that visit Ireland are from. Also these materials were used in the Spring and Summer of 2010.

This response demonstrated excellent research skills.

Q6b)

This part of the question asks candidates to assess the success of the campaign described in Q6a). Assessment was better than in previous series.

One response that scored maximum marks as assessment was made against measurable targets.

'The promotional campaign of Tourism Ireland was very effective particularly the websites where they had 13 million visits, an increase of 34% from 2009. Also their social media pages (new word of mouth) on Facebook and Twitter were popular as they had 81,000 fans on Facebook and 13,000 followers on Twitter.

Furthermore that year that the promotional campaign went out there were 8.9 million visitors (9% increase from 2009) which led to Ireland generating 3.46 billion Euros in revenue. However they did find that the radio adverts were less effective as they did not give people an image of Ireland unlike the other methods used and they found that although the TV adverts were very effective they were also very expensive compared to the money they spent on the internet (26.1% of the budget was spent on this) and on direct marketing and public relations.'

This question should give candidates time to study and research on their own with just some guidance from you. It would be best to pick a short lived campaign that uses a variety of promotional techniques and or materials so candidates can look at how each of these fitted in with the campaign to produce maximum awareness to the maximum number of the target market.

For the description of the campaign candidates get two marks for referring to the techniques used, two marks for materials and two marks for where or when the materials were used.

For the assessment candidates should think how they are going to assess. What are they going to judge? Is it how many people came? How much money was made? How the relevant target markets were or were not reached?

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