

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

J204

For first teaching in 2017

J204/01 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 1 series overview

Teachers appear to have used OCR resources (including the practice paper and previous live papers available online from OCR) to good effect.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrated a breadth of knowledge across the topics on the specification (especially in Section A) applied their answers in Section B to the contexts given in Texts 1 to 3 used clear and logical chains of argument to demonstrate analytical skills gave detailed, comparative, contextual reasons to support recommendations used the numerical data given in Text 3 when answering Question 18 (d). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> left one or more multiple-choice questions entirely blank gave generic answers to questions in Section B, rather than contextually specific answers gave brief answers with no attempt to explain or analyse points made made a recommendation when required by the question but gave limited or no reason to support the recommendation made no reference to, or use of, the numerical data given in Text 3 when answering Question 18 (d).

Section A gives time for candidates to settle into the examination. This section of the paper was generally well answered by most candidates. Some candidates lost marks by leaving an MCQ question blank. This is poor examination technique. Candidates should be encouraged to indicate a response to all 15 questions. A minority of candidates also lost marks because the letter written in the box was unclear. Candidates should be discouraged from trying to alter an answer by writing over it – say by trying to change a B to a D, or vice versa. In such cases it is impossible for the examiner to know which letter was the last to be written. If a candidate wishes to change their response, they should fully cross out their original answer and replace it with their new selection, if necessary, this should be written to the side of the box provided.

OCR support



Centres are advised to give candidates plenty of practice at answering multiple-choice questions throughout their programme of study. OCR has produced lots of [practice multiple-choice questions](#) for centres to use. They are organised by topic, so that they can be used appropriately throughout the programme of study.

For Section B it is important to remind candidates that questions which include the name of the business in their wording should show evidence of application of understanding (i.e. candidates should give an answer which is applied to the business detailed in Texts 1 to 3). Each text includes important information about one specific business which can be used to gain application marks.

In this specification 'application of knowledge and understanding' refers to the use of context, and not simply the mentioning of context. A name drop of the business, relevant personnel or the product/service the business offers is insufficient for the award of application. The candidate must use the context in their answer i.e. the contextual reference must add something cognitive to the response which demonstrates further understanding by the candidate of the topic in question. This is an important issue because answering such questions in a theoretical or generic way severely limits the number of marks that the examiner can award to the candidate. As per the specification 32% of marks on this paper are reserved for application of knowledge and understanding.

Each of Questions 16 to 18 contain at least one 'analyse' question and at least one 'evaluate'/'discuss'/'recommend' question. To increase candidate accessibility to marks, these skills are independently assessed and so, for example, a candidate may gain full marks for evaluation without any analysis (or vice versa). It is, therefore, important that candidates are clear as to the difference between the two skills, because to achieve maximum marks they will need to fully demonstrate both skills i.e. analysis and evaluation.

What is analysis?

Analysis requires candidates to present a chain of reasoning. The chain of reasoning should begin with an appropriate point which answers the question and end with at least one impact or 'knock-on effect' of the point made. Care should be taken to make sure that the impact/'knock-on effect' is on the correct subject. Whereas most questions require an analysis from the business' perspective, sometimes (as in Question 17 (c) on this paper) the analysis required is an impact on one of the business' stakeholders.

There must be a logical link in the chain of argument between the initial point being made and the analytical development. If a candidate's initial point was about 'reaching more customers then by a logical chain of argument they could arrive at 'more revenue' as the business facing impact of having more customers. However if a candidate's initial point was about 'reduced costs' then 'more revenue' could not be given as a direct analytical development because there is no logical link between reduced costs and making more revenue. An answer whose initial response was 'reduced costs' could be adequately analysed by chains of argument which include lower cash outflows, higher profits or more funds being available for expansion.

The maximum tariff for analysis on any question on this paper is 2 marks. Therefore even on the highest tariff questions only 2 analytical points are needed to achieve the maximum marks awardable for this skill. It should be noted, however, that the skill of analysis is tested many times on the paper including questions using the command word 'analyse' and questions using the command word 'evaluate'.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation requires a supported judgement to be made. The question wording may use 'discuss', 'evaluate' or 'recommend' – all of these require a justified, reasoned, argument to be put forward.

The decision reached should be explicitly stated. Reasons for this decision should be made clear, with reference to contextual argument where possible.

For questions that require candidates to recommend one option over another, it is important that the justification is comparative. Reasoning as to why an option is a good option to take is not sufficient to justify the recommendation, the reasoning needs to show why one option is better than the other.

Each time the skill of evaluation is rewarded on this paper, it has a tariff of 3 marks. Candidates should be encouraged to reach decisions and give reasoned justification to support their argument using contextual information. While a valid justification that applies to most businesses would achieve 2 of the available 3 evaluation marks, an answer which argues using the particular circumstances of the business in the text would be deemed stronger and would be given the full 3 marks available.

In addition, the 9 mark question on this paper (Question 18 (d)) includes the testing of candidate ability to interpret and use numerical data. The need to demonstrate quantitative skills was highlighted in the examiners' report last year. This series examiners have seen an increase in the proportion of candidates who included the demonstration of quantitative skills in their answers, however further reinforcement of this issue would be beneficial. On Question 18 (d), 2 marks (application marks) are reserved for this purpose. For an award of 9 out of 9, candidates are required to show that they have used the numerical data given – in this case the market research data and/or Walkers' current adaptations to its product range. Those who did not include numerical data were still able to achieve 7 of the available 9 marks.

The range of questions presented on this year's examination paper gave candidates of all abilities the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. The vast majority of the scripts showed that the candidate had, at least, attempted to answer all of the questions set, with a consequent very low question omit rate across the paper (with the exception of Question 18 (c) (ii)). The questions addressed a wide range of topics taken from the specification and were a true test of a candidate's ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to how businesses operate. The higher tariff 7 and 9 mark questions gave high ability candidates the opportunity to fully demonstrate their understanding using contextual application, analysis, and evaluation; and many achieved full marks.

Section A overview

The majority of multiple-choice questions were well answered. Only three questions appeared to cause difficulty (Questions 5, 7 and 10).

Question 5

- 5 Employee retention:
- A extends the working hours of employees
 - B leads to higher recruitment costs
 - C minimises time spent selecting new workers
 - D reduces discrimination in the workplace

Your answer

[1]

This question was testing whether candidates understood the meaning of the human resource term 'employee retention'. The correct answer is C. Some candidates got the answer to this question wrong, with responses being evenly split across the three distractors.

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to spend sufficient time ensuring that candidates have a robust understanding of all business-specific terms within the teaching content of the specification. This could be frequently reinforced as a lesson starter using definition cards or an electronic equivalent which match terms to their meanings.

Question 7

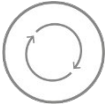
- 7 What would be included in the job description for a hospital doctor?
- A A list of the medical qualifications required
 - B An ability to listen carefully to patients' concerns
 - C Previous experience of working in a hospital
 - D The main duties of medical staff when working in a hospital

Your answer

[1]

This question was testing understanding of the content of a job description. The correct answer, D, was selected by only 50% of candidates. By far the most common incorrect answer was A. A list of medical qualifications would appear on a person specification rather than a job description.

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to make sure candidates have seen real examples of person specifications and job descriptions to help them answer questions relating to content and purpose of these documents.

Question 10

10 Which type of ownership is most suitable for an entrepreneur who wishes to start up their own business quickly and with as little paperwork as possible?

- A Partnership
- B Private limited company
- C Public limited company
- D Sole trader

Your answer

[1]

This question tested understanding of legal types of business ownership. The correct answer is D. Incorrect answers were fairly evenly split across the three distractors. This seems to indicate a lack of robust understanding of this area of the specification, across the entire ability range.

Section B overview

Candidates should use the information provided in each of the appropriate texts when answering the questions in Section B. This is especially important when the name of the business is included in the question because this indicates that marks are available for application.

Question 16 (a)

16

Text 1

Nina's Knitting Supplies

Nina runs a successful business selling knitting wool and sewing products. She opened her first shop 15 years ago. The business has grown organically and now sells products from 10 shops and a website. Nina uses market segmentation to target customers. Nina employs 80 people. She works hard to meet the shared objectives of her employees, as well as external stakeholder groups such as customers, suppliers, lenders and the local community.

Nina produces a weekly update that is sent by email to all employees every Friday. The updates contain information about the future development of the business, plus other stories of interest to employees. Recent stories include congratulating an employee on the birth of a child and the charity fundraising activities of one shop.

Nina plans to develop the business further over the next five years, especially as knitting is becoming an increasingly popular pastime. This has led to more competitors entering the market.

(a) Explain **one** way that a business can segment its market.

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.....

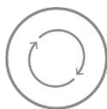
.....

..... [2]

Examiners were looking for a 'way'. The majority of candidates were able to suggest a 'way', gaining at least 1 of the available 2 marks. By far the most common correct 'ways' were 'by age' and 'by gender'.

Those candidates who developed their answer through to explanation, e.g. by stating that 'by age' might mean targeting the elderly or 'by gender' might mean advertising specifically to women, etc. were given full marks.

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to spend sufficient time developing candidate understanding of the demands of the command words in the questions. This question began with the word 'explain' rather than 'identify' therefore some development was needed to gain full marks.

OCR support



To help centres and candidates OCR has included in the specification for this qualification a full list of possible command words that could appear on the exam paper.

Centres should make sure that candidates have a robust understanding of what is required by each command word listed in the specification.

Question 16 (b)

(b) Explain how the objectives of **three** external stakeholder groups can be satisfied by Nina's Knitting Supplies.

1

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2

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3

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[6]

By far the most common answers to this question were that Nina's store can meet the objectives of customers by selling high quality knitting wool, the objectives of the local community by providing 80 jobs, and the objectives of supplier by making large orders to stock the 10 stores. All of these answers are correct and are applied to Nina's business. Such responses gained the full 6 marks.

Candidates who gained 2 or 3 marks are likely to be able to improve their answers by ensuring that they give applied answers. The question wording explicitly asks how Nina's business can meet the objectives of external stakeholders, not how any business can do so. Generic answers such as 'paying lenders on time' or 'paying tax to the government on time' are valid but each can only gain 1 mark.

Candidates who did less well on this question tended to make one particular error i.e. giving responses about store managers', Nina's and employees' objectives. Presumably overlooking the word 'external' in the question or confusing 'external' with 'internal'.

Question 16 (c)

(c) Analyse **one** likely reason why Nina sends a weekly update to her employees.

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..... [3]

This question was generally well answered with at least a third of candidates gaining full marks.

This is the first question on the exam paper that uses the command word 'analyse'. To achieve full marks the response needed to suggest a valid reason, apply it to Nina's business and then analyse this reason. Throughout this paper analysis means an impact of a previously made point, in this case on Nina's business. Valid analytical answers commonly seen by examiners included to increase employee retention, to increase productivity and to improve levels of customer service. Please see the published mark scheme for suggested answers to this question.

Question 16 (d) (i)

(d) (i) Identify **two** methods of external growth that a business could use.

1
2 [2]

This question dichotomised candidates. Few candidates gained 1 mark; candidates either knew what was meant by external growth methods (and therefore could suggest two methods and gained full marks) or did not appear to know (and therefore gained no marks). By far the most common correct answers were 'merger' and 'takeover'. Please see the published mark scheme for a list of other acceptable answers.

Question 16 (d) (ii)

(ii) Evaluate whether or not Nina's Knitting Supplies should continue to grow organically.

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..... [7]

The 7 marks for Question 16 (d) (ii) were allocated as follows: 2 marks for application, 2 marks for analysis and 3 marks for evaluation. Each assessment skill was marked independently. Further details of this mark breakdown can be found in the published mark scheme on the marking grid for this question.

Most candidates managed to achieve at least 1 mark for evaluation i.e. by making a decision as to whether or not Nina's business should continue to grow organically. Those who were able to justify their decision gained extra evaluation marks. Those whose justifications were deemed good (i.e. valid but non-contextual) were given an extra 1 mark (totalling 2 marks for evaluation) and those whose justifications were deemed 'strong' (i.e. valid and contextual) were given an extra 2 marks (totalling the full 3 marks for evaluation).

To gain analysis marks examiners were looking for a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages to a business of using organic growth (or external growth). Candidates needed to show a sound understanding of the difference between these two types of growth to achieve marks.

The most commonly suggested, correct, advantages to Nina's business of using organic growth were the relatively low cost and the high degree of control that Nina would retain. On the other hand, the most commonly suggested correct, advantages to Nina's business of choosing to use external growth were faster growth and the removal of a competitor.

To gain application marks candidates needed to apply the advantages and disadvantage of using organic growth (or external growth) specifically to Nina's business. Candidates should be encouraged to embed this application of understanding throughout their entire response. Please see exemplar 1 for a clearly laid out response that demonstrates this skill and gained full marks.

Exemplar 1

An advantage to Nina's Knitting Supplies is that it is low cost. This would mean that Nina has more profit to spend elsewhere, such as on her knitting supplies in order to stay ahead of the new competitors.

A drawback to Nina's Knitting Supplies is that growing organically is much slower than growing externally. If there are new competitors in the market, Nina will want to grow faster over the next 5 years in order to keep her knitting supplies sales up.

I think that Nina's Knitting Supplies should begin growing externally because the risk of being overtaken by competitors is too big when Nina has been in business for 15 years. Nina could take over one of the competitors to eliminate them from the market, increasing her market share. [7]

knitting

This response begins by suggesting that an advantage of organic growth is its low cost. This valid understanding is developed by a logical chain of argument to suggest that lower costs lead to higher profits which can be used to buy extra supplies to stay ahead of the competition. This is analysis. By including in the response that 'knitting supplies' would be purchased to stay ahead of the 'new' competition the response also demonstrates application. This first paragraph, therefore, gains 1 mark for application and 1 mark for analysis.

The second paragraph correctly suggests that growing organically is likely to be slower than growing externally. This valid understanding is developed by a logical chain of argument through to an impact on the increased ability of the business to maintain sales in the face of competition. This is analysis. The inclusion within the argument of 'new' competition, '5 years' and 'knitting supplies' shows that the candidate has applied their understanding to Nina's business. This second paragraph, therefore, gains 1 further mark for application and 1 further mark for analysis.

The final paragraph begins with a clear decision in favour of external growth. This decision is supported by valid justification via an argument related to speed and the need to eliminate one of the competitors to increase market share. The inclusion within this argument of the reference to the slower time frame of '15 years' that Nina's business has been in operation makes the justification contextual. Therefore, as per the mark scheme, 3 marks are given for evaluation because the response contains "a justified contextual decision".

Question 17 (a)

17

Text 2

HSBC

HSBC offers a range of banking and financial services for personal and business customers. The bank has branches in many cities and towns across the UK.

Employing the best people is important to HSBC. It uses several methods to select new employees. Once appointed, all employees are offered training and development opportunities that include studying for academic qualifications such as degrees and professional diplomas.

Over 70% of HSBC's call centre employees in the UK have begun working from home permanently. Before this change the employees worked together in a busy call centre. The tasks performed by call centre employees are varied, but include taking telephone calls from customers and completing administrative work, such as opening new bank accounts. Senior managers are now considering whether to introduce working from home for all of its UK call centre employees.

(a) State **two** methods that a business can use to select new employees.

1

2

[2]

Approximately two-thirds of candidates achieved at least 1 mark on this question. By far the most common correct answers were 'interview', 'application form' and 'CV'.

Of those that did less well on this question a significant proportion suggested answers such as 'focus groups' and 'questionnaires'. This suggests some confusion with market research methods. Others appeared to confused selection methods with recruitment methods suggesting 'job advertisements' or 'external recruitment'.

Question 17 (b)

(b) Explain **three** methods of training HSBC may use.

1

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2

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3

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[6]

The vast majority of candidates scored at least 2 marks by identifying 'on-the-job training' and 'off-the-job training'. Recall of the term 'induction training' was far more sporadic with candidates more likely to suggest 'online training' or 'at home training'.

Those who did well on this question gave answers specifically applied to HSBC (as required by the question). Applied answers often included reference to opening bank accounts, administrative tasks, answering phone calls, working in a busy call centre or working at branches across the UK. Each correct method applied to HSBC gained 2 rather than 1 mark.

Question 17 (c)

(c) Analyse **one** benefit for HSBC's employees of studying for academic qualifications.

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[3]

This question uses the command word 'analyse' so requires a benefit developed through a chain of argument to an impact. However, unlike all other analyse questions on the paper, the wording of this question indicates that the analysis is to be from the employees' point of view. Examiners were therefore looking for personal benefits of studying for academic qualifications with personal impacts.

By far the best answers related to improved chances of promotion leading to higher pay. Those that also contained application to HSBC gained full marks. Other good answers included improved self-esteem, gaining new skills and gaining a sense of achievement.

Those who did less well on this question suggested benefits that were business facing. Responses such as higher employee retention, greater productivity or more profit could not be given as these are benefits to HSBC rather than its employees.

Question 17 (d) (iii)

- (iii) Recommend whether HSBC should introduce working from home for all of its UK call centre employees. Give a reason for your answer.

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..... [3]

Questions 17 (d) (i), (d) (ii) and (d) (iii) comprise one question, split into three parts for accessibility. The question is testing 'ways of working' (topic 3.2 on the specification) and in particular 'working from home'.

In Questions 17 (d) (i) and 17 (d) (ii) examiners were looking for positives and negatives, respectively, of having employees working from home (from the business' perspective).

Once the first mark was secured those who applied their answer or gave an impact on the business of this feature gained extra marks (application/analysis respectively). Candidates generally did well at parts 17d (i) and 17 (d) (ii) of this question.

Part (d) (iii) was the first 'recommend' question on the paper. It required candidates to decide whether or not HSBC should introduce working from home for all of its UK call centre employees. There was no right or wrong answer here, all candidates were required to do for the first of the 3 available marks was to make a choice. Almost all candidates managed this and, thus, gained at least 1 mark. Of the very few candidates that scored zero on this question, the reason was invariably one of 'sitting on the fence' and never reaching an overall decision.

The other 2 marks available for Question 17 (d) (iii) were given for the quality of the candidate's justification of their decision. To be awardable the justification needed to argue why the decision was 'better' than the alternative (rather than just 'good'). As such the justification needed to be comparative

and supported with valid reasoning, e.g. cheaper because ., lead to greater productivity because . . ., etc. For full marks the response also needed to be contextual.

Please see exemplar 2 for a response to Question 17 (d) (iii) that was given full marks.

Exemplar 2

I think HSBC's employees should work from home because HSBC will have to spend less money on places for them to work so their total costs will decrease and profits will decrease. Also ~~the~~ employees may feel more motivated as it gives them more flexibility so their attitude towards customers maybe better! Also 70% of their call centre employees already work from home so it's not much of a change. [3]

This response begins with a clear decision in favour of employees working from home. Two comparative arguments are given: The first, that it would be cheaper, because the bank would need to spend less money on places for them to work. The second, that customer service will be better, because of the increase flexibility and motivation of the work force. Either argument is acceptable as justification. The reference to '70% of their call centre workers already work from home' makes the response contextual. The response is, therefore, given 3 marks for evaluation as per the mark scheme '1 mark for a judgement' plus '2 marks for a contextual justification'.

Question 18 (a)

18

Text 3

Walkers Snack Foods Ltd

Walkers Snack Foods Ltd (Walkers) manufactures well-known snacks, including Walkers crisps, Quavers and Wotsits. The company has a market share of more than 50% of the UK potato snack market. The company aims to maintain its market share and to increase profitability.

Walkers uses different marketing strategies as the snacks move through the stages of the product life cycle. Flavours are regularly added to Walkers' range of crisps, often trialling new flavours before launching them. Recent examples have included 'fish & chips' and 'chicken burrito' flavours.

Walkers have responded to concerns about healthy eating by adapting its product range, including:

- recipe changes to reduce added salt by 25% and saturated fats by up to 70%
- a reduction in bag size
- multipacks now containing 22 bags rather than 24, with no change in price.

These changes were supported by a marketing strategy which affected all elements of the marketing mix.

An independent market research company arranged focus groups in both 2017 and 2022 to look at healthy eating trends. It found that:

- 46% of people were concerned about healthy eating in 2017, compared with 60% in 2022.
- In 2022, 36% of people considered whether a snack was healthy before buying it.
- In 2017, 26% of people thought that snack companies were trying to produce more healthy products. By 2022 this figure had increased to 29%.

(a) Identify **one** stage of the product life cycle.

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..... [1]

Three-quarters of candidates gained the mark for this question, with answers fairly evenly split. The mark scheme allowed examiners to award stages as per the J204 specification or the more detailed product life cycle as listed in OCR's A Level qualification (H431).

Those that did not achieve the mark on this question appeared to have no knowledge of the product life cycle.

Question 18 (b)

(b) Analyse **two** advantages for Walkers of trialling new products before launching them.

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2

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[6]

This question was targeted at high ability candidates. Those that did well on this question had both a secure understanding of trialling as a market research technique and the ability to analyse the impact on Walkers of using this method. Please see the published mark scheme for suggested answers to this question.

By far the most common incorrect answers examiners read related to gaining customer opinions or receiving qualitative feedback that could be used to improve the flavour of the crisps. This shows a fundamental misunderstanding of trialling as a method of market research.

Misconception



A common misconception among candidates appears to be that trialling involves giving out free samples (either in store or in a focus group) to obtain feedback that can be used to improve the product. This is not what 'trialias' involves.

Trialling is a primary market research technique that involves launching a product in a limited number of stores/distribution channels for a limited timeframe. The main purpose of trialling is to test whether a full launch should go ahead.

By way of example, Walkers could have put new flavours of crisps on sale at selected supermarkets in London, or wherever. Shoppers seeing the product on the shelves will choose whether to purchase them. At the point of sale there is no opportunity for Walkers to gain any customer opinions or qualitative feedback on how to improve the product, indeed at this point the crisps remain untasted. The only direct feedback that Walkers gain from this method is quantitative i.e. the sales figures. Sales figures which the company can use to decide whether to proceed to a full launch.

Question 18 (c) (i)

- (c) The marketing department at Walkers is considering a new promotion method for the Quavers brand and is considering either:
 - advertising in national newspapers for a four-week period, or
 - running a prize competition.

(i) Analyse **one** advantage for Walkers of each promotion method.

Advertising in national newspapers for a four-week period

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Prize competition

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.....

[6]

Question 18 (c) (ii)

(ii) Recommend whether advertising in national newspapers or a prize competition would be the most appropriate promotion method for Walkers to use. Give a reason for your answer.

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[3]

Questions 18 (c) (i) and 18 (c) (ii) comprise one question, split into three parts for accessibility. The question is testing candidate understanding of methods of promotion. This question was not well answered.

General answers about the advantages of promotion i.e. more customers, more sales, etc. could not be given. Examiners were looking for particular advantages of each specific method. For example, a national newspaper has a very large readership or can reach people who would not normally consider buying crisps. On the other hand, a prize competition reaches existing customers and entices them to

purchase in greater quantities and costs little other than for the prizes which are cost-controllable by the business. Please see the published mark scheme for other suggested answers to Question 18 (c) (i).

Question 18 (c) (ii) was the second 'recommend' question on the paper and had the greatest number of blank responses of any question. The question required candidates to recommend which of the two promotional methods Walkers should use. There was no right or wrong answer here, all candidates were required to do for the first of the 3 available marks was to choose one of the two promotional methods. Those who left the response space blank did not gain this mark. Almost all other candidates clearly identified their recommendation and, thus, gained at least 1 mark (even if their reason for selection was for totally incorrect reasons).

The other 2 marks available for 18 (c) (ii) were given for the quality of the candidate's justification of their recommendation. To be awardable the justification needed to argue why one method was 'better' than the other method. As such the justification needed to be comparative and supported with valid reasoning, e.g. cheaper because... or reach a larger audience because ..., etc. Arguments that only argued that a method was good were not awardable (as this would be the type of answer expected for Question (c) (i)).

Question 18 (d)*

(d)* Evaluate, with reference to the data in Text 3, whether Walkers' marketing department should consider introducing healthier products.

[9]

This is the highest tariff question on the paper. The 9 marks were allocated as follows: 1 mark for knowledge, 1 mark for understanding, 2 marks for numerical application, 2 marks for analysis and 3 marks for evaluation. Each assessment skill was marked independently. Further details of this mark breakdown can be found in the published mark scheme on the marking grid for this question.

The question was well answered by the majority of candidates. Most candidates achieved some marks for understanding, analysis and evaluation. Candidates across all ability ranges did less well achieving the knowledge and application marks. For an example of how to achieve these marks, please see exemplar 3.

For the knowledge mark, examiners were looking for explicit knowledge relating to marketing. This could be achieved by stating the role or purpose of marketing or the marketing department. It was noticeable that of those that did not achieve this mark, a significant proportion appeared to be high ability candidates. For some candidates, a deliberate exam technique defining key terms in the question at the beginning of a response might be helpful here.

For the understanding mark, examiners were looking for one or more advantages or disadvantages to a business of introducing new products. The vast majority of candidates achieved this mark.

For the application marks, examiners were looking for the use of the numerical data given in the text (as indicated in the question by the phrase 'with reference to the data in Text 3'). A mark was given each time a candidate made use of the numerical data in a calculation (to a maximum of 2 marks). Some calculations were relatively straightforward, e.g. the number of years over which the data was collected, others were more complex, e.g. percentage change in those concerned with healthy eating. Candidates were not penalised for incorrect use of mathematical terminology when referring to percentage change.

For the analysis marks, examiners were looking for a logical chain of reasoning which culminated in the potential impact on Walkers of introducing/not introducing new products. Examiners saw lots of reasoning that linked to impacts on sales revenue, profit, brand awareness and reputation; less so (but equally valid) impacts on cash flow, dividends to shareholders, break-even and market share.

For the evaluation marks, examiners were looking for a clear decision coupled with justification of this decision. There was no right or wrong answer here, all that was required for the first of the 3 available marks was to make clear their decision as to whether Walkers should or should not consider introducing healthier products. Almost all candidates clearly indicated their decision and, thus, gained at least 1 mark for evaluation. Of the very few candidates that scored zero for evaluation, the reason was usually one of 'sitting on the fence' i.e. giving reasons for and against but never stating an overall decision, such responses could not be rewarded with evaluation marks.

The other 2 marks available for evaluation were given for the quality of the candidate's justification. A good justification was given 1 extra mark for being valid but appropriate to most businesses, e.g. 'Walkers should not introduce healthier products (1 mark) because it might lead to a loss of loyal customers (+1 mark)'. A strong justification was given 2 extra marks for being valid and contextual, e.g. 'Walkers should introduce healthier products (1 mark) because the proportion of the general public concerned about healthy eating has increased in the last few years (+2 marks)'. Some candidates did not give reasons for their decision (limiting their evaluation mark to 1 mark out of an available 3).

Exemplar 3

The purpose of ~~the~~^{their} marketing department is to make customers aware of new products crisps, and to help satisfy their needs.

One advantage to Walkers ~~for~~^{for} introducing healthier products is ~~that~~ that they may increase their market share. This is because there is a 14% increase from 2017 to 2022 about people concerned with healthy eating, so if Walkers expand their crisp range, they will draw in even more ^{healthy} customers, therefore increasing and maintaining their over 50% market share, which is one of their aims.

One drawback to Walkers introducing healthier products is that they may lose customers

to less healthy competitors, such as Monster Munch. This is because ^{Walkers} they are well known for their unhealthy ^{crisps, such as Wotsits} products and larger quantities in multipack bags, which has now decreased by 2 bags. This would lead to a decrease in sales and profit, and potentially in market share as well, for Walkers, as some customers may not be interested in new healthy crisps. I think that ~~they~~ Walkers ~~the~~ marketing department should introduce healthier products because they will increase their sales and profit as ~~they~~ ~~with~~ their ~~healthier~~ healthy crisps will be attractive to new customers. There has also been

END OF QUESTION PAPER

an increase of 3%, of people thinking snack companies were trying to produce healthy crisps, and Walkers needs to do that in order to maintain their over 50% market share.

This response is a good example of how a candidate can include knowledge marks and quantitative application into their response.

The knowledge mark was given for the opening paragraph which clearly states the role of the marketing department i.e. raising awareness of products and satisfying customer needs.

There are three instances in this response where application marks could be given. The first is in paragraph 2 where the candidate calculates that those concerned with healthy eating have increased by 114% (14 percentage points). The second is in paragraph 3 where the candidate calculates that the number of bags in a multipack has reduced by 2. The third is at the end of the final paragraph where the candidate calculates that there has been a 3% (increase) 3 percentage points in those who think businesses are trying to introduce healthier products. As the maximum award for application on this question is 2 marks, the first two evidenced were given.

Centres are encouraged to reinforce to candidates the importance of using any numerical data given, especially on the highest tariff question on the paper.

Common examples of numerical application evidenced in candidates' responses were:

- healthy eating has become more popular over the last 5 years (2017 to 2022 = 5)
- in 2022, 40% were not concerned with healthy eating ($100 - 60 = 40$)
- in 2017, 54% were not concerned about healthy eating ($100 - 46 = 54$)
- in recent years concern for healthy eating has increased by 14 percentage points ($60 - 46 = 14$)
- multipacks have reduced in size by 2 bags ($24 - 22 = 2$).

For further examples, please see the extensive list in the published mark scheme.

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