



Module report for April 2019 assessment session

Level: Certificate in Professional Marketing

Module: Integrated Communications

Please refer to the April 2019 assessment

Overarching performance:

The overall pass rate is consistent with previous sessions. It is pleasing that the number of distinctions is increasing, more so if there were a higher proportion of submissions attaining a distinction.

Factors contributing to the low number of distinctions are the same as in previous sessions:

- lack of higher level skills (for example, assess)
- lack of attention to aspects of some questions (for example, how external communication messages may differ at each stage of the product life cycle)
- lack of well-constructed purposeful and implementable communication methods, media and tools.

Key points:

Candidates are advised to take full advantage of the available word count and use it effectively- allocate the word count for a task in accordance with the way the marks are allocated.

It is important that candidates have a clear focus on the direct requirements of each question. For example, a number of candidates discussed the product life cycle in response to Task 2b but neglected to demonstrate how the external communication message for one product/service may differ at each stage.

Task 3b clearly states the elements of an integrated marketing communication plan that should be focused upon and too many candidates devoted too much of the word count to elements of an integrated marketing communication plan such as a situational analysis.

Task	Strengths	Weaknesses
Task 1	a) Clear signs of research into the chosen organisation.	a) Not using the required headings, lack of detail, poor utilisation of the page allocated,

	Clearly structured around the headings given in the guidance notes. b) The suitability of two methods of internal communication were well assessed in terms of their suitability for the chosen organisation using a range of relevant criteria. c) Human and financial resources required to support successful integrated communications were selected and it was clearly demonstrated how and why they were relevant.	under-utilisation of the page allocated. Under emphasising the headings given in the guidance and overemphasising 'other relevant information'. b) Two methods of internal communication were described in general terms. c) A number of human and financial resources were outlined in general terms. Links to integrated communication was often unclear.
Task 2	a) Well informed description of relevant brand building theories such as those listed in the guidance notes. Benefits that branding can bring clearly highlighted in the specific context of the chosen organisation. b) Clearly stating the one chosen product/service. Good understanding of the product life cycle and clear demonstration of how external messages may differ at each stage. c) A well-structured creative brief with a clear focus on the product/service referred to in Task 2b at one stage of the product life cycle.	a) Generic description (often of only one method) and unapplied diagrams. The benefits branding can bring often not highlighted. b) Generic descriptions of the product life cycle with no direct reference to external communication messages. c) A poorly structured creative brief with no clear focus on a particular stage of the product life cycle. There were some submissions that described a creative brief rather than developing one.
Format and presentation	Well-structured, well-presented and well- referenced submissions that had been both spell-checked and proof read.	Given the use of word count for all but Task 1a, it is disappointing to see more use not being made of line breaks and headings/sub headings in order to improve the

		overall presentation of submissions. Some submissions containing illegible and unreferenced diagrams. Numerous typographical errors and confusion between a marketing plan and a marketing communications plan. Use of forms of referencing other than the required Harvard referencing.
Task	General Issues	
Task 1	a) Lack of adherence to the list of headings, given in the guidance notes, that must be used. Signs of organisation summaries being 'recycled' from other modules, rather than specifically written in accordance with the guidance notes given in this assignment brief. b) Lack of assessment with signs of simply describing, with no real consideration of the chosen organisation. c) Lack of awareness of what human and financial resources are required to support successful integrated communications. Many candidates tended to be able identify budget as a required financial resource, but a number were able to clearly demonstrate why the human resources they referred to were required.	
Task 2	a) It is important that answers are informed by relevant theory, particularly when 'methods' are referred to within the question. Also, when a question asks for benefits it is helpful to directly refer to benefits rather than, for example, advantages. Attention must be paid to the language used in the question – this question referred to methods – plural. b) Lack of a clear focus on the element of the question referring to how external communication messages may differ at each stage of the product life cycle. Not clearly stating the product/service that was the focus of the answer. c) Lack of focus on the part of the question referring to one stage of the product life cycle. Lack of focus on 'using appropriate emotional or informational appeals'.	
Task 3	a) Lack of focus on maintaining corporate reputation leading to general communication methods being referred to with no real clear signs of why. b) Lack of focus on the elements referred to with the question. Lack of SMART marketing communication objectives. There was also a	

	trend to providing a to do list rather than an implementation schedule.
Format and presentation	Poor allocation of the given word count across the various parts of a task. The available word count should be allocated in accordance with the way the marks are allocated to the various parts of the task. Submissions containing numerous typographical errors, misaligned margins and not adhering to aspects of the CIM page count policy. References from sources that are not sufficiently relevant and/or reliable. For example, Wikipedia, blogs, lesson slides. Not stating the word count for each task.
Task	General Recommendations
Task 1	a) Do take the time to read the associated guidance notes carefully. Use the headings that 'must be used'. Make effective use of the 1 page allocated to this part of Task 1. Take full advantage of this opportunity to make a good first impression with a clear, well-informed effective organisational background. Aim to be as specific and detailed as possible and ensure that tables/charts add sufficient value given the space devoted to them. b) Ensure you understand what assessment verbs/command words such as assess require. Simply describing when asked to assess will limited the marks available. c) Do pay attention to all aspects of a task. For example, this task referred to successful integrated communications. Therefore, it should be clear how each resource supports successful integrated communication. With tasks like this where no further mark breakdown is given, aim to give approximately equal emphasis to human resources and financial resources.
Task 2	a) Do take the opportunity to show your knowledge and understanding of relevant theory and your ability to apply that theory to your chosen organisation. b) Do ensure all elements of the question are directly addressed. It can be helpful to use the assignment brief as a checklist. c) Do some research to find an appropriate structure for a creative brief and ensure the different elements are completed well. Remember that a creative brief is a key document. If the creative brief is poor the response to the brief may also be poor.
Task 3	a) Do have a clear focus on the direct requirements of the question and make that focus clear. b) Do have a clear focus on the question and the associated guidance. Avoid providing general suggestions such as 'newspaper advertising'. Try and think in terms of being able to hand your

	answer to a colleague who should be able to implement and measure the success of the plan.
Format and presentation	Submissions should be spell checked and proof read prior to submission. Spell check alone is unlikely to identify all errors. Printed copies should also be checked carefully to ensure legibility and that all pages are in order. Good use should be made of headings and subheadings to make it as easy as possible for examiners to navigate their way through submissions. It is the responsibility of the author of the report to make it easy for the examiner to see how all elements of each question have been answered in accordance with the guidance. Referencing should be in accordance with Harvard referencing. Footnotes are not an acceptable form of referencing. All text and diagrams taken from other sources should be referenced. All sources of information should be relevant and reliable. Blogs, for example, by their very nature are not reliable. Unless the assignment brief specifies otherwise each task should be written as a 'standalone' answer. Real names MUST NOT be included. Word count for each task and the assignment in total to be clearly stated.