Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCE AS Level in Business (8BS0)

Paper 01: Marketing and People

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Introduction

The overall standard of responses has dropped since last year and candidates lack the knowledge required to answer many of the questions resulting in the average mark achieved on this paper decreasing this year. Candidates grasp of key Theme 1 terminology is still lacking. Many candidates also struggled with the Theme 2 terminology in Section C, Q3. As stated in the specification and demonstrated in the sample assessment materials and past papers, Section C, Q3 will draw from both Theme 1 and Theme 2 content requiring candidates to make connections between marketing and people and managing business activities, many candidates were clearly not prepared for the Theme 2 element of this paper.

Q1a) As with many of the questions, candidates did not have the necessary understanding of terminology to answer this question well. Some attempted to lift information from the extract to provide an example, but this cannot be awarded without also having shown an understanding of the term.

Q1b) Candidates were generally able to show some understanding of the term, but answers were vague and often confused between objectives and long term aims.

Q1c) Candidates struggled with this question and seem to have little understanding of added value. Many defined unique selling point instead. Those that did demonstrate an understanding of added value neglected to explain how social objectives could lead to an increase in added value and therefore did not achieve the two application marks available.

Q1d) The majority of candidates were able to provide an accurate definition of niche market and give a benefit, but many did not apply their answer to the Good Hotel and Guatemala and therefore could not access the two application marks available on this question. Some candidates also wasted time by evaluating their point by providing a 'however'. This is not a requirement of 'Explain' questions.

Q1e) This question was generally well answered and in many cases good use of the business context with candidates suggesting the use of loyalty cards to gain free nights or access to other hotel facilities. Some candidates struggled to provide two different methods, but were still able to access Level 2 marks by providing one method in context with evaluation.

Q1f) Candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of a USP and in most cases at least one pricing strategy, but in some cases they struggled to explain how a USP could affect the choice of pricing strategy. It is important that candidates are taught the links between elements of the specification rather than learning them in isolation. There was also some confusion over the pricing strategies at times in particular market skimming and penetration pricing were often mixed up. Candidates were able to suggest other factors, such as competition or location, which could affect the Hotel's pricing strategy, but again application to the business context was often lacking.

Q2a) Another definition question which demonstrated some candidate's lack of business terminology. Although the many candidates did achieve full marks, there were lots of vague, muddled responses and a noticeable amount of responses defined chain of command rather than span of control.

Q2b) Another definition question which demonstrated some candidate's lack of business terminology. Although the many candidates did achieve full marks, there were lots of vague, muddled responses and a noticeable amount of responses defined appraisal rather than consultation.

Q2c) This question was generally very well answered with the many candidates achieving full marks. Those candidates that struggled with reorganising the formula were still able to achieve 2 out of the 4 marks by providing the formula for PED and calculating the 15% change in quantity demanded.

Q2d) Most candidates were able to show some understanding of the Boston Matrix although clear definitions were rare. Some candidates described each element of the Boston Matrix, but with no application to the business context so missed out on the 2 application marks. The analysis mark was often missed as candidates did not explain how Beaverbrooks could use the matrix to inform investment or marketing decisions.

Q2e) Candidates really struggled with this question and many resorted to discussing demand factors rather than supply factors. Although the question is a good differentiator for the more able candidates, all candidates should have been able to access marks by demonstrating knowledge of supply factors. The extract was a stimulus for candidates to suggest relevant factors effecting the supply of silver jewellery, which some did particularly well, discussing the mining of silver for example or the cost of the machinery or labour required to produce silver jewellery.

Q2f) The knowledge of decentralisation was not clear in many responses and the term was at times confused with delayering. A clear definition at the start of an answer provides a good starting point and shows the examiner clear knowledge from the start. Many candidates resorted to generic answers based on improved motivation with little or no application to the business context. Some candidates discussed tall and flat structures rather than answering the question. There is a tendency for some candidates to lift information from the extract when they do not have good knowledge, this will not gain marks unless the information is used alongside knowledge to answer the question.

Q3) As in previous years it was clear that candidates were not prepared for the Theme 2 element of this question. There was little understanding of economic influences and some simply focused on external factors rather than economic influences. Many candidates did not fully attempt this question and only discussed the effect of competition on Tails.com. Again, there was evidence of information being lifted from the extract, but not used to develop chains of reasoning.