

Introduction

Candidate A

Topic – marketing mix of Marks and Spencer PLC

The candidate was awarded **0/2 marks**.

The candidate does not state what Marks and Spencer does.

The candidate does not analyse the 7 Ps of the marketing mix in the report itself, so is not awarded the purpose mark.

Candidate B

Topic – to assess the corporate social responsibility of Costa Coffee

The candidate was awarded **2/2 marks**.

The purpose of the report is given in the first sentence of the paragraph *'to assess the Corporate Social Responsibility of Costa Coffee and how this impacts the organisation.'* **(1 mark)**

A mark is awarded for a description of the activities of the company. It is clear that Costa Coffee sells coffee to the public through their outlets. **(1 mark)**

Research

Candidate A

Topic – marketing mix of Marks and Spencer PLC

The candidate is awarded **4/4 marks**.

The candidate is awarded a mark for explaining the value of the information being accessible:

'This information was easily accessible meaning I was able to check back regularly and keep track of new deals and promotions' (1 mark)

The candidate is awarded a further mark for explaining the website might be unreliable because it could be biased:

'The information on the company website could be unreliable as it could be heavily biased in favour the company because any negative comments would damage their reputation.' (1 mark)

The candidate is awarded a mark for explaining why the information is relevant:

'Asking relevant questions allowed me to see what the public think of Marks and Spencer's marketing mix' (1 mark)

The candidate is awarded a final mark for explaining why the information is valuable:

'at the current moment meaning the information is valuable as it is up to date.' (1 mark)

The value of the questionnaire is further explained by stating *'it also allowed me to get a variety of opinions of the business as I handed out the questionnaire to a mix of ages and genders.'* 1 mark would also have been awarded here but full marks have been reached.

Three valid points are made explaining the value of the competitor's website However, full marks for this section have already been reached:

'Using a competitor's website eg Sainsbury's allowed me to compare prices and webpage layouts between the two businesses.'

'This information is valuable as it was free to access... meaning it was cost effective.'

'The information on here could be incomplete as the company is in control of the information and could withhold information that shows them in a negative light.'

The first two points made about the Marks and Spencer visit are a repeat of each other. The mark is highlighted on the second point as it is slightly stronger although both would be valid. However, the candidate has already achieved full marks for this section:

'This is extremely helpful as it is first-hand information from a member of staff in the business who would have knowledge relevant to my topic.'

The final point made would also be worth a mark, however the candidate has already achieved full marks for this section:

'This method also allows me to focus on the key points of the marketing mix and ask more in depth questions based on the marketing mix that a customer might not be able to answer.'

Candidate B

Topic – to assess the corporate social responsibility of Costa Coffee

The candidate is awarded **3/4 marks**.

The candidate is awarded a mark for explaining the reason for the information being accurate is that it came from the company's own website:

'The company's website was very efficient as it was accurate considering it is established website the business itself meaning the content came directly from the organisation.' **(1 mark)**

The candidate is awarded a further mark for explaining the website might be biased as the company would give positive information:

'However, due to this being the company's website the information given could be bias as the company will try and give the most positive image the can of their business.' **(1 mark)**

The candidate was awarded a mark for explaining that old articles may contain out of date information:

'However, this article was from 2016 which means the given data could be outdated as things may have changed in the company from then.' **(1 mark)**

Analysis and interpretation

Candidate C

Topic – to evaluate the effectiveness of Sephora's marketing mix

The candidate is awarded **13/13 marks**.

The first three sentences in this section are findings. The candidate has then made the following points of analysis:

'This shows that the business is continuously adding to its product portfolio and diversifying its range meaning that it will reduce the risk of failure as if one product fails there are others that can maintain profitability and support the success of the business.' **(1 mark)**

'Furthermore, having so many different products and brands will appeal to a more diverse range of customers and will always be attracting new customers resulting in higher sales and increased profits.' **(1 mark)**

'Having so many Sephora label products also means that it will be easier to introduce new products as the brand is so established, reducing the risk of failure and increasing the likelihood of sales of the new product.' **(1 mark)**

There is no actual evidence to show that advertising will be expensive, so it is not analysis and therefore, the following point is not credited: *'However, advertising and promoting so many products and labels will be very expensive and will decrease the profitability of the company.'*

The candidate goes on to discuss pricing, starting with an analysis point before giving the finding:

'Sephora have premium pricing strategy and the products are targeted at upper and upper-middle class sections of society' **(1 mark)** for analysis. The finding follows this point, ie *'which is seen by the cost of their mascara at £27.50.'*

This point of analysis is then developed – *'have a high class image. This shows that although Sephora are a successful organisation, they do promote a luxurious profile and that their products will be unaffordable to some people.'* **(1 mark)**

Further development of the premium pricing strategy (which is analysis of the cost of the product) is then given with the following points:

'This means that Sephora are losing potential customers who may see them as too expensive.' **(1 mark)**

'This also means they may lose out on valuable market share to competitors who use low or competitive pricing.' **(1 mark)**

'However, by using a premium pricing strategy, Sephora are able to obtain a higher profit margin per unit' **(1 mark)**

The sentences *'Sephora have signed Khloe Kardashian... This shows that the company are using celebrity endorsements as a method of promotion.'* gives a finding, so no analysis mark is awarded.

The finding is analysed by the statement, *'By using Khloe Kardashian the company will attract additional customers as she has a massive 26.3 million followers on Twitter and this would influence people to buy the products she is promoting.'* **(1 mark)**

The next point, *'This will increase the sales'* is repetition of *'will attract additional customers'* and therefore does not attract a mark.

There is no evidence that signing a celebrity is expensive; the candidate has made an assumption therefore, no mark was awarded. The point that follows might be seen as a generic theory point, however it was awarded a mark as it does relate to the finding:

'this could be a risky strategy if Khloe Kardashian were to have any negative publicity, this would impact badly on the Sephora brand as they have no control over it, and it may put people off purchasing, reducing profits.' **(1 mark)**

The finding about Sephora's attitude to animal testing is analysed by:
'This shows that, where the company has a choice, they have good morals in terms of the protection of animals. This will benefit Sephora as it will promote them in an ethical light and positive image which will help and encourage sales.' **(1 mark)**

The finding about the look of Sephora's retail outlets is analysed by the candidate:

'They have a unique image offering a very customer friendly layout with easy access to products, which may encourage impulse purchases,' **(1 mark)**

'This also shows that the company have considered diverse customer needs in terms of busy lifestyles offering a relaxed and inviting atmosphere, and also the opportunity for customers to attend their stores and make a quick purchase. This will encourage repeat custom, increasing sales and brand loyalty.' **(1 mark)**

The next paragraph *'Sephora invest heavily in their staff...'* does not relate to the topic of the project and therefore gains no marks. The candidate refers to Human Resources and not the marketing mix.

The next finding about Sephora offering free facials and makeup trials is analysed by the following two points. However, full marks for the section have already been reached:

'This shows that the company values its customers, giving them a good reputation and will encourage customer loyalty.' Although brand loyalty was awarded earlier, this point is valid as it is analysis of a different source.

'many customers may accept the free makeup trials and then leave the store without purchasing. This means that staff time and products are being wasted, with no guaranteed sale'

The finding about online shopping at Sephora are analysed by: *'they encourage additional sales with their free shipping'* and *'This also shows that Sephora are reaching out to additional custom for those who prefer to shop online and for those who do not have a Sephora store where they live, widening their target market and increasing sales.'* However, full marks for the section have already been reached.

The next point the candidate made is a recommendation and therefore gains no mark in this section – *‘Sephora will have to employ many people’*

No mark was awarded for *‘profits will have decreased’* as this is an assumption and not supported by evidence.

The next paragraph starts with a finding – *‘Sephora currently have over 2000 stores’*. This is then analysed – *‘The impact of having stores in so many locations is that they will be able to maximise sales and profits by reaching customers across the world.’* No additional marks are awarded as full marks for this section have already been reached.

A final finding is given – *‘Sephora recently opened a new store in Romania’*. This is analysed by:

‘This demonstrates their organic growth and shows that although the company is successful and already have numerous stores across the world they continue to display innovation with the progression and expansion...’

No additional marks are awarded here as full marks for this section have already been reached.

Candidate D

Topic – impact of external factors in Ted Baker PLC using PESTEC analysis

The candidate is awarded **0/13 marks**.

The first three sections on Political, Economic and Social factors are mainly general theory points, with one finding, therefore no marks were awarded as there is no analysis.

The paragraph about technology describes existing technology which Ted Baker has, therefore it is an internal factor and not an external one, and so it is not relevant to the report. This paragraph also contains general theory points.

The remaining two paragraphs on Environmental and Competitive factors contain findings with no analysis and findings, which are not supported with evidence therefore, no marks were awarded.

Conclusions and recommendations

Candidate C

Topic – to evaluate the effectiveness of Sephora’s marketing mix

The candidate is awarded **10/10 marks**.

‘I recommend that Sephora should expand their custom to a wider audience by bringing out a range of competitively priced own label products.’ (1 mark). This recommendation is justified by stating that *‘Increased sales due to decreased prices will assist with their aim of maximising profits.’* Earlier in the report it states that Sephora target upper and upper-middle class sections, so this recommendation is further justified by the statement *‘This would allow Sephora to target different societal classes’*.

A further development of the first recommendation is awarded a mark:

‘there could be a negative element linked to this which must be considered if they were to follow this recommendation. Sephora has a high class luxurious image and by promoting reduced prices this could adversely affect the upper class image of the company and ultimately deter existing upper class custom.’ (1 mark)

‘I recommend that the company considers a male celebrity... to help progress the marketing and sales of their male products’ is awarded **1 mark**. This is justified by saying that they already use celebrity endorsement but they are all female. The second sentence is repetition.

‘I recommend that Sephora focus on more cost effective methods of promotion’ is awarded **1 mark**. This is justified as the candidate states how expensive celebrity endorsement is in the analysis section. Although not credited in the analysis section, the candidate is not penalised for making a recommendation on the point.

Further recommendations on promotion are given marks:

‘I recommend they create a hashtag... which is a free way of customers propelling ‘hype’ around the product and increasing brand awareness.’ (1 mark)

‘This would also encourage new customers to purchase after clicking on the hashtag.’ (1 mark)

The candidate was not awarded marks for points about Human Resources in the analysis section. However, their recommendation based on this is given a mark so as not to penalise the candidate twice:

‘I recommend that Sephora build on this and introduce a long service award scheme such as a cash bonus once an employee has worked with the company for 10 years.’ (1 mark)

Two further development points were awarded marks:

‘This would further assist with employee’s loyalty to the company and reduce staff turnover.’ (1 mark)

'This could also assist in attracting new highly skilled recruits to the company who would be able to bring fresh perspective and innovative product and marketing ideas to build on Sephora's success.' **(1 mark)**

The conclusions about free makeup trials is a repeat of an analysis point and therefore does not gain a mark. However, the justified recommendation coming from it does:

'I recommend that these services are not free, but marketed on a minimum purchase offer. This way the customer is still receiving a facial or makeover, increasing customer satisfaction and the company are making a sale and building on their profitability.' **(1 mark)**

Full marks are reached at this point.

The following point is a justified recommendation, however no further marks are awarded as full marks for this section have already been reached:

'I recommend that the more a customer spends, the longer their facial/make up trial may be, encouraging customers to spend as much as possible, increasing profits.'

The candidate attempts to make a conclusion however, it is a repeated finding and gains no marks:

'I conclude that Sephora do market promotional offers on their website such as discounts and free shipping'

The candidate makes a further justified recommendation however, no further marks are awarded as full marks for this section have already been reached:

'I recommend they do limited time offers where customers can buy one product and get one free. This would assist in customer loyalty and improve sales and profits'

'This would also encourage customers to try new and different products' – is a repeated point (customers buying more).

One further correct point is made, but no further marks are awarded as full marks for this section have already been reached:

'By only running the offer for limited times, this may increase the number of times people access the website to check if the deal is running, which may result in other impulse purchases, increasing sales.'

The final recommendation regarding animal testing was not awarded a mark. Sephora sell in China where animal testing is a legal requirement so it would be controversial to recommend becoming 100% free from animal testing when they sell in this market.

Candidate D

Topic – impact of external factors in Ted Baker PLC using PESTEC analysis

The candidate is awarded **7/10 marks**.

The candidate has been awarded recommendation marks consequentially in this section. As the recommendations are based on the candidate's attempt at analysis, marks were awarded for the following:

'Ted Baker could increase their yearly profit by having less staff in stores that are not needed this will make Ted Bakers yearly profit increase due to not having to pay a lot of staff.' **(1 mark)**

'Ted Baker could also cut back on cost that they don't need i.e. if they bought too much material; they can look at previous years and make cuts' **(1 mark)**

'They could combat this by having factories in the countries they sell in which will cut the cost of foreign exchange rates and will increase the yearly profits.' **(1 mark)**

'Ted Baker could bring in a pensioners collection which would bring in a larger market for Ted Baker as the UK age population is growing, find out what they would like and what they would want.' **(1 mark)**

However a mark is not awarded for *'bringing in a gender neutral collection as there are more and more people coming out as LGBTQ+'* as there is no evidence of this earlier in the report. It is seen as *'new'* information.

'Ted Baker could also set up social media pages to post about sales, new collections, new products etc. this would notify the customers when they have new stock and improve their yearly profits.' **(1 mark)**

'I suggest Ted Baker continues to join these groups and keep reducing the general waste, water and carbon they use.' **(1 mark)**

A mark is not awarded for *'Ted Baker should keep track of their carbon footprint as this shows customers they care about the environment'* as it is a repeated point of one above.

'Ted Baker can further improve this by... bringing in new collections/products and being better than the other competitors. Making Ted Baker more affordable for more customers to come in and buy products.' **(1 mark)**