

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE Applied Business
Unit 6 Investigating Promotion
6921 Paper 01

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GCE Applied Business 6921: Investigating Promotion – Principal Examiner Report June 2015

General Comments

The first of the two main scenarios focused on the promotions used by two fruit farmers in the Vale of Evesham. One operated as a pick-your-own farm and the other supplying regional supermarkets and greengrocery chains. Candidates found it relatively easy to associate with the pick-your-own situation but found it difficult to relate to a business only selling to other businesses. The second scenario related to promotions used by 'Welcome to Yorkshire'. The main promotions used here were sponsorship and product placement and some candidates found it difficult to tie the details of these to the actual situations given.

Questions 8 to 10 required an understanding of how specific real businesses actually carry out their promotions. Question 8 was about the use of informative, rather than persuasive promotion. This was generally well understood.

Question 9 was about businesses that use one of three specific sales promotions. Where candidates chose one of the listed forms of sales promotion, part (a) was generally well answered, but many candidates still found it difficult to relate the constraints for part (b) to those imposed by the business.

Question 10 related to the use of billboards as a method of promotion. It was generally fairly well understood but there were limited developed answers.

Unfortunately, the usual perennial weaknesses, which are flagged up after every series, still prevent many candidates from gaining high marks. These are:

- Not reading the questions carefully enough.
- Not considering the context of the question in sufficient depth.
- Not understanding some very basic terminologies.
- Not considering the number of marks being awarded for a question.
- Not writing in the space provided, especially in cases where candidates have large handwriting.
- Not developing answers, especially where the command word and the number of marks awarded indicate that this should be done.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question required candidates to consider the way in which Chris Cowen sold his fruits to the market, which was through regional supermarkets and greengrocery chains which then used their own brand names for his products. Generally this made the use of television advertising inappropriate because the target would not be watching television in order to decide the supplier, and would be approached directly. Many candidates simply wrote about the benefits of television advertising in general and did not tie this back to Cowen's actual target markets. Candidates who recognised the target markets gave good answers.

Question 2

Almost all candidates identified gender discrimination as an issue with the advertisement and most could site the Sex Discrimination/Equality Acts element as what was illegal. Some candidates, however, explained this in terms of simply being unfair. Few candidates knew that it is illegal to discriminate against trade union members simply because they are trade union members, again only taking the approach that this was unfair rather than the approach that everyone, with minor exceptions, has the right to join a trade union. Age discrimination against students was more difficult to argue and needed to be based upon indirect discrimination which was the approach taken by only a very few candidates.

Question 3

This question was well answered by candidates who considered Anne's likely target market. The question asked for candidates to 'judge' the suitability of the methods and this required them to consider both positive and negative points. Only the better candidates did this. The best candidates also considered the relative suitability, taking into account the nature of the likely target markets.

Question 4 (a)

Nearly all candidates could give general benefits of employing an advertising agency, but a significant number of candidates did not specify what internal constraints Anne might have in terms of creating an effective radio advertisement. Candidates who started with the constraints generally gave well developed answers. Only the best candidates explained why Anne would have the constraints.

Question 4 (b)

The question did ask candidates to 'discuss'. The majority of candidates only considered positive points, which were generally well applied. There was significant number of candidates who cited low cost as a benefit, whereas large helium balloons are actually relatively expensive. Few candidates gave a drawback of using the helium balloon.

Questions Q5(a) to question 6 A significant number of candidates were confused as to what relationship was being shown in Figure 2. Some thought that it was 'Welcome to Yorkshire' that was being sponsored. Some assumed that 'Welcome to Yorkshire' was making the programme rather than just sponsoring it.

Question 5 (a)

Some candidates had the sponsorship the wrong way round. Some candidates put down very basic answers, such as 'money' or 'more viewers', which did not show sufficient understanding of the situation to gain a mark. Money could refer to sponsorship monies, profits from the programme, payments from ITV. More viewers would come from making a good programme and did not relate directly to the sponsorship. Candidates giving slightly more developed answers gained good marks, except where they gave benefits to 'Welcome to Yorkshire'.

Question 5 (b)

Again there was the problem for some candidates who thought that 'Welcome to Yorkshire' was being sponsored. Some candidates only considered sponsorship in general terms rather than the benefits, and drawbacks that could result from the nature of the programme itself.

Where the details given in Figure 2 were used to support answers, candidates generally gave well argued explanations, although many candidates assumed that all of the destinations for the 'Taste Tour' were in Yorkshire.

Question 6

For many candidates the word 'else' was ignored. For a significant number of candidates there was an assumption that 'Welcome to Yorkshire' was actually making the programme and candidates made suggestions such as placing more episodes in Yorkshire, adding details such as the best tourist destinations and extending the length of the series so that more areas of Yorkshire could be covered.

Question 7 (a)

Most candidates gave fairly general answers to this question, usually related to the number of viewers and the popularity of Emmerdale as a programme. Some also noted that the location of Emmerdale was in Yorkshire.

Question 7 (b)

Where candidates had a good understanding of what a product placement was they gave well reasoned answers. However, a number of candidates focused on the fact that some of the placement would be in the local pub in Emmerdale and argued that viewers would be put off by the association with alcohol, ignoring the fact that the viewers were quite happy to be watching the characters in Emmerdale being in the pub and drinking. Other candidates seemed to think that the product placement meant that the posters, etc, were being put into actual Yorkshire pubs.

Questions 8 to 10

Candidates' answers to these questions were limited by how well they knew and understood the promotional campaigns of the selected businesses and how carefully they had read the questions.

Question 8

This was well answered by most candidates who read the questions carefully enough. Candidates who chose businesses, such as the NHS, which were more likely to focus on informative advertising, rather than persuasive advertising, tended to give the more developed answers.

(a) This required a very basic statement as to what media was used. The only candidates who failed to score a mark were those who did not refer to a media but, for example, put down a target market.

(b) Most candidates scored marks for the actual information provided, but often did not go on to say why this information was useful to the customer.

(c) Again most candidates could identify the target market and then explain how the business ensured that that target market saw the information. Often answers were fairly basic and lacked the development needed for full marks.

Question 9

(a) Generally this part of the question was well answered by candidates, except those who did not restrict their answers to the three listed sales promotions given. There were also some candidates who took example of 'discounts' in general, and not ones just for bulk buying.

(b) Candidates needed to analyse the effects of constraints that the 'business placed on the use' of the sales promotion. Many candidate dealt with constraints the sale promotion might place on the business, such as cost, need to have sufficient stock, etc. These candidates tended to gain no marks. Where specific constraints, such as time, who could used the sale promotion, etc, good answers were given, but only the best candidates went on to give well developed answers.

Question 10

(a) Very few candidates had difficulty in stating the location and giving, or implying the target audience. Some candidates did give very general answers with no specific location and the target as just being people passing by. Explanations of how the location ensured the right target audience could see the advertisement were often poorly expressed so few candidate gained the full 4 marks available.

(b) Nearly all candidates could give good explanations of how the advertisement on the billboard created attention, usually with reference to colour, bold words, recognisable logos, etc. Few candidates understood exactly what 'action' meant and confused this with 'attention' 'interest' and 'desire'. Many candidates simply said that customers would therefore go and buy the product, but not what was on the advertisement that would make the purchasing action easier.

Issues for future series

The points listed below repeat comments made in previous reports, but they are ones that are still **not** being addressed by many candidates – hence marks are being lost unnecessarily.

- 1. The applied approach** – All businesses used in these papers relate to real businesses, either named or with the names changed. Preparation for this paper should, therefore, include as much study of the promotional techniques used by real businesses as possible.
- 2. Terminologies** – Candidates need to know all of the terms given in the syllabus **and** common terms that relate to the real world of promotion.
- 3. Reading the question/following instructions** – Many marks are still being unnecessarily lost, simply because candidates have not read the question carefully enough or have not taken the context into consideration.
- 4. Questions requiring extended answers** – There will continue to be two questions with 11 marks in the future series. Students should be shown how to develop their answers so that they can provide in-depth and detailed answers for these questions.

5. Questions based on own study – Students must be able to use knowledge and understanding of a wide range of real promotional situations in order to answer questions on any part of the syllabus. This must be in sufficient depth to show clear details of the promotional campaigns.

Please also note the comments made about online marking in previous reports and the comments made about writing only to the space provided on the paper itself. Centres need to ensure that their candidates are not being disadvantaged simply because of the layout of the paper. Additional work outside of the specified area on the paper, or on additional sheets, is totally acceptable, but, when this is done, it is vital that the candidates **indicate** somewhere on their answer to a specific question that they are using additional paper or completing the answer somewhere else in the actual booklet. Preferably, they should also indicate where the rest of the answer is.

Grade Boundaries

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