

## **SENIOR EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR STUDENTS AND TUTORS OF CIMG**

**MODULE NAME:** INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

**AWARD NAME:** PROFESSIONAL POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN MARKETING

**DATE:** DECEMBER 2021

### **1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PAPER**

The overall pass rate was about 70% indicating that students were quite well prepared for the examination. There were some exceptional candidates and several average/borderline ones. It seemed exceptional candidates had some experience in marketing communication practice based on the depth and creativity of the answers provided. It would be good to explore this assertion further.

The case study was presented to make it easy for the candidate to identify the key issues and offer creative solutions. It was anchored around what can arguably be termed the core-essence of marketing communications – changing attitudes (beliefs/knowledge, feelings/affection/sentiments and driving purchase/sales/action). The case study which focused on how IMC can be used to improve a hotel's occupancy rates in this Covid-era was set to test candidates overall understanding of marketing communication messages, strategies, tools and media which are integral to marketing communications. There were some exceptional responses with 61.5% of candidates scoring 50% and above.

The key principles that differentiate pass candidate from failed candidate were the ability to situate answers within the appropriate context, comprehensive understanding of marketing communication tools, and media and effective time management. It was also easy to notice candidates who were well prepared for the examination as opposed to those who attempted to just huff and puff through.

In the optional section, candidates avoided questions 2, 3 and 4 that involve issues that are more practical and more common in the practice of marketing communications i.e., development of comprehensive agency briefs, agency evaluation and selection, setting budgets, contrasting communications tools and media.

It was a bit surprising to note that candidates who attempted question 4 which was on marketing communications tools and media also did poorly since that is at the heart of marketing communications. Tutors should provide a framework to help compare and contrast these tools and also deepen candidates understanding of when and how to deploy each tool based on context analysis, communication goals, target audience and strategy.

Candidates should expect to be tested more in those areas since they are an integral part of marketing communications practice.

## 2.0 PERFORMANCE OBSERVATIONS

### [General Strengths and Weaknesses of Candidates]

- There was remarkable difference in standards between about 46% of the students who excelled and the rest.
- The general strengths revolve around having an appreciation of the outline of a marketing communications plan though the application within context was weak.
- Candidates also need to improve their knowledge of marketing communications tools in order to understand how they differ from each other and how they need to be deployed.
- Candidates approach to questions needs improvement. For example, when a question demands a comparison, candidates failed to develop a framework as the basis for the comparison.

## 2.0 QUESTIONS PERFORMANCE

Q/N	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Average Score	22	13.25	11	9	12.4	9
Highest Score	36	17	16	13	19	13
Lowest Score	6	8	4	2	7	2

## 3.0 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS BY QUESTION GENERAL REMARKS

### [Which questions was popular and attempted by candidates? Show of Behaviourial, Technical and Core Job competencies]

- The most popular question attempted by candidates was question 6 which requested for a marketing communications plan. It was answered by all the candidates (100%). It seems a marketing communications plan was highly anticipated. About 70% of candidates had 50% or more of the total marks available for Q6.
- Q5 was the next popular question. It was answered by 12 out of 13 candidates. The question which requested for the marketing communication implications of the marketing mix and a range of digital tools that can be used to evaluate a campaign was well answered by the candidates with 8 out of 12 candidates representing 66% scoring 50% and above

## QUESTION 1A

- The context was how a 3-star hotel can deploy various key messages, IMC tools and media to improve occupancy rates in the Covid-19 pandemic.
- This question was very well answered with about 70% of candidates scoring more than 50% of the mark. There were some very brilliant and innovative responses showing a grasp of the topic and strong practical marketing communications experience.
- Candidates who scored below 50% attempted to produce generic answers without placing their responses within the context provided.

### **QUESTION 1B**

- This question asked for how the hotel can evaluate its marketing communications. The question was well answered with 70% of candidates scoring above 50% of the available marks.

### **QUESTION 1C**

### **QUESTION 2**

- Question 2 which focused on key elements that will be used to develop an agency brief and criteria to be used to select an agency was answered by only 4 candidates (30%). However, the candidates who attempted it had an excellent grasp and showed strong insight and or experience. Only 1 out of 3 was unable to attempt the second part of the question largely due to time constraints.
- Marketing Communication practitioners work regularly with agencies and this topic will be tested again in subsequent examinations

### **QUESTION 3**

- This focused on setting the marketing communications budget. It was the least attempted question, with only 3 out of 13 candidates (23%) attempting the question. One of the key practical areas for marketing communications practitioners involves setting the marketing communications budget and attendant “battles” with Finance. Practitioners must understand the nuances involved and have a strategic approach for setting their budget in a way which helps them to achieve their goals. Candidates should expect this to be re-examined in future.

### **QUESTION 4**

- The first part of the question focused on comparing and contrasting PR & Advertising and the second part focused on strengths and weaknesses of radio and print as advertising tools. This was attempted by 7 candidates (53%) with

only 3 out of 7 (42%) scoring above 50% of the mark. Candidates failed to develop a framework as the basis for the comparison. There also seemed to be a weak grasp of the tools though they are fundamental to the practice of marketing communications. This section will be re-examined in future examinations

## QUESTION 5

- Question 5 was the second most popular question. It was answered by 12 out of 13 candidates (92%). The first part which focused on the marketing communications implications of the marketing mix was expected to be a curve ball to test candidates understanding of how the marketing mix plays an integral role in marketing communications. This produced some exceptional responses, showing a very strong grasp of the topic with 5 out of 12 candidates scoring 80% and above.
- The second part which focused on a range of digital tools that can be used to evaluate a campaign was well answered with 10 out of 12 candidates scoring above 60%.

## QUESTION 6

- This question which focused on an outline marketing communications plan for a leather bag manufacturer was the most popular question. It was attempted by all the candidates with 10 out of 13 (76%) scoring 50% and above. However, the highest score was just 55%. Developing a marketing communications plan within the examination hall can be a daunting task but candidates are expected to understand the key elements of an IMC plan and how the various elements interrelate. This may show up in other forms.

## 1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tutors need to spend time teaching Candidates about how to approach questions with the key principles of; Format/Presentation, Context and Content (depth). Presenting with an appropriate format is an opportunity to pick some easy points whilst the ability to situate a response within the right context is what makes a professional paper stand out.
- Tutors need to spend time on communications planning and the various linkages between each step of the process. 12/13 candidates attempted the question on communications planning but out of about 70% who scored above 50% of the allocated marks, almost 90% scored 55% or below.
- Special attention also ought to be paid to an understanding of marketing communication tools and media.

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