

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

Principal Learning
Hospitality, Unit 7

HO307: Sales and Marketing in the
Hospitality Industry

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General comments

This external examination paper generally performed well with students being awarded a broad range of marks, demonstrating a variety of ability at Level 3.

Unit 307 gives students the opportunity to study sales and marketing and to apply principles and techniques to organisations and businesses within the hospitality industry by means of a scenario on which the questions are based. It is clear that teaching sessions had focussed on most of the required key learning outcomes with some students demonstrating a good knowledge. The area of weakness continues to be with Learning Outcome 4 'Understand how to evaluate the effectiveness of hospitality marketing activities' as students seem confident with understanding marketing activities but not how to evaluate them, although students this series did perform better on these questions than in previous series. Most students appeared to have been prepared well for the paper but some were unable to provide responses which were detailed and comprehensive particularly with the questions requiring extended written responses. It appears that the active verb in questions is either misunderstood or is largely ignored by students with many students unable to discriminate effectively between the action verbs of identify, describe, evaluate, analyse etc. Most students did make a good attempt at answering all the questions, and the more able students displayed an up-to-date knowledge of current issues and trends especially with regards to using social media for marketing purpose. A few, less able students or students who had not completed the unit content offered confused responses although answers were attempted rather than left blank as in previous series. As such the paper performed effectively to discriminate between the different abilities and levels of learners. Centres are strongly urged to ensure that the whole unit content is covered, using practice assessments as appropriate, before students are entered for the paper in future.

Question 1 (a)

This question was answered well by the majority of students with all achieving the full four marks as they could state the four elements of the marketing mix.

Question 1 (b)

This question was answered well by the majority of students with most achieving either two or three marks as they correctly identified three ways of market segmentation. Some students lost one mark because all three responses related to segmentation by demographics.

Question 1 (c)

Although students appeared to know what a product life cycle is this question was not answered well by most as they failed to apply their knowledge and make a good explanation as to how the product life cycle model could be used by the business.

Question 2 (a)

Most students were able to identify one way of collecting internal secondary market research but some gave an incorrect way that related to primary research.

Question 2 (b)

Most students were able to identify one way of collecting external secondary market research but some gave an incorrect way that related to primary research.

Question 2 (c)

Although students appeared to have a good knowledge of how to construct a questionnaire for marketing purposes, many were unable to explain how to evaluate the results of collecting the information and lost marks, scoring less than half available. This indicated that students found difficulty in applying the knowledge learned.

Question 3 (a)

Most students seemed to have missed the term 'point-of-sale' in the question stem or did not understand it as many described examples of promotional activities in general rather than 'point-of-sale' activities and therefore lost potential marks.

Question 3 (b)

Nearly all students were able to describe two different online marketing activities but some examples given were descriptions of activities that were not necessarily an example of 'on-line' i.e. they could have been paper based.

Question 3 (c)

The majority of students did circle sponsorship as being the correct answer.

Question 4

Most student responses to this question were good as they were able to describe how the business could develop a long-term relationship with customers and gave good examples. Many examples given were very current and included many references to the use of social media as well as using traditional methods of having customer loyalty and membership schemes.

Question 5

Many students struggled to make an analysis of a wide range of factors that would need to be considered and taken action on to respond to a poor world-wide coffee harvest with many discussing only the obvious factors such as diversifying the product range. Many students omitted to relate their suggestions to the financial implications on the business in relation to sales and profits with some not seeming to be able to make the correlation between a poor world-wide coffee harvest to the likely increase in the price of coffee. Overall learners answered the question adequately with improvements needed in providing more ideas and analysing these. It is important that learners understand what the question is requiring them to do (i.e. explain, evaluate, discuss, analyse etc.)

Question 6

Most students scored marks in MB1/MB2 as the answers they gave were relevant to the question but were not sufficiently detailed and were focused on the more obvious and short-term ways of evaluating the success of the marketing activity. This question was designed to give the higher level students the opportunity to fully demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding but no student was able to do this effectively.

Question 7

This question was answered fairly well by the majority of students with many achieving marks in Mark Band 2. This suggested that students were able to apply the knowledge they had learned to looking at the broader picture of how businesses can minimise the effect of new local competition by using marketing activities. This question was designed to give the higher level students the opportunity to fully demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of marketing activities but only one student was able to do this effectively. However other responses were interesting and some good efforts were made in explaining different ways, including the use of social media, joint promotions and having a USP (unique selling point). Some students made good suggestions but failed to relate them to levels of business, market share and the financial implications of these.

Recommendations for centres:

- Ensure that students are able to understand, and distinguish between, the use of the active verbs in the question i.e. identify, state, outline, discuss, evaluate, explain and analyse.
- Use previous examination papers for practice revision sessions to assist students in structuring suitable examination responses to ensure that high marks can be gained across possible questions from all the learning outcomes.
- Encourage students to give breadth and depth within responses to questions to demonstrate a full knowledge and applied understanding.
- Ensure that centres cover the whole unit content in teaching sessions with more equal weighting cross the four learning outcomes.
- Use typical examination questions and mark schemes with students to identify where allocation of marks are awarded and can be gained.
- Use practice assessment sessions when necessary to allow students to develop confidence and ability in writing examination responses.
- Attend appropriate Edexcel training events that focus on planning and preparation for Diploma assessment.

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