



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2003

STAGE 4 PROJECT

**“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name
would smell as sweet”**

William Shakespeare

It is said that brands are at the heart of marketing and business strategy. Marketing is about decommunitising the enterprise's offer. It is perceived as the same as those of competitors, then customers and consumers will be indifferent towards the product offering.

This topic was chosen because the impact and importance of Branding is a major issue of debate at this time.

In general candidates scoring well approached the task in a reasonable manner. The examiner was looking for a professional approach given that this is a Stage 4 project. Candidates offering a logical, informed and well-researched paper attracted the higher grades. It is good to see 45% in the A/B category. In designing this particular topic for the Stage 4 Project the examiner had in mind a number of issues which were considered relevant. Candidates presenting material on these issues were most likely to attract higher grades. What are the distinctive characteristics of brands? What is their distinct attraction to so many customers today? Why is it that we continue to be loyal to brands even when we are told that Branding costs so much, and that ultimately the customer is the one who pays? We are better educated than ever before, more informed and have greater access to information, yet we continue to rely so much on the Brand, why is this? Can it be considered illogical, irrational to be so devoted to a Brand? What is the future of Branding in an E-business enterprise environment? Are some products more capable of being branded than others, and why?

Some candidates continue to misunderstand the nature of a Stage 4 project, and insist upon offering what can best be described as a very poor first year effort, supplying the reader with an unwanted and un-requested descriptive piece. The instructions for this project specifically stated that the examiner required candidates to be analytical, and to avoid such a purely descriptive approach. Those who showed they could apply to a company what they have learned on the course were rewarded. The examiner was not impressed by a simple regurgitation of a company blurb extolling the virtues of “how it has done its branding”. What was required was an analytical evaluation of the branding strategy engaged in by the enterprise in the light of the topics covered in the previous paragraph.

Those candidates attracting lower grades did so because they failed to follow some very clear instructions. Candidates also lost marks for offering a piece of work that in some cases exhibited a serious and disturbing absence of proof reading. The development of primary

research, properly undertaken, attracts the attention of the examiner in a positive way. Simply relying upon secondary research is deemed to be inadequate at this stage. Some logical effort at primary research methodology is essential. Candidates, in some cases, simply provided secondary research by transcribing the “blurbs” supplied by companies approached for the purposes of this project. This is inappropriate and insufficient at this stage of study.

What was most impressive about those papers attracting high grades (70+) was the professional manner in which the candidates dealt with the brief, and the fact that they covered the material being sought by the examiner as detailed in the paragraphs above.

Grade	Mark Range	% achieving this grade
A	70-100	21%
B	60-69	24%
C	50-59	37%
D	40-49	13%
E	35-39	1%
F	0-34	4%