

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

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

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Summer 2014

Publications Code UA038064

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6996

Promotions and Sales in Travel and Tourism June 2014

General Comments

The paper followed the format of a question and answer booklet. Students were required to respond in the spaces provided. There were 5 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. Students therefore needed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and skills in vocationally related contexts. Students need to apply knowledge and understanding of the specified content and of related skills in vocationally-related contexts. Students need to use appropriate research techniques to obtain information to assess vocationally related issues and problems. Finally students were required to evaluate information to make reasoned judgements, draw conclusions and make recommendations about vocationally related issues and problems.

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

Question 1.

Q1 (a) (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

There were four marks available for students identifying the correct stage of the sales process from the individual descriptions given. The vast majority of students scored the maximum marks available here.

Q1 (b) This was a slight change to the format from previous years. A scenario was provided and students needed to explain what the next stage would be in the sales process to secure a booking. Most students correctly identified overcoming objections and were able to explain what they would do at this stage to try and secure a happy customer and a booking. If students failed to score the three marks available it tended to be because they could not identify the stage in the sales process the scenario represented. One response that scored the three marks available: 'The next stage would be overcoming objections whereby you find an alternative holiday or re-emphasise how the one you have chosen is suitable for their needs. It is important not to rush customers so you ensure you get the right holiday for them.'

Q1 (c)

For this question students were provided with a scenario outlining a promotional campaign to target two different target markets and students

were asked to explain whether they thought the promotional materials suggested would attract the target markets outlined.

Students tended to score well at this question if they thought about it and planned their answer. Otherwise answers tended to be disjointed and difficult to follow. One student that scored 8 marks:

'If a leaflet was handed out to a retired couple they'd probably read it, however, chances are most retirees wouldn't travel at peak times because they know it is busy and want to avoid it so they wouldn't receive the leaflets which means leaflets wouldn't attract retired couples. Business people would normally travel at these peak times to get to work so they'd get the leaflet but it wouldn't be useful to them as most would be at work during these times. On the other hand posters at the stations advertising rail links would be more successful at attracting both types of customers as they'd see how easy it is to get to the airport/station which would be beneficial for their travel plans – retired couples would see it and could use it to go on holiday and business customers could easily get to the airport to fly to a meeting.'

Question 2.

Q2(a) (i) This question called for definition of two terms used in the specification. The first one asked for a definition of promotional techniques. Despite the fact that many questions in past papers have focused on this area a large number of students still continue to confuse promotional techniques and promotional materials. To score full marks it needed to be clear that students did understand the difference and showed this in their answer.

One response that scored 2 marks:

'A promotional technique is how an organisation would tell a customer about itself by using, for example, advertising and/or direct marketing.'

Q2(a) (ii) Again if students knew the definitions of terms in the specification they tended to score well here:

'Means of communication. These could be used as promotional methods such as on TV or in newspapers.'

Q2(b) (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

This question was a differentiator. Many students scored well here and could apply the scenario provided to their answers and explain how they might help or hinder Paulton Park reach its objectives. However other students struggled and confused the P's providing answers for Product that should have been seen under Promotion.

Some good responses seen across the four sections:

Product

The product is a theme park. It has lots of rides which will appeal to the young children and Peppa Pig world which is unique but it also has gardens and lakes and animals which would help to attract more grandparents to the park too.

Price

Senior citizens aged over 60 years go cheaper than regular adults and also children go free if they are under 1Metre tall. This will attract grandparents with young grandchildren as grandparents are likely to be over 60 and

young grandchildren are likely to be under 1 metre tall and this means the family can save money. The overnight accommodation can be booked for £40 per person this will attract European families as it is affordable and convenient as it is near the park.

Place

The fact that Paulton Park is a 3 hour drive away from the Eurotunnel may put people off from Europe therefore meaning a negative impact on bringing in more European families. However the general infrastructure for domestic tourism with links from train and M27 motorway means more grandparents who live close can easily access Paulton Park.

Promotion

Promotion works against for European families as they may not know the English language very well and Paulton Parks website is only in English language so European families can't understand the promotional activities. Also the park only advertises regionally which won't reach out to European families. Also it might not reach out to all grandparents across the UK, only those in Hampshire.

Q2(c)

This question was a real differentiator. Many students did not understand what was required and a lot of answers did not score any points. Overall it was a low scoring question. Students need to know that the marketing mix is another term for the 4Ps. One response that scored four marks: 'Organisations need to ensure that all four parts work together to help meet overall objectives. For example meeting an objective of increasing visitor numbers they will need to ensure the product is targeted to the correct market, the price is appropriate for the product/service, they show they are in a good location for easy access and they use the correct promotional techniques to reach new visitors. Without one of these parts they would not be so successful at meeting their objective.'

Q2(d)

This was the analysis question based around key features of the business environment. The key features of the business environment lend themselves to the high level questions. Analysis always differentiates between students and this was no different. Many students confused profitability and economic. Many other did not discuss them in relation to promotional activities which meant that no marks could be awarded as they were not answering the question. Most students gained 3-4 marks for some thought processes. A bit more organisation in the thought process could help. There were some very insightful answers. One response that gained 7 marks:

'Marketing in business is considered a variable cost, it changes with demand for a product/service. Profitability can affect promotion as if a firm makes a small profit then advertising budgets will be smaller than if the firm was making a large profit. The type of advertising and promotion can change e.g. small profits being made, firms may only engage in cheaper advertising such as radio rather than TV or local advertising not national. The profits a firm makes help determine the budget allocated for marketing.

Economic. The state of the economy can determine how a product is marketed, for example if there was a period of recession (2008) firms in the travel and tourism industry are likely to be affected as in a recession

consumers cut out unnecessary spending, less people are likely to be going on holiday and visit attractions, it impacts marketing decisions and promotional activities, more money saving options will be used; e.g. BOGOF as this will seem to be a better price to pay for the attraction, it also may mean a reduction in marketing budgets, so cheaper options will be used again.'

Question 3.

Q3(a)(i) This question was about market research methods. Most students were able to select a suitable primary research method to suggest. However where marks were lost was in the justification. This answer needs students to apply their answer fully to the scenario given. Many students justified their choice talking about generic advantages of their method, 'would allow them to get up to date answers' for example. This type of justification did gain marks, however, to gain the full marks some if not all of the justification needed to be related to the scenario. So students needed to look at the information Go Places required and justify why their chosen method would gain them this information.

Q3(a)(ii) This question was the same as the one above only this time focusing on secondary research. A few students struggled with this and again provided a primary research method. However the vast majority of students were able to provide a secondary research method. One student that scored 4 marks:

'Go Away Airlines could use central data from previous customer records to determine where most customers travel from and how much they pay for them, therefore allowing them to determine what segments they would need to target with their promotional campaign.'

Q3(b)

Again a good differentiator question with students scoring 0-6 marks. Some just did not understand the question whilst others were able to pick up all marks available.

One response that scored 6 marks:

'It is important because different activities appeal to different target markets so if you know your target market then you will be able to use the correct promotional activity and will appeal more to the customer you want to attract. For example older people may not watch much television so a TV advert will be pointless for them but they may read newspapers all the time so a newspaper advert would directly reach them and may appeal. It is also important as it will save the organisation money as they will not be spending time and money on the wrong promotional activities.'

Question 4

Q4(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)

Most students were able to score the four marks available here. This was a slightly changed version of a question used previously to ascertain knowledge of promotional techniques. Many students confused Personal Selling with Direct Marketing but otherwise scored well.

Q4(b)

This question required evaluation of two different promotional campaigns given in a scenario. It is generally expected that an evaluation will have a conclusion where the student decides one or other is the better campaign. Few students gave a conclusion.

Most went through each material in turn and said why it was positive. Depending on the depth this normally meant they were awarded 3-4 marks. For higher marks they needed to make more insightful judgments as some of the ideas suggested really would work better than others, although there were no right or wrong answers. Again organisation before putting pen to paper could help. One response that gained level 3 marks:

'The first promotional campaign will allow business people nationally to see the sales promotion of 25% off but of course advertising nationally will cost a lot of money and they are losing 25% of money if people come. Also paying the large conference venues in the town to include a flyer means that business travellers will receive it but not necessarily read it as they don't have much time and the company is in competition with other conference venues and hotels. The second promotional campaign will allow business people to notice the Barrhead Hotel, the direct marketing method allows them to get directly in touch with business travellers and they will be constantly checking emails, the only issue is that they may not read the email and think it is junk mail. Inviting the journalists will allow the hotel to use the method of public relations as it won't cost them anything and they are gaining free publicity but the journalists are local meaning the press release they use will probably only be in the local newspaper. I would say the first promotional campaign is best although it will cost the most. It's the best two techniques to be noticed by the most people directly.'

Q4(c)(i)

Too many students suggested a campaign that did not suit the requirements of the hotel. Sending leaflets to local centres in the area was an idea that came up quite a lot. Students should understand that local families are unlikely to require accommodation where they live. However generally this was a question that scored well. A typical 4 mark answer:

'A television advertisement during the summer months would attract families. Offering a discount if they book online such as children under 5 go free or if they book between July –August they get 10% off watersports.'

Q4(c)(ii)

This question required students to justify their campaign provided in c(i). Again this was another differentiating question. Many students scored well but others seemed unable to think beyond discounts. One badly scoring answer which was highly repetitive and scored 1 mark:

'Because the families will be able to save money on food which will be meeting their needs as they have high expenses. Having low disposable income affects their holiday and so offering free meals will enable them to save money.'

Question 5.

Q5(a)

Most students adapted well to deciding whether their researched campaign was local regional or national and scored well here. There was evidence of good research with detail coming through in responses. Many used promotional material terminology which was good although few used promotional technique terminology. One response that scored 7 marks: 'Hero ride launch Flamingo Land. A regional campaign.

To promote the new ride in Flamingo Land the company produced new TV adverts which were shown across Yorkshire to attract customers to come and see the new ride.

They also had sponsorship agreements with Leeds United football club which showed the advert on the big screen during and before the game. The launch of the new ride also gained regional attention as they had stars of Coronation Street and rugby players which made the regional broadcast, Calendar.'

Q5(b)

This question produced a wide array of marks. Many students struggled to think of valid changes that could be made to their campaign to make it fit to attract an international audience. Others confused international with national and therefore gained no marks. Others however, produced some good explanations with insightful adaptations.

One response gaining maximum marks:

'Alton Towers could be included in the government's campaign to attract overseas tourists to the UK through current campaigns like 'Great Britain'. This campaign is run on TV adverts, online websites, social networking and leaflets in overseas countries. The feature of Alton Towers on their promotional materials could mean a mass influx of overseas tourists visiting.

Alton Towers could use social networking sites more to promote their sales promotions as Twitter and Facebook are worldwide and if Alton Towers became worldwide even for a short time millions of people would see it and wonder what it is so go and research it. Also I think Alton Towers quality of adverts are brilliant and they all feature the correct elements but maybe they could add in how easy it is to access it from close international airports and how cheap it is to stay for two nights and then showcase this overseas especially in Europe to attract more tourists internationally.'

Grade Boundaries

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