

# Professional Diploma in Marketing

## Marketing Planning Process

Senior Examiner Assessment Review Report  
December 2009/March 2010



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## Senior Examiner Assessment Review Report

**UNIT NAME:** Marketing Planning Process

**AWARD NAME:** Professional Diploma in Marketing

**DATE:** December 2009 to March 2010

- **Background to the paper:**

The paper was developed around a standard scenario approach that had been widely publicised in advance through tutor training and other materials to support candidates in their preparation for assessment of the new unit.

The assignment was designed to offer the opportunity for candidates to apply the tasks to their own organisation, or an organisation of their choice. This would be particularly advantageous to those employed candidates who might be able to address an issue relating to their work situation that in turn related to marketing planning. However, the broad nature of the scenarios should not have precluded anyone who was not in a work situation, to be able to tackle the tasks in an equally rigorous way.

Hence, the two scenarios proposed were very general and related to responding to either an increase or decrease in the level of demand for the organisation's products or services. It was felt that this should offer an opportunity for all candidates to be able to apply the tasks in a work-related or other selected situation.

Two tasks were set: rationale and marketing plan (40%), and an evaluation report (50%); a further 10% of marks were allocated for presentation.

The tasks were designed to elicit both the level of understanding of marketing planning theory and its application in practice, and the nature of the paper reflected this. Hence, the process of marketing planning needed to be put in the organisational context and the setting of the scenario. A marketing audit needed to be undertaken to provide a platform for developing a marketing plan, and a short-term marketing plan was required to be produced. In addition, candidates were asked to evaluate the process of planning that they had undertaken including: the MPP itself, the marketing audit, the STP approach adopted, and any implementation issues.

Guidelines were provided on word limits: 500 for the rationale, 2,500 for the plan, and 3,000 for the evaluation report. In addition, candidates were required to submit: a background to the organisation (two sides of A4), a summary of marketing audit findings (maximum six sides of A4), and a further set of tables and schedules to support the plan (another six sides of A4 maximum).

- **Comments on how the marking scheme was applied in terms of:**

- Concept, Application and Evaluation
- Syllabus coverage
- Use of command words and the extent to which answers reflected what was required
- The relative weighting of each part of a question/task and an indication of what aspects of the question/task required most care and attention

- What differentiated the A, B, C, or D grades

The overall breakdown of the mark scheme was: 30% concept, 30% application, 30% evaluation, and 10% time management and presentation.

Syllabus coverage was comprehensive, with all aspects of the marketing planning process covered, and specific aspects of the task required that each of these elements of assessment should be addressed.

Construction of a plan with regard to the scenario was the practical vehicle for assessing the role of marketing planning, the marketing audit process, segmentation-targeting-positioning strategies, and the implementation of plans in context. Thus the two tasks, together with supplementary materials, were designed to assess candidates' knowledge of MPP concepts, their practical application, and an evaluation of the decisions made relating to these.

Command words were explicitly utilised throughout the assignment brief and candidates should have gained a clear understanding of what was required from these. In particular, this related to the practical nature of Task One where candidates were asked to *outline* the rationale and *develop* a short-term plan. Whereas, in the evaluation report, a more considered and judgemental approach was prompted through the use of command words such as *critically evaluate, explain, justify, and assess*.

The weightings of tasks are set out in the marking criteria in the assignment documentation that were further refined at the standardisation meeting, to take account of the rationale for selecting the scenario in context and key expected components of the plan in Task One; and the balance between knowledge, application and evaluation in the accompanying report in Task Two. Nonetheless, it is fully evident from the mark scheme that the comprehensive and integrated development of a plan that is fit for purpose and being able to assess how this was achieved in a critical way are what was expected; presentation is also important from the point of view of it being relevant and appropriate to the tasks set.

The Professional Diploma Grade Descriptors for Level 6 indicate what distinguishes an A, B, C and D grade. The grade descriptors indicate what is expected from candidates within the different grade boundaries. In addition, the generic mark schemes indicate the minimum requirements under each assessment criteria. Generally, these can be summarised as follows:

A grade:

- All of the elements under each assessment criteria are comprehensively presented
- Thorough understanding of relevant syllabus areas
- Considerable evidence of wider reading from a range of sources
- Consistently relies upon and refers to appended material
- Thorough appreciation and understanding of key issues
- All aspects of the submission relate entirely to the assignment brief
- All aspects of the submission are detailed, complete, applied and evaluated
- All aspects of the submission adhere fully to the command prompts within the assessment criteria
- Consistent and appropriate use of underlying concept and theory
- Professionally researched, structured and presented throughout

#### B grade:

- All of the elements under each assessment criteria are competently presented
- Good understanding of relevant syllabus areas
- Some evidence of wider reading from a number of sources
- Relies upon and refers to appended material
- Sound appreciation and understanding of key issues
- Most aspects of the submission relate to the assignment brief
- Most aspects of the submission contain good detail, application and evaluation
- Most aspects of the submission adhere to the command prompts within the assessment criteria
- Appropriate use of underlying concept and theory
- Well researched, structured and presented throughout

#### C grade:

- Most of the elements under each assessment criteria are adequately presented
- Reasonable understanding of relevant syllabus areas
- Some but more limited evidence of wider reading
- Some reliance and reference to appended material
- Reasonable appreciation and understanding of key issues
- Aspects of the submission have a tendency to be overly generic and formulaic
- Aspects of the submission contain reasonable detail, application and evaluation
- Aspects of the submission adhere to the command prompts within the assessment criteria
- Reasonable use of underlying concept and theory
- Reasonably researched, structured and presented

#### D grade

- Some elements under the assessment criteria are not fully presented
- Limited/lacks understanding of relevant syllabus areas
- Little/no evidence of wider reading
- Little/no reliance or reference to appended material
- Limited/lacks appreciation or understanding of key issues
- Aspects of the submission are irrelevant, inaccurate or inconsistent
- Aspects of the submission contain little/no detail, application or evaluation
- Aspects of the submission ignore command prompts within the assessment criteria
- Limited/no reference to theory and/or incorrect application
- Report lacks structure and focus, is under researched and poorly presented

Overall, the grade descriptors provide a basis for understanding grade differences, but they are not definitive in this respect and due attention needs to be afforded to the specific tasks and the scenario presented. In particular, a focus on coherence and consistency in the plan and the process of its development is paramount to achieving success in this assignment.

- **A general overview of how the assessment (exam or assignment) was tackled, including a statistical analysis on the assessment as a whole.**

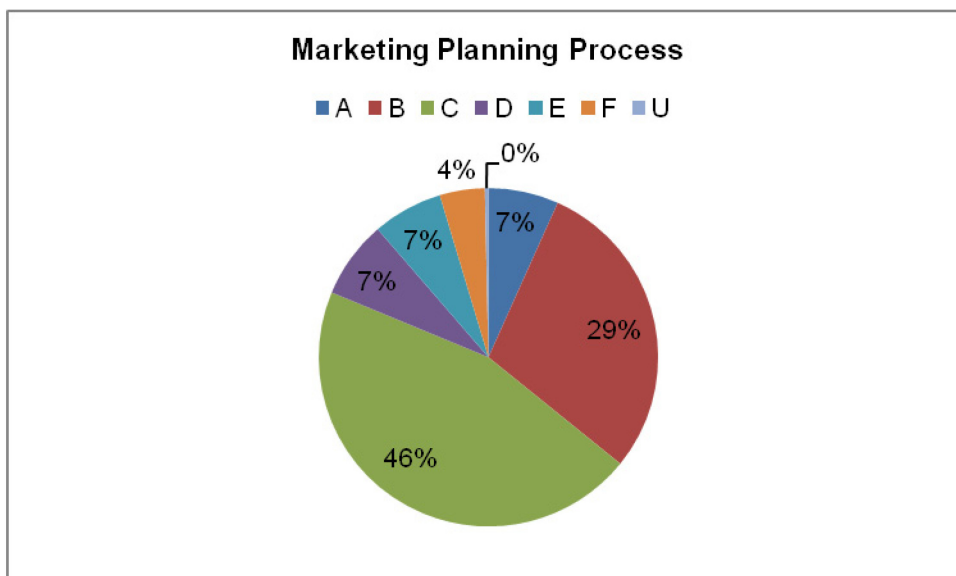
The overall pass rate for the December 2009 paper was 79.24%.

The grade profile for December 2009 was as follows:



The overall pass rate for the March 2010 paper was 81.24%.

The grade profile for March 2010 was as follows:



There would appear to be no variation between scenarios in terms of candidate performance. Also, there was no overall significance in the difference in average marks between tasks. There was, however, significant variation across task performance by

candidates, with some candidates doing better in Task One whilst others were stronger in Task Two. In many cases, the candidate was sufficiently strong in the one task to balance the weakness in the other task resulting in an overall pass in the unit.

- **Feedback on the academic quality of the cohort(s) that has just been examined and the quality of the teaching, as judged by the results**

On the whole the standard was very good, which reflects well on the guidance that has been provided by tutors, and the hard work that has been undertaken by candidates in preparation for submission of the completed assignments.

Further to this, a clear indication of the nature of the assignment and its tasks was provided through tutor support mechanisms before the syllabus launch and this was evident in the way that many candidates approached the work. There were also many references to the supporting materials and the CIM workbook, which displays clear evidence of good research into relevant materials that enable the production of good quality submissions.

Overall the results were therefore very pleasing, although there is still scope for standards to improve across the board, particularly with regard to producing more balanced responses to the tasks and greater integration and clarity in the assignment as a whole. As already mentioned, there were some good, well-researched and executed plans that were soundly justified. However, the vast majority of passes were at C grade that often tended to be a consequence of having good practical plans but limited theoretical evaluation and justification, or the opposite, with relatively weak plans but strong conceptual content. It was also the case that some candidates struggled to get to grips with either, yet only a relatively small percentage fell into this category.

In addition, some candidates provided weak responses in particular aspects of the assignment: for example, a lack of detail in the plan or poor evaluation of the process such as STP.

Formatting and presentation issues were evident in many submissions, although this may be the result of a lack of awareness of the expectations of the examiners at the first sitting of the new unit.

- **Commentary as to whether recommendations made in previous years have been properly followed up**

Not applicable. This was the first sitting of the new unit.

- **Comments and examples of:**
  - strengths and good practice
  - common mistakes when tackling this type of question/task

Strengths and Good Practice

Rationales for the plans were generally concise and applied giving relevant information that had been extracted from the audit to demonstrate why the marketing plan was being compiled. This was the case across a wide range of different organisations

Most plans started with either an executive summary or a situation analysis that 'set the scene' and then some relevant and SMART objectives were given – most candidates were able to apply information from the audit to indicate a justified direction and plan for their chosen organisation.

The concept of strategy relating to segmentation, targeting and positioning was generally well understood and applied to the products and markets that were central to the plan.

Marketing actions were often explicitly detailed using schedules and tables where appropriate (eg through the use of Gantt charts to specify implementation schedules).

There was also considerable evidence of evaluation skills in terms of justification for STP, strategy and tactics.

Essential theory was generally well understood and applied to the context of the organisation to assist in critically evaluating the way that the plan has been developed and issues around implementation in practice.

Many submissions were well integrated across the whole of the plan and the evaluation report (Tasks One and Two) that indicated coherent thinking and execution of the planning process.

On the whole, presentation, format and style was good and consistent with task requirements. Supporting charts and diagrams were usually well conceived and relevant.

#### Common Mistakes

The rationale was sometimes unclear and justified in the context of the organisation under investigation – was it an increase or decrease in demand that was being considered?

A key issue for many weaker submissions was missing out important components of the marketing plan eg audit, mission/corporate objectives; strategy (being too focused on marketing tactics); implementation.

This was exacerbated by some candidates' misunderstanding of the way that the audit appendix should be used: the intention was that this would be synthesised and used as a basis for the situation analysis in the written plan – sometimes this was not done and an essential element of the plan was therefore omitted, and marks for that part were, as a consequence, not able to be awarded.

Similarly, cross-referencing to supporting materials was not always well undertaken resulting in lack of clarity and confusion in what was exactly being proposed in terms of strategy, marketing mix tactics, and the implementation process.

Over-reliance on theory in the plan and evaluation reports but particularly the latter was also an issue. Often there was a simple restatement of key concepts, models or lists without application.

The weakest area was the strategic component of the evaluation report focusing on STP. Here there were many submissions that failed to grasp not only the stages of the process of STP and how it applied to the organisation's situation (ie developing a relevant segmentation approach to the context, but also included limited justification of why a particular target market segment(s) has been selected as the focus of the plan).

Some poor submissions were simply not well-researched and lacked evidence of detailed understanding in the plan, and the evaluation report indicated a lack of preparation by the candidate.

There were several issues around word/page counts, use of appendices/supplementary tables and schedules, font size etc, that need to be addressed in future by the candidates themselves and through tutor guidance. Greater clarity on this will be provided in subsequent assignment briefs.

- **Guidance about how candidates can avoid making similar errors and strategies for improving performance**

Read the brief carefully and identify what exactly is required and the way that it should be presented in the final submission document.

This involves being aware of the essential aspects of the task, the different components of the plan and evaluation report that need to be produced, and how they all inter-relate – consistency and coherence across the assignment are critical to success.

Become familiar with the key components of the MPP plus the different sections expected to be included in a 'standard' marketing plan.

Understand the need to be able to critically evaluate the way that the plan has been developed in the given setting and what factors led to decisions that were made about strategy and tactics.

Be able to specify the practical difficulties with regard to implementation of different aspects of planning such as undertaking the audit and executing the plan in reality 'on the ground'.

Be absolutely clear that the audit appendix cannot act as the situation analysis 'in its own right' – this needs to be summarised into the relevant section of the marketing plan. Cross-reference this and any other supporting materials in the relevant area of the plan document.

Get the balance of theory and practice right. Use theory where appropriate to structure your approach and justify where you have made decisions and expect to encounter difficulties in practice. But there also needs to be a strong allied content which should be relevant to the scenario context and the organisation under consideration.

- **Suggestions of possible alternative approaches to tackling a question/task or parts of a question/task while making it clear that it is not the only way**

The tasks are clearly specified and there is a general expectation in terms of what should be included and this is reflected in the mark scheme.

Most candidates were pretty clear about what was required and how to produce a successful submission. Weaker candidates generally fell short, not on approach, but on preparation and understanding.

This is an open brief which provides an opportunity for all candidates to create and evaluate a plan in a particular context, so adopting a standardised planning approach is critical to success, knowing its limitations particularly in the setting of the organisation and its markets under consideration.

However, there is certainly scope for interpretation and emphasis in the context of the situation that the organisation faces – this issue relates to relevance of approach and content, and completeness of the task.

Although there is room for creativity in terms of the detail of application, the essential learning outcomes to be assessed are around understanding the MPP and being able to critically evaluate its value and relevance to a particular organisational situation.

- **Recommendations for how performance can be improved in future assessments**

Become familiar with the Marketing Planning Process and its implementation in practice.

Identify the stages of a marketing plan and the key components of each in detail.

Learn to apply the MPP through consideration of case studies.

Read relevant theory on MPP and its implementation.

Specific areas of focus should include:

- the benefits of marketing planning
- undertaking the marketing audit
- applying the segmentation, targeting, positioning approach
- implementing marketing plans in practice – potential barriers; how to overcome them.

- **Clarification about any syllabus or assessment changes**

There are unlikely to be any syllabus and assessment changes in forthcoming assignments.

For the foreseeable future, the general structure of the assignment is likely to remain similar to that which is currently being used.

- **Possible future assessment themes**

The approach currently adopted is likely to be retained with scenario changes being the main variable factor in future assignments.

Candidates should be fully aware of a range of stimuli to enacting the marketing planning process which may come about as a result of internal and external forces eg strategic decisions around new products and markets, re-launching and repositioning existing products, changes in the competitive environment, etc.



The Chartered  
Institute of Marketing

# Professional Diploma in Marketing (Level 6)

## NEW SYLLABUS

### Unit 1 – Marketing Planning Process

#### Work Based Assignment

#### Marketing Planning and Changing Market Demand

CIM Deadline Date – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009

Results Released – February 2010

OR ALTERNATIVELY

CIM Deadline Date – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Results Released – May 2010

The Chartered Institute of Marketing has strict deadline dates which must be adhered to. The assignment must be submitted to the Accredited Study Centre well before these dates to allow time for administration and postage. Contact your tutor for your Accredited Study Centre submission deadline.

Candidates are required to complete **ALL** tasks.

#### Assessment

- All tasks within the assignment brief are compulsory
- **100%** of the marks available for this paper
- Maximum word count – **6,000 words**

#### Documentation

Candidates must ensure that they are registered with CIM as a studying member and for this assignment, by the required deadline(s).

#### Word Count

Candidates must adhere to the word count stated. No marks will be allocated for information contained in appendices, unless explicitly stated within the assignment brief. Appendices should be used for supporting information only. CIM reserves the right to return **unmarked** any assignment that exceeds the stated word count or contains, in the opinion of the examiner, excessive appendices.

#### Plagiarism and Collusion

In submitting their assessment for this unit, and completing the declaration statement in the appendix, candidates are confirming that the work submitted for all tasks is their own and does not contravene the CIM policies including word count, plagiarism and collusion. In addition, the tutor is required to sign the assignment/project candidate listing document, confirming that to the best of their knowledge the work that the candidate is submitting is their own. **It is essential that tutors and candidates read the guidance printed on the inside of this assignment brief in order to adhere to the word count, plagiarism and collusion policies for this assignment.**



# Professional Diploma in Marketing Guidance Notes

## Assessment Regulations

Candidates have to complete the assessment brief published by The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) for the relevant academic session. Tutors should be prepared to offer advice to candidates regarding the brief, the mark scheme and the grade descriptors. Tutors and candidates should also understand and apply the CIM policies relating to assessments including word count, plagiarism and collusion. These are available on the CIM Tutor Zone [www.cimtutors.com](http://www.cimtutors.com) and CIM Learning Zone [www.cimlearningzone.co.uk](http://www.cimlearningzone.co.uk) websites. Each assessment must be completed individually, not as part of a group.

## Context

Where a task requires the candidate to select an organisation, the assessment should be based on the candidate's organisation, or an organisation of their choice, selected with tutor advice. A brief overview of the organisation chosen, including legal classification, product or service offered, target market and structure, should be included in the appendix. This information should not be included as part of the word count and no marks will be allocated to this section.

## Confidentiality

Where candidates are using organisational information that deals with sensitive material or issues, they must seek the advice and permission from that organisation about its inclusion in an assessment. Where confidentiality is an issue, studying members are advised to anonymise their assessment so that it cannot be attributed to that particular organisation.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing for its part accepts responsibility for marking the assessment following the confidentiality procedures it has laid down. All CIM examiners have to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and do not knowingly mark any assessment where there is a conflict of interest. In addition, no work is published without the prior agreement of a studying member and the organisation. All assessments are stored securely and after twelve months, are shredded confidentially.

## Assessment Criteria

The assessment briefing documents include the marking scheme and guidance notes, which are designed to indicate to the candidate the types of information and format that are required. The marking scheme should not replace any briefing that is usually undertaken by the unit tutor. It is important that, when assessments are issued, discussions take place between the group and tutor to clarify their understanding of the assessment brief and what is required.

## Mark Schemes

Mark schemes are included so that candidates are aware where the majority of the marks will be allocated and are therefore able to structure their work accordingly. However, CIM reserves the right to amend the mark scheme if appropriate.

## Grade Descriptors

There is a grade descriptor document attached to this assessment, which is used by examiners as part of the marking process. The grade descriptors comprise:

- Concept
- Application
- Evaluation and
- Presentation.

The relative weightings of these elements are used to inform grades within a level and differentiate between levels. At Professional Diploma level, the relative weightings are 30%, 30%, 30% and 10% respectively. To maximise marks, candidates need to understand the principles of the grading criteria to ensure that work submitted reflects the right balance.

## Appendices

Appendices should only be included where necessary and should be used to accommodate tables and diagrams to support/illustrate the main body of the text. **No marks are awarded for work included in the appendices**, and these should not be used as an alternative location for work that should appear in the main text. Appendices should not include published secondary information such as annual reports and company literature, etc.

## Tutor Guidance to Candidates

Each candidate should receive a minimum of 60 minutes tutorial time per unit, scheduled at key periods. Tutors should be prepared to offer advice to candidates regarding the tasks, particularly in relation to the organisation they choose to use.

Tutors can give feedback on **one** draft of an assessment and/or answer specific subject-related questions from a candidate related to their assessment. Tutors should not return a completed assessment to the candidate for improvement. Evidence of a centre doing this will result in the assessment being sent back unmarked.

## Word Count Policy

Candidates must comply with the recommended word count, within a margin of +10%. For some tasks a specified number of pages is given as an alternative to the word count.

These rules exclude the index (if used), headings, information contained within references, bibliography and appendices. Candidates should present their work professionally, using tables and diagrams to **support** and/or illustrate the text. Unless tables and diagrams are specified as a requirement of a task, they can be included in either the appendix or the main body of the text. If tables are included as appendices the findings must be summarised within the main body of the text for marks to be awarded. If candidates use tables to present their answer in the main body of the text, the words used (or where appropriate the number of pages) will be counted and the rules relating to word count (or number of pages) will apply.

When an assessment task requires candidates to produce presentation slides with supporting notes, the word count applies to the supporting notes only. The maximum number of slides indicated on the assessment brief excludes the title page slide and the contents page slide.

Candidates should state the number of words that they have used at the end of each task. In addition, the total number of words used for the whole assessment must be indicated on the front cover of the assessment.

Any assessments that exceed the word count policy will be penalised by candidates forfeiting the marks for format and presentation for each individual task that exceeds the recommended word count (specified number of pages). Work that grossly exceeds the recommended word count (specified number of pages) will be null and voided and candidates will be asked to complete and submit a new assessment.

Where a candidate's work has contravened the word count policy, it will be reviewed by the senior examiner and the CIM Academic Misconduct and Irregularities Committee before a final decision is made.

## Referencing and Professionalism

A professional approach to work is expected from all candidates. Candidates must therefore:

- identify and acknowledge **ALL** sources/methodologies/applications used. The candidate must use a Harvard referencing system to achieve this (notes on Harvard are on the CIM Tutor Zone and Learning Zone websites).
- express their work in plain business English. Marks are not awarded for use of English, but a good standard of English will help candidates to express their understanding more effectively.

All work that candidates submit as part of the CIM requirements must be expressed in their own words and incorporate their own judgements. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished

work of others, including that of tutors or employers, must be appropriately referenced. Authors of images used in reports and audio-visual presentations must be acknowledged.

### **Plagiarism and Collusion**

Academic offences, including plagiarism and collusion, are treated very seriously. Plagiarism involves presenting work, excerpts, ideas or passages of another author without appropriate referencing and attribution. Collusion occurs when two or more candidates submit work which is so alike in ideas, content, wording and/or structure that the similarity goes beyond what might have been mere coincidence. Plagiarism and collusion are very serious offences and any candidate found to be copying another candidate's work or quoting work from another source without recognising and disclosing that source will be penalised.

**It is the candidate's responsibility** to make sure that he or she understands what constitutes an academic offence, and, in particular, what plagiarism and collusion are and how to avoid them. Useful guidance materials and supporting policies are available on the CIM Tutor Zone and Learning Zone websites.

In submitting their assessment for this unit, and completing the relevant declaration statement in the appendix, candidates are confirming that the work submitted for all tasks is their own and does not contravene the CIM policies including word count, plagiarism and collusion. Tutors must sign the assessment candidate listing, confirming that to the best of their knowledge the work submitted is the candidate's own. Where a tutor has concerns about the authenticity of a candidate's submission, this should be referred to in the comment box on the assessment candidate listing. CIM reserves the right to return assessments if the necessary declaration statements have not been completed.

Candidates believed to be involved in plagiarism and/or collusion for one or more tasks will have their work looked at separately by the senior examiner and/or another senior academic and plagiarism detection software will be used. Candidates found to be in breach of these regulations may be subject to one or more of the following: disqualification from membership; refused award of unit or qualification; disqualification from other CIM assessments/qualifications; refused the right to retake units/qualifications.

### **Submission of assessments**

As well as hard copies of assessments tutors must also send in an electronic copy of each candidate's work to the CIM email account at [senditin@cim.co.uk](mailto:senditin@cim.co.uk). A sample of centres' submissions will be put through plagiarism software.

### **Final Grades**

Final grades will be sent to the candidates from the CIM by the usual process in February, May, August or November, depending on when assessments were submitted for marking.

# PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN MARKETING – NEW SYLLABUS

## UNIT ONE: MARKETING PLANNING PROCESS

### Project Brief: Marketing Planning and Changing Market Demand

#### ANSWER ALL TASKS

##### Role and Scenario

In your role as a Marketing Executive in your organisation, or an organisation of your choice, you have been asked by the Marketing Director to develop a marketing plan. For your chosen organisation you should consider the development of the plan in the context of **ONE** of the following scenarios:

- a response to a significant increase in the level of demand by consumers and/or trade customers for a product or service of your organisation

##### OR

- a response to a significant decrease in the level of demand by consumers and/or trade customers for a product or service of your organisation.

When developing your marketing plan, which should cover a **short term period** (as relevant to your organisation), you should give due consideration to the particular scenario that you have selected. You should also include an initial rationale for selecting the scenario you have chosen. Further to this, you should produce a report that considers the contribution of marketing planning and some of its key aspects to the success of the organisation faced with the change in market demand. The marketing plan and report are to be presented by the Marketing Director at the next Senior Management meeting.

In preparation for the meeting, you have been asked to carry out the following tasks and present them as a formal report, to be tabled at the meeting.

##### Tasks

##### Preparatory Work

- Provide a brief background to the chosen organisation, its customer base, position in the market in relation to its competitors, and current product/service range (up to a maximum of two sides of A4, no marks awarded).
- Prepare a marketing audit for the chosen organisation, in order to form a basis for the marketing plan. The audit should provide an evidence base for the development of the marketing plan related to the selected scenario. Your audit findings should be included as an appendix to your marketing plan (up to a maximum of six sides of A4). Marks will be awarded for the use of this information within the Marketing Plan and Evaluation Report.

## **Task One: Rationale and Marketing Plan**

- Outline the rationale for the choice of scenario, which forms the basis of the plan, in the context of the current position of the chosen organisation.

*Maximum word count for rationale: 500 words*

- Develop a short term marketing plan that is appropriate to the selected scenario, using the information gained from the marketing audit. Accompanying tables and schedules may be included within the plan or attached as appendices (up to a maximum of six sides of A4).

*Maximum word count for marketing plan 2,500 words (excluding table and schedules)*

*Appendices: Audit findings maximum of six sides of A4*

*Tables and schedules maximum of six sides of A4*

## **Task Two: Evaluation Report**

Produce a formal report suitable for tabling at the Senior Management meeting, that:

- critically evaluates the role of marketing and marketing planning in responding to a change in the external marketing environment
- explains and justifies the process of undertaking the marketing audit, and identifies the issues of information gathering and analysis associated with this
- assesses how an appropriate strategy has been developed for the situation faced by your organisation, utilising segmentation-targeting-positioning strategy
- specifies the potential issues that may be encountered in implementing the marketing plan over the given timescale in the context of your organisation, and presents operational proposals for addressing them.

*Maximum word limit for evaluation report: 3,000 words, excluding relevant appendices*

**NOTE:** This is an individual assessment and must be completed individually and not as part of a group.

## **Appendix**

- Provide a brief statement in the appendix confirming the following:

*'I confirm that in forwarding this assessment for marking, I understand and have applied the CIM policies relating to word count, plagiarism and collusion for all tasks. This assignment/project is the result of my own independent work/investigation except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged in the body of the text and/or a bibliography is appended. The work that I have submitted has not previously been accepted in substance for any other award and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any other award.'*

## Assessment Criteria

- Outline of the rationale for the choice of scenario which forms the basis of the plan, in the context of the current position of the chosen organisation
- Development of a **SHORT TERM** marketing plan that is relevant to the selected scenario
- Critical evaluation of the role of marketing and marketing planning in responding to a change in the external marketing environment
- Explanation and justification of the process of undertaking the marketing audit, and identification of the issues of information gathering and analysis associated with this
- Assessment of how an appropriate strategy has been developed for the situation faced by the chosen organisation, utilising segmentation-targeting-positioning strategy
- Specification of the potential issues that may be encountered in implementing the marketing plan over the given timescale in the context of the chosen organisation, and presentation of operational proposals for addressing them

## UNIT ONE: MARKETING PLANNING PROCESS

### Marketing Planning and Changing Market Demand

#### MARK SCHEME

MARKING CRITERIA	% Mark Available	CIM Examiner's Mark	CIM Moderated Mark
Outline of the rationale for the choice of scenario which forms the basis of the plan, in the context of the current position of the chosen organisation	40		
Development of a <b>SHORT TERM</b> marketing plan that is relevant to the selected scenario			
Critical evaluation of the role of marketing and marketing planning in responding to a change in the external marketing environment	10		
Explanation and justification of the process of undertaking the marketing audit, and identification of the issues of information gathering and analysis associated with this	15		
Assessment of how an appropriate strategy has been developed for the situation faced by the chosen organisation, utilising segmentation-targeting-positioning strategy	10		
Specification of the potential issues that may be encountered in implementing the marketing plan over the given timescale in the context of the chosen organisation, and presentation of operational proposals for addressing them	15		
Format and Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>relevance to the tasks</li><li>use of concepts and frameworks to support arguments, points and recommendations</li><li>professional tone and required format</li><li>appropriate use of examples to illustrate points</li><li>Harvard referencing</li></ul>	10		
Total Mark	100		

#### CIM use only

Marked by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

Second Marker/Moderator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

## **Guidance on tackling the assignment**

Candidates undertaking this assignment are expected to focus on producing a marketing plan based on their own organisation or an organisation of their choice. The marketing plan should be contextualised around **ONE** of the following two scenarios:

- a response to a significant increase in the level of demand by consumers and/or trade customers for a product or service of your organisation

OR

- a response to a significant decrease in the level of demand by consumers and/or trade customers for a product or service of your organisation.

The selected scenario should provide an opportunity for a fit to be made with the situation of the chosen organisation, and the scenario should give focus to the detailed development of the plan over a short term period, as appropriate to the organisation and its sector.

In addition to developing a short term marketing plan that sets out a direction into the future, the candidates are also asked to produce a report that considers specific aspects of the planning process, where they should draw upon theoretical understanding applied to the organisational context.

## **Undertaking the marketing audit**

In order to produce the marketing plan it is necessary for the candidate to firstly undertake the marketing audit. Candidates are expected to assess the current position of the chosen organisation by conducting a marketing audit, which should evaluate both external and internal environments. This should be undertaken through the acquisition of relevant information from a range of sources, and analysis using appropriate marketing audit tools, ie, frameworks and models that provide insight into the current position and enable strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to be established, particularly from the perspective of the selected scenario.

The marketing audit will form the evidence base of the situation in which the marketing plan is developed, and should be relevant to the scenario. The audit should be appended to the marketing plan (maximum six sides of A4, font size 11 for text or font size 8 for text used in diagrams, tables and illustrations). The main findings of the audit should be incorporated into the marketing plan as the situation analysis component and as a platform for the specification of marketing objectives and strategy.

## **Short Term Marketing Plan**

A key element of the assignment is the production of a short term marketing plan which responds to a shift in the level of demand by consumers and/or trade customers for a product or service of the chosen organisation. This should be preceded by an explanation of the choice of scenario as a focus for the marketing plan.

The marketing audit of the situation facing the organisation will provide the evidence base on which the plan should be formulated. Details of the plan should be set out over the given timescale and incorporate all the necessary components of a marketing plan, based on the scenario. The timescale covered by the plan will depend on the nature of the organisation and its markets. However, its emphasis will reflect the short term nature of the plan and may be quite tactical and operational in nature. Matters to be considered will address the change in demand and so may include the impact on skills and resources with a focus on the short term, rather than strategic long term, return on their deployment.

All the substantive components of a marketing plan should be included. However, the plan is likely to contain tables and schedules with details of, for example, analysis, marketing

activities, implementation processes, etc. These should be included either in the marketing plan or in a supporting appendix. If tables are included as appendices they must be referred to within the main body of the plan for marks to be awarded. These tables and schedules should not exceed six sides regardless of whether they are included in the body of the plan or in the appendix. The font size should be 11 for text or font size 8 for text used in diagrams, tables and illustrations.

## **Evaluation Report**

Candidates should produce a report that evaluates the role of marketing and marketing planning in responding to a change in market demand, and a justification of undertaking the marketing audit. Assessment of how an appropriate segmentation-targeting-positioning strategy has been adopted as part of the plan is a further requirement. Candidates should also identify potential issues that may be encountered when implementing the plan, and propose how these will be addressed.

When compiling the report, candidates should select the organisation on which to base their assignment and produce a summary of the background to the organisation, which should form an appendix. The report requires that candidates critically evaluate the role of marketing and marketing planning when reacting to a change in the external environment. This should be addressed using appropriate arguments, which can be supported by theory and academic research that should be appropriately cited in the report.

Additionally, within the report, candidates should reflect critically on undertaking the marketing audit from both theoretical and practical perspectives. An evaluation of how it was undertaken, the sources used, difficulties in collecting specific information, gaps in the data, methods of analysis, and the trade-off between time and value in the planning process should be considered.

Further requirements include assessing how segmentation-targeting-positioning has influenced the selection of an appropriate strategy on which to base the plan, and finally, recognition of planning implementation issues and proposed remedial action. For each of these aspects of the marketing planning process, candidates are expected to incorporate into their report both conceptual and practical insights into their application to the chosen context. The analysis of these particular tasks may highlight specific issues associated with the external market, such as consumer behaviour and competition, or particular internal issues, such as resource limitations. Moreover, the nature of the organisational context, such as the size of the business, whether it operates in service or product markets, and whether it has profit or non-profit goals, may be relevant to both segmentation and implementation. Clearly there is scope for discussion of contextual issues within an appropriate theoretical framework.

## **Presentation**

In producing the report, it is important that candidates adopt a style and structure that naturally lend themselves to reporting on the outcomes of their work as a Marketing Executive to a meeting of the organisation's Senior Management. The format should be consistent with the specific requirements of the tasks, and the balance of emphasis should be guided by the weighting of each of the assessment criteria, as indicated in the mark scheme. A holistic approach to the report is expected, in which emphasis is given to insightful analysis, originality and clarity of expression. At the same time, it is important that a comprehensive plan is systematically developed in the context of the organisation and scenario. It is particularly important that due regard is given to the conceptual underpinning of the way in which some of the key aspects of the marketing planning process have been undertaken, and a critical perspective is provided on how this has been applied in the setting of the chosen organisation.

**Professional Diploma Grade Descriptors**

	<b>Grade A</b>	<b>Grade B</b>	<b>Grade C</b>	<b>Grade D</b>
	This grade is given for work that meets all of the assessment criteria at Diploma level to secure at least 70% and demonstrates a candidate's ability to:	This grade is given for work that meets all of the assessment criteria at Diploma level to secure at least 60% and demonstrates a candidate's ability to:	This grade is given for work that meets enough of the assessment criteria at Diploma level to secure at least 50% and demonstrates a candidate's ability to:	This grade is given for border line work that does not meet enough of the assessment criteria at Diploma level to secure a pass and is within the band 45-49%. This may be due to:
<b>Concept 30%</b>	<p>develop appropriate research strategies for both primary and secondary research</p> <p>selectively identify valid and relevant information from a wide range of sources for the discipline</p> <p>manage own learning independently</p> <p>evidence comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the marketing discipline at Diploma level</p> <p>synthesise and analyse new and/or abstract information and data in the context of wide ranging problems, using a range of appropriate techniques</p>	<p>develop appropriate research strategies for both primary and secondary research</p> <p>identify and select valid information from a suitable range of relevant sources for the discipline</p> <p>manage own learning with minimal guidance</p> <p>evidence detailed knowledge and understanding of the marketing discipline at Diploma level</p> <p>analyse new and/or abstract information and data in the context of broadly defined problems, using appropriate techniques</p>	<p>develop an appropriate research strategy for both primary and secondary research</p> <p>identify and select information using a minimum number of resources for the discipline</p> <p>manage own learning with support and guidance</p> <p>evidence a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of the marketing discipline at Diploma level</p> <p>analyse information and data in the context of explicitly defined problems</p>	<p>an inability to develop an appropriate research strategy for both primary and secondary research</p> <p>insufficient sources of information being used to underpin research</p> <p>an inability to manage own learning effectively</p> <p>repeating case material rather than evidencing knowledge of the marketing discipline at Diploma level</p> <p>a lack of detail and argument when analysing information for a specified task</p>
<b>Application 30%</b>	<p>engage in effective debate in a professional manner evidencing a comprehensive understanding and application of key principles</p> <p>produce detailed and coherent arguments in response to well defined and abstract problems using relevant vocational language</p> <p>express ideas persuasively and with originality, applying appropriate marketing terminology and concepts accurately</p> <p>apply a wide variety of illustrative examples to underpin findings supported by references to wider reading and learning resources to exemplify points</p>	<p>evidence a sound understanding and application of key principles</p> <p>produce logical arguments in response to a given brief using vocational language correctly</p> <p>express ideas clearly, applying appropriate marketing terminology and concepts accurately</p> <p>apply a variety of illustrative examples to underpin findings supported by some references to wider reading and learning resources to exemplify points</p>	<p>evidence a basic understanding and application of key principles</p> <p>produce arguments in response to a given brief using sufficient vocational language</p> <p>outline ideas and concepts using appropriate marketing terminology</p> <p>include some illustrative examples to support findings including minimum references to wider reading and learning resources to exemplify points</p>	<p>a lack of basic understanding of key principles and limited application</p> <p>insufficient and/or inappropriate use of marketing terminology to explain ideas</p> <p>limited development of ideas or concepts</p> <p>few or no examples to support findings</p>
<b>Evaluation 30%</b>	<p>evaluate findings leading to incisive conclusions and recommendations</p> <p>produce reliable, valid and incisive conclusions and recommendations, based on research findings and analysis</p>	<p>evaluate findings leading to informative and reliable conclusions and recommendations</p> <p>produce reliable and informative conclusions and recommendations, based on research findings and analysis</p>	<p>evaluate findings leading to reliable but limited conclusions</p> <p>produce reliable but limited conclusions and recommendations based on findings</p>	<p>little or no attempt to evaluate findings</p> <p>superficial conclusions and recommendations which lack depth</p>
<b>Time Management, &amp; Presentation 10%</b>	<p>plan, review and complete work within the specified deadlines/time allocated</p> <p>an exceptional and professional standard of presentation, format and tone</p>	<p>plan, review and complete work within the specified deadlines/time allocated</p> <p>a high standard of presentation, format and tone</p>	<p>complete work within the specified deadlines/time allocated</p> <p>acceptable presentation, format and tone</p>	<p>work not being completed within the specified deadlines/time allowed</p> <p>errors in presentation, format and tone</p>