



## **EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**AUGUST 2007**

### **STAGE 2 PROJECT**

#### **General Comments**

The project brief required the student to conduct an investigative study into a company operating in the heating industry and to assess the likely changes for the construction sector brought about by global warming. Students were requested to investigate consumer awareness of the issue and to justify their research design and implementation before making recommendations as to how the business opportunities should be best exploited.

The primary objective of the Stage 2 Project is to test the ability to display and apply the marketing principles to a real life situation. Even though the project brief explicitly mentioned the need to concentrate on business issues, many students continued to spend an inordinate portion of their project explaining the scientific and social issues surrounding global warming. The lack of marketing phraseology and principles was evident in many projects as was the failure to use models to structure the report. A SWOT analysis alone does not constitute sufficient examination. Few students provided sufficient justification for the choice of survey design and fewer did more than gloss over the results. Some projects were little more than an amalgam of hits from the internet and their bibliographies reflected this accordingly.

The Examiner suggests a number of general guidelines for future reference:

1. There is a requirement for sufficient evidence of applied marketing principles and concepts. Answers should therefore be couched in correct marketing terminology. One should concentrate on the marketing problem at hand and not on surrounding technical, moral or social issues – unless the issues are likely to have a direct consequence on demand.
2. Marketing opportunities and threats arise from changes in the marketing environment. Students should consider the application of models such as PEST, SWOT, Product lifecycle, Porters Five Forces and the adoption process. These models will help you to structure your answer.
3. Where a company profile is requested, a description of the firm's structure, microenvironment, market share, customers and competitors is expected. Invariably the segmentation process and product portfolio should also be investigated.

4. Greater marks will be awarded to students who successfully link issues arising from the company and environmental analysis to their primary research and findings. Research findings should be reflected in the use of graphs and tables. Recommendations should derive from research findings. In the past poorer students have suggested unsubstantiated recommendations that have almost exclusively concentrated in area of promotion.
5. The Examiner is aware of the existence of tailored industry reports, which are commercially available. These usually contain information that is not marketing specific. The Examiner's Report May 2006 expressed concern that "plagiarism continues to be a reoccurring problem with some students relying solely on unedited information, downloaded verbatim, from internet websites". This practice is easily identifiable and is contrary to the spirit of this professional examination. Students should take great cognisance that this form of cheating will not be tolerated. Students are on notice that the examiner reserves the right to request students to defend the findings of their project.