

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Applied Business (6921)
Unit 6: Investigating Promotion

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Publications Code 6921_01_1606_ER

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The first main scenario related to promotions used by Manchester United. The questions required good application of a variety of promotions to the football club and most candidates could combine their understanding of the methods of promotion to the nature of a football club. The second main scenario focused on a small graphic design business where application to the details given about the business and the skills of the owner and his assistant were very important, and not always used effectively to answer the questions set.

Questions 8 to 10 required an understanding of how specific real businesses actually carry out their promotions. Question 8 was about promotion to create a specific brand image. This was well answered by candidates who selected a clear brand image of which they had good understanding.

Question 9 was about businesses that use a catalogue for promotion. This caused little difficulty for most candidates.

Question 10 related to the use of moving image to promote a business's products. Again this was generally well answered.

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

1(a)

Nearly all candidates could provide a feature of ambient advertising and give a reason why the merchandise would advertise Manchester United, but only the better candidates could explain how the merchandise demonstrated the feature of ambient advertising they had identified. They therefore did not explain why the examples of merchandise were ambient.

1(b)

This question asked for benefits to Man U of offering merchandise 'other than providing promotion for the businesses. The majority of candidates did focus on the revenue aspect of selling the merchandise, but a significant number of candidates gave answers that were essentially promotion, such as exposing the brand image. Few candidates gave developed answers for the full 3 marks.

2(a)

Most candidates scored 3 or 4 marks for this question, generally using their own experience of social media and applying that well to Man U's likely use of such platforms as Facebook, Twitter and its own website. Good examples were used to support how Man U might use social media. Some candidates explained 'why' social media would be used rather than 'how' it would be used.

2(b)

Where candidates took full notice of the need for this to refer to a 'non-UK target market' they generally gave good answers, usually citing language and access problems. Some candidates treated this question as though it was asking about general problems of using social media, with no reference to a non-UK market, and therefore scored few, if any, marks.

3

This question clearly appealed to most candidates and there was good application, using the information in Figure 2, to explain the benefits and drawbacks of sponsorship. Whilst there were some very good answers from the better candidates there was also a significant minority of candidates who did not read the question carefully enough. These candidates gave only benefits or drawbacks, not both, or more commonly only the benefits and drawbacks for Man U, not, as asked for in the question, for the sponsors as well.

4(a)

Where candidates had a good understanding of the two terms, sales promotion and public relations, appropriate examples were given with implied understanding of the meanings. Most candidates scored 3 or 4 marks. Some candidates confused sales promotion with promotion in general.

4(b)

As with 4(a) candidates who did not understand the term public relations, which was a quarter of the candidates, scored no marks. The remaining candidates gave good likely PR promotions for Man U, but only the best

candidates developed their answers well to explain why those PR promotions might not be successful.

5

Generally this was a well answered question using the situation of someone displaying art in a cafe. Most candidates gave the limitation of restricted access because this was inside a cafe, only in the centre of Bristol or hitting the wrong target. Some candidates seemed to think that Karim was giving out samples of his work as a business might do for a new flavour of yoghurt.

6

This was poorly answered by most candidates because they tried to give general answers to a question that asked for the benefits and drawbacks of using a local newspaper versus using local radio for promotion. These candidates ignored the nature of Karim's business, and the skills that he and his assistant would have because of their studies at university. Where candidates did take these into consideration, and that the business was new and would probably have limited capital available, candidates gave well developed answers easily reaching Level 3 or 4.

7

As with question 6, many candidates ignored any application to the scenario and took the question to read, 'what are the benefits and drawbacks of using an agency for creating a website rather than doing this in-house?' A third of the candidates made no attempt to relate their answers to Karim's business. They did not take account of the fact that he, and his assistant, had design skills, that the business was new and cost and time would have been important considerations, and that there were only two people working in the business.

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.

Q8

(a) The term 'brand image' did cause problems for a few candidates but, as this was potentially very wide, most candidates scored the mark available.

(b) Candidates found little difficulty in providing details of the promotion(s), but only the better candidates went on to explain how the specific promotion chosen actually worked to support the chosen brand image.

(c) Most candidates gave fairly general answers benefiting from the fact that the question had asked why 'might' it have been unsuccessful. There was a lack of details of actual problems arising from the specific campaign to promote the brand image.

Q9

The question required candidates to choose a catalogue that covered a wide range of products and whilst most candidates had little problem in selecting suitable catalogues such as Argos or Next, some referred to brochures rather than catalogues.

(a) Candidates were able to identify features of the catalogues that might help to attract customers but only the better candidates went on to explain why those features would attract customers' interest.

(b) Where candidates had studied the costs involved for the specific catalogue being produced there were good answers. A significant number of candidates gave general answers in the hope that they would apply to keeping the costs low and in some cases these did not match what the chosen business actually did as ways of keeping the cost low.

Q10

Few candidates had any problem in selecting a suitable children targeted television advertisement, but many seemed to forget that this had to relate to moving image for part (b).

(a) The question only asked for description and few candidates failed to give valid child appealing elements of the chosen advertisement. This had to appeal to children and very occasionally candidates gave features, such as low cost, that were designed to appeal to the parents not the children.

(b) This was not very well answered because only the best candidates could explain why the cost of producing moving image is generally so expensive. Most could give lists of costs, actors, film crew, editing, etc, but not why they would be fairly high. Some candidates ignore the requirement to relate this to production costs of the advertisement and simply argued that advertising on

television was expensive because of the charges made by the television companies.

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

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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