

Designation: - Option Module – **Marketing Strategy** (4268) - Research, Analysis and Academic Reading

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
DISTINCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis/research clearly draws heavily on and makes effective use of ‘desk-top’ data from trade journals, financial papers, current/reliable & robust trade documents as well as data drawn from the Internet. Sources are thoroughly referenced and listed in an extensive bibliography• A key aspect of the research is effective analysis of all available information that leads to findings related to the organisation’s current marketing strategy• Analytical tools and approaches such as PEST and Porters ‘Five Force Analysis’ are used in depth• Research of the appropriate market segment/s should analyse trends relevant to the sector in customer & competitor behaviour and assess the impact these have on the marketing strategy pursued by the candidate’s organisation• Research options should be explored and tested against the organisation’s strategic objectives and capacity to change• Appropriate risk analysis should be undertaken, including existing and potential barriers to success within suitable planning horizons• Research should be in depth and any analysis relating to options for changes must include aspects drawn from other Diploma modules, for example Finance, HRM, Change, Information Management• Within the research associated with this module, a time plan is likely to be a critical factor and reference to it should be made

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
MERIT/PASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis and research undertaken makes use of ‘desk-top’ data such as journals, financial papers, up-to-date, reliable and robust trade documents, as well as data obtained by use of the Internet. These are adequately referenced and listed in a bibliography• The research should be undertaken by reference to a range of ‘publications’ and the analysis of available information should lead to robust findings related to the organisation’s current marketing strategy and operational plans• The candidate should construct a PEST analysis and develop findings by reference to Porters ‘Five Force Analysis’, although this may not be as detailed as that expected for higher marks/grades• Research of the appropriate market segment/s should analyse the relevant trends in customer and competitor behaviour and indicate some impact that this has on the organisation’s current marketing strategy• Marketing options are explored and tested against the organisation’s existing strategic objectives• Some risk analysis is undertaken, including existing and potential barriers to success, appropriate to the industry’s planning horizons• The research/analysis relating to options for changes includes aspects taken from other Diploma modules, for instance Finance, HRM, and Information Management• The research associated with this module requires a time plan and this should be evident

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
FAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and research undertaken does not make sound use of ‘desk-top’ data such as trade journals, financial papers, up to date, reliable and robust trade documents or data obtained by using the Internet, but focuses on one or two documents only that may be out of date. There is an inadequate bibliography • What analysis is undertaken does not lead to robust findings that relate to the organisation’s current marketing strategy and operational plans • Whilst some attempt is made to develop a PEST analysis and there may even be some reference to Porters ‘Five Force Analysis’ , the analysis lacks robustness and any in-depth study • Research of the market segment/s does not focus on trends but only one or two datum points and lacks useful details relevant to customer and competitor behaviour for, say, the Director of Marketing • Marketing options are not explored or tested against the organisation’s existing current objectives • Little in-depth risk analysis of any type is undertaken • Inappropriate planning horizons are chosen in undertaking this research • The research/analysis is confined to details associated with this module alone, or, where it does relate to other modules, the analysis is inappropriate or superficial • The attention given to research, analysis and reading is out of balance at Diploma level in relation to the assignment writing

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
DISTINCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis/research clearly relates to the organisation’s current and possibly future marketing strategy, as well as its range of products and services currently provided and those projected in the organisation’s future plans • There is clear evidence that the candidate has used a range of information sources to verify findings (or at least infer their reliability) as they relate to the organisation and its activities • Findings appear to be of value and of potential use to the organisation in the immediate future and longer term • The PEST analysis directly relates to marketing within the appropriate industrial/commercial/NFP sectors and within appropriate marketing segments • Porter’s ‘Five Force Analysis’ is applied to appropriate sector/s, in sufficient detail for the findings to be of value to all sub-units of the organisation • In applying Porter’s Five Force Analysis and undertaking the PEST assessment, the candidate keeps in mind the level of this research (Diploma) and its general management nature rather than sees it as being part of a higher degree study in marketing. (i.e. it is not at MBA or Marketing Degree level) • Application of findings relates to current organisational practice and leads to the confirmation of existing policy/practice or identifies suitable options for change • When identifying findings and forming recommendations, these are accompanied by notes of caution where there is a lack of robust evidence to substantiate them – in other words caution should be expressed where appropriate and the need for further confirmatory evidence to support the findings is required • The organisation’s capacity for change forms a part of the analysis and this also includes relevant risk assessment • The candidate clearly provides evidence that indicates an understanding of how this module links with activities drawn from other Diploma modules

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
MERIT/PASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate’s analysis/research relates to the organisation’s marketing strategy, its current products and services and, for higher marks, includes consideration of the organisation’s future plans • Implicit or explicit evidence indicates that the candidate has used a range of information sources to verify findings and these are germane to the organisation • Findings appear to be of value to the organisation in the immediate future and possibly longer term operations/strategy • The PEST analysis relates to the industrial/commercial/NFP sectors in which the target organisation operates and includes implied or explicit reference to relevant marketing segments • Porter’s ‘Five Force Analysis’ is used within the appropriate sector and is of value to the organisation • In applying Porter’s Five Force Analysis and the PEST analysis and their implications, the depth/detail of the candidate's analysis may not be consistent but all aspects are included in one or another way and they are all in sufficient detail to infer reliability • Application of the research relates to current organisational practice and forms some recommendations in relation to existing policy/practice, as well as identifying options for change, if appropriate • Recommendations are sensible, clear and derived from the research but the candidate may not necessarily highlight the incidence of strengths or weaknesses in the findings • The candidate demonstrates a practical application/dimension of the recommendations that are made by assessing the organisation’s capacity for change, and to change, but the accompanying risk assessment may lack some more substantial details • The candidate provides some evidence that indicates their understanding of how this module relates to activities covered within some of the other Diploma modules

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
FAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate’s analysis/research relates to the organisation’s plans in general but lacks specific reference to the marketing aspects and in particular fails to cover the range of products/services • There is a lack of evidence that the candidate has used a range of information sources to verify findings • Findings appear to be general and lack sufficient detail to be of value to the organisation in the immediate future or in the longer term • The PEST analysis lacks specificity in that it does not relate to marketing within the industrial/commercial/NFP sectors of the target organisation/or its marketing segments • Porter’s ‘Five Force Analysis’ lacks sufficient detail; the findings do not derive from the research and they lack value to the organisation • In attempting to applying Porter’s Five Force Analysis and the PEST assessment, the candidate’s level of research lacks sufficient depth for the Diploma • Recommendations are not accompanied by notes of caution where there is a lack of robust evidence to substantiate them • A robust assessment of the organisation’s capacity for change, in the light of recommendations, does not form part of the report • The candidate fails to indicate how other managerial activities from the Diploma in Management qualification relate to the work of this module

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
DISTINCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate’s report articulates the organisation’s existing policy and practice and relates this to the sector/segment/s in which it is operating as well as any expansion or contraction within various planning horizons • The report contains robust, reliable, relevant and current information that is presented in suitable formats for such a report – for instance graphs indicating trends; financial data to indicate sector growth/contraction; tables setting out competitors existing and possible future activities; pie-graphs to communicate market penetration/reduction over time; product life cycle graphs; etc. • Where findings lack robustness due to the non-availability of evidence, this is clearly stated and, if appropriate, any further research/evidence that would be necessary to confirm such findings is stated • Findings/recommendations are articulated in sufficient detail to allow senior managers to form their own opinions/judgement from the report concerning this aspect of managing in the target organisation • In proposing any change to the marketing strategy, the proposal is accompanied by a clear, concise and precise assessment of the organisation’s capacity to change as well as an associated assessment of the risks accompanying any change and an assessment of risk if such changes are not undertaken. This should ideally include a ‘time-line’ and a highlighting of critical dates/times • If the candidate is to achieve the highest possible marks, the report should include an assessment of the implications for the sub-organisational units of the target organisation and, where appropriate, for other plant/sites associated with the organisation

Designation: - Option Module – **Marketing Strategy** (4268) - Overall Quality of the Report

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
MERIT/PASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The candidate's report identifies the organisation's current policy and relates this to the sector/segment/s in which it is operating. This may include reference to any expansion and/or contraction planned by the organisation• The report contains up-to-date information that is presented in suitable formats, but may not always use the best communication methods for a marketing type report (see above for some idea of the formats for presentation of data, findings, and recommendations)• In proposing any change to the marketing strategy, the report includes a clear assessment of the organisations capacity to change and an assessment of the risks associated with such proposals. Such an assessment identifies the possible critical dates by which decisions should be made and implemented• The candidate indicates by implication or explicit reference the impact any change may have on the rest of the organisation

Designation: - Option Module – **Marketing Strategy** (4268) - Overall Quality of the Report

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
FAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate's report identifies the organisation's current policy only superficially and whilst this may be related to the sector/segment/s in which the organisation is operating, it lacks sufficient detail for a report at Diploma in Management level. No reference is included that refers to any planned change in policy such as expansion and/or contraction • The report contains information/data that is not properly referenced and may therefore may be suspect in its reliability • The presentation of data/information may be in an unsuitable format, so that the reader can not readily extract the information they need. For instance, there is a lack of graphical information, tables or spread sheets • In proposing changes, the recommendation/s lack practical implementation as the report fails to include a suitable assessment of the organisation's capacity/potential for change and there is also a lack of identification of a suitable time liner and critical dates • There is no serious assessment of the risk/s associated with the proposed changes or the risks if they are not implemented • The candidate ignores, or only mentions in passing, the impact that any proposed changes may have on the rest of the organisation

