



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2010

STAGE 4 PROJECT

Social networks make viral marketing and word-of-mouth marketing much easier than before.

This topic was chosen because the impact and importance of social networks as a means of communicating with the marketplace.

What was most impressive about those papers attracting high grades (70+) was the professional manner in which the candidates dealt with the brief, and the fact that they covered the material being sought by the examiner. The grades ranged from a low of 40% to a high of 90%.

Those candidates attracting lower grades did so because they failed to follow some very clear instructions. Candidates also lost grades for offering a piece of work that in some cases exhibited a serious and disturbing absence of proof reading. The development of primary research, properly undertaken, attracts the attention of the examiner in a positive way. Simply relying upon secondary research is inadequate at this stage of studies, no excuses. Some logical effort at primary research methodology is essential. Candidates, in some cases, simply provided secondary research by transcribing the "blurbs" supplied by companies approached for the purposes of this project. This is inappropriate and insufficient at this stage of study.

Some candidates continue to misunderstand the nature of a Stage 4 project, and insist upon offering what can best be described as a very poor first year effort, insisting as they do, on supplying the reader with an unwanted and un-requested purely descriptive piece. What was required was an analytical evaluation of the branding strategy engaged in by the enterprise in the light of the topics covered in the previous paragraph.

Good structure and logical thinking are always rewarded. The higher echelon of grade will always go to the more professional work. The lower grades are gleaned by those candidates that insist upon providing a basic, lecture-style approach, as though the purpose was to show all they know about the topic - when in fact what is required of a Stage 4 project is a thorough understanding of the topic under discussion and the ability to critically evaluate material

A few points are worth noting: it is best to have size 12 font, 1.5 spacing, with any graphics clearly and properly labelled and referenced. Having a soft copy allows the examiner to search for any situations of plagiarism, this was not in evidence at all on this occasion, but it is an area which needs special care, especially in the context of providing an overview of the industry for example. The examiner believes that it is a good idea for every candidate to have someone, other than the author, read the document prior to handing it in. Doing this will assist in proof reading, as well as giving an indication as to whether the document is well structured and makes sense.