

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 4

Cambridge International AS & A Level Business 9609

For examination from 2023



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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Business, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the syllabus requirements. This document helps teachers to assess the standards required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme.

In this booklet candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2023 exam series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with examiner comments about where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by comments on how the answer could be improved. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates for each question.

Please refer to the June 2023 Examiner Report for further details and guidance.

The questions and mark schemes are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

9609 June 2023 Question Paper 42
9609 June 2023 Mark Scheme 42

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you a high-, middle- and low-level response for each question. The candidate answers are set in a table. In the left-hand column are the candidate answers, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high

1	Leadership refers to how a either formal or informal leader chooses to guide and inspire employees.
1	BV's managing director, Rohit, in 2020 is named entrepreneur of the year by a business magazine in an article where praise was highlighted for his emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence consists of needing good social and human skills needed , and by having high levels of emotional effectively of strategic h levels or to a

Responses are written by real candidates in exam conditions, demonstrating the types of answers for each level. These could be used to discuss and analyse the answers with learners in the classroom to improve their skills.

Examiner comments

1 The candidate gives a definition of leadership. AO1 (knowledge and understanding) can be awarded for knowledge of leadership and the elements of leadership and for knowledge of strategic management. To be awarded all of the AO1 marks, candidates need to show both of these.

Examiner comments explain where and why marks were awarded. These help to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams to help learners refine their exam technique.

How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate did not attempt to analyse the overall impact of BV's leadership strategy on BV in their answer. Three elements of BV's leadership were analysed well, but that was only enough for Level 2 AO3.
- In this case, it was not about analysing the impact of elements of strategy (like emotional intelligence and organisational structure), it should be about analysing what was good and what was bad about BV's leadership as a whole. Candidates who did this achieved Level 3 AO3 and marks in the top level of this skill.

This section explains how the candidate could improve each response. It helps learners to improve their exam technique.

Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

A strategy is a combination of many elements. When candidates are asked to analyse and evaluate strategy, we expect them to bring those elements together and develop arguments about the strategy as a whole. This is one of the main differences between the other papers in this suite of examinations and this one. The strategic approach required to be successful in this paper must be recognised and candidates should be taught to widen their answers to encompass more than just individual strands of analysis and evaluation.

This section lists common mistakes as well as helpful guidance from the examiner. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes. You can use this alongside the relevant Examiner Report to guide your learners.

Question 1

Example Candidate Response – high

1	Leadership refers to how a either formal or informal leader chooses to guide and inspire employees.
1	BV's managing director, Rohit, in 2020 is named entrepreneur of the year by a business magazine in an article where praise was highlighted for his emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence consists of needing good social and human skills needed , and by having high levels of emotional effectively of strategic h levels or to a
2	It would allow for Rohit to effectively implement a much more effective degree of strategic management. Having a leader with high levels of emotional intelligence, is likely to lead to a better relationship with employees, subsequently increasing possibilities of employees being motivated to increase their levels of productivity, and even reducing high levels of labour turnover which is a common issue in the restaurant/food chain industry. Therefore it can be argued that Rohit's high levels of emotional leadership is likely to have improved relations with employees which is a vital factor in aiding effective strategic management.
3	In 2021, Rohit sells 45% of BV to a Venture Capitalist in order to raise capital to finance growth. This was likely used as capital raised from a venture capitalist is permanent finance, that does not need to be paid back. Leadership from this scenario would can also be argued to be important in contributing to effective strategic management as it is most likely that decision making would now need to be discussed

Examiner comments

1 The candidate gives a definition of leadership. AO1 (knowledge and understanding) can be awarded for knowledge of leadership and the elements of leadership and for knowledge of strategic management. To be awarded all of the AO1 marks, candidates need to show both of these.

2 AO2 application is awarded for applying knowledge of leadership or strategic management to the scenario of BV. Repeating pieces of the data is not application. However, since the candidate shows knowledge of leadership, this application of Rohit's emotional intelligence can be awarded.

3 Here is the start of a chain of analysis about the impact of Rohit's emotional intelligence on BV. In this case the employees are more motivated, leading to more productivity, reducing levels of labour turnover. This is a good example of Level 2 analysis, which is a developed chain of analysis based on an individual element, in this case emotional intelligence.

4 This is a judgement, but it only has limited supporting evidence. The question asks candidates to evaluate the extent to which leadership contributed to BV's effective strategic management and this judgement is only about a small part of leadership – emotional intelligence. Therefore, it can only be based on limited supporting evidence.

5 The candidate applies their knowledge of leadership to the data about BV. In this case the candidate chooses decision-making as an element of leadership (although there is no explicit knowledge of this given by the candidate) and Rohit's decision to sell 45% of the company.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

with an additional individual. ~~leader~~ ^{Effective} leadership with the new venture capitalist would be vital to reduce any potential conflicts and also communicating to all employees the purpose of selling 45% of BV so that ~~Rohit~~ can clearly communicate the objective of wanting to grow BV. This sense of direction provided through effective strategic management would likely to have led to motivating employees, especially managers to help BV reach in achieving its growth, effective leadership would also have resulted in any worries about employees being dealt with, with this would have reduced risks of low morale, low productivity or even worries about job security. Overall effective leadership in 2021 was much needed in contributing to effective strategic management.

In 2016, A new organisational structure was implemented, appearing to be a hierarchical structure. A hierarchical structure is a structure where all employees are managed by someone above them in the organisational hierarchy. Effective strategic management would require ~~str~~ effective leadership when going through such substantial change. A hierarchical structure has potential to severely hurt employees' motivation, especially those towards the bottom or near the bottom of the organisation hierarchy, as they would likely feel remote from employees at the top which could have led to a significantly negative impact on motivation which subsequently may have impacted levels of higher labour turnover and absenteeism. Therefore it ^{could have been} essential for BV to provide clear communication to all employees and prevent potential issues of low morale which over long term, may have led to productivity and

Examiner comments

6 The candidate starts another chain of analysis, this time about Rohit's decision-making. Again the chain of analysis develops, but it is just about the one element of leadership, so it can only be awarded at Level 2 AO3.

7 To be awarded all of the AO1 marks, the candidate needs to demonstrate knowledge of both leadership and strategic management. Although the knowledge is limited here, it is awarded as the candidate shows knowledge of strategic management (providing a sense of direction). It would have been better if the candidate had given a better definition of what strategic management actually is.

8 While this is a judgement that uses the wording of the question, it does not have any supporting evidence. It makes a simple statement and expects the examiner to connect this to the previous point. Good evaluation would make this link clear.

9 The candidate offers another piece of knowledge about leadership. All the AO1 marks are awarded at this point in the response.

10 The candidate gives another chain of analysis that develops from leaders needing to effectively manage change.

11 The candidate makes another judgement about the importance of leadership, this time with limited supporting evidence. However, this only reaches Level 1 AO4 because it is a repetition of the previous analytical point. Good evaluation should make a judgement and then explore how that judgement was made, weighing up different perspectives and arguments.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

efficiency problems.

Overall it is clear that leadership would have had a significant impact to BV's effective strategic management between 2009 and 2022. BV was clearly a business motivated to grow, meaning changes were likely to occur frequently and hence needing effective management leadership to allow for strategic management. With the continuous ambitious growth, it could have led to a potential internal diseconomies of scale, regarding too having too much to manage and the workforce feeling alienated, which would have likely hurt most employees' morale, ~~how~~ therefore showing the extent of importance of needing a leadership style based on clear communication and high emotional intelligence, resulting in more effective strategic management. Furthermore paying workers in 2020-2021 during a global pandemic throughout BV's closure likely saved employees how much leaders of BV, value of employees which would have likely improved their commitment and attitude towards being employed at BV, consistently through 2009 to 2022 strong leadership played a large contribution in effective strategic management.

Examiner comments

12 This is a good conclusion. It starts with a judgement that answers the question. The candidate then explains why they made the judgement – this is the supporting evidence (because BV was clearly a business motivated to grow). This is Level 1 AO4. The candidate then develops this further by stating that the potential diseconomies of scale that could have come from the expansion merits the importance of leadership to BV. This is Level 2 AO4. It is not the only way to develop an evaluative comment, but it was the method chosen by this candidate. However, to get into Level 3 the candidate must explicitly use context within their evaluation and this occurs when specific reference is made to Rohit's emotional intelligence. At that point the candidate is awarded the bottom of Level 3 AO4.

13 The candidate continues to develop their evaluation and uses another explicit piece of context (paying workers through the pandemic) further showing the importance of leadership. This pushes the answer to the top of Level 3 AO4.

Mark for AO1 = 3 out of 3

Mark for AO2 = 2 out of 2

Mark for AO3 = 6 out of 8

Mark for AO4 = 7 out of 7

Total mark awarded = 18 out of 20

How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate did not attempt to analyse the overall impact of BV's leadership strategy on BV in their answer. Three elements of BV's leadership were analysed well, but that was only enough for Level 2 AO3.
- In this case, it was not about analysing the impact of elements of strategy (like emotional intelligence and organisational structure), it should be about analysing what was good and what was bad about BV's leadership as a whole. Candidates who did this achieved Level 3 AO3 and marks in the top level of this skill.

- Despite being awarded all the AO4 marks in this response, the evaluation could have been improved. The best evaluations looked at how the judgement might change depending on different perspectives. One such approach would be to suggest how important leadership might be to BV in the short-term, compared to the long-term. Another approach was to argue that different stakeholders may value the contribution of leadership in different ways; perhaps the employees see leadership as crucial to BV's strategic management. Whereas the customers, who may not have any interaction with BV's leaders, may not see it as important at all.
- Candidates should not leave all the evaluation until the end of their response. This candidate attempted to evaluate earlier in their answer, but it was done too quickly and seemed to be perfunctory. Making judgements and evaluative comments throughout an answer is sensible and makes for a better strategic response.

Example Candidate Response – middle

1 Leadership is very important for effective strategic management. For BV, leadership has contributed to a significant extent to its strategic management between 2009 and 2022.

2 Leadership was very important for BV's strategic management for several reasons. Leadership is how the manager leads the company and therefore several ways of doing that. Leadership also links with corporate culture and franchisees are told that they have a distinct corporate culture and must work with that. In 2010, Rohit's emotional intelligence was highlighted in a business magazine article. This suggests that Rohit is very self-aware and also aware of others. This might mean that workers feel included and cared about which would increase their support for the business and any change. In 2016, a new organisational structure was implemented, and there are restaurant supervisors that are responsible for restaurant workers. This gives authority and it's a power culture where people are given power and authority. This, in turn, makes strategic management more effective because people are less likely to resist change. In 2020-2021, Rohit decided to pay BV's employees throughout the closure which shows that he's a good leader who cares about his employees, which increases their support for the business. Therefore, for these reasons, leadership has contributed to BV's effective strategic management.

3 However, there were other factors that contributed to BV's strategic management as well. In 2010, Rohit set a long-term aim to transform BV into a major brand in every US city. A part of strategic management is following the set aims, and it doesn't include being a good leader. Also, in 2011, they opened two more

Examiner comments

- The first two sentences in this response do not add to the quality of the response at all. They merely reword the question which should be avoided.
- This is a good example of tautology as the candidate uses the same words to try and define something. By stating that 'leadership is how the manager leads the company', the candidate shows no knowledge and wastes time.
- The candidate simply states that leadership is linked with these other areas of the specification.
- There is some knowledge in this statement and in this case it is knowledge of emotional intelligence. This is an element of leadership and can be awarded a knowledge mark. Many candidates choose to start their answer with a definition.
- The candidate attempts analysis here. However, increasing the employees' support for the business is not a good enough impact to award any analysis marks yet.
- The candidate applies their knowledge to the organisation chart and shows that they understand what it is showing. This is the skill of application (AO2).
- The candidate demonstrates knowledge (AO1) about types of culture.
- A very simple piece of Level 1 AO3, showing that this may make employees less resistant to change. The candidate could develop this through a chain of analysis by looking at how this may have effected BV.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

9	shows that he's a good leader who cares about his employees, which increases their support for the business. Therefore, for these reasons, leadership has contributed to BV's effective strategic management. However, there were other factors that contributed to BV's success. Strategic management is well in 2010, but it's not just management, it's also about the business. Set a long-term aim to transform BV into a major brand in every US city. A part of strategic management is following the set aims, and it doesn't include being a good leader. Also, in 2011, they opened two more restaurants and sold 45% of BV to a venture capitalist. This, again, is following the aims set after strategic analysis. Between 2011-2014, BV opened 13 more restaurants; in 2015, they became a PLC and they started to market its franchise model. All this is not about employees or being a good leader, it's about achieving the aims set for growth. In 2020-2021, they started a joint venture with a delivery business, and in 2021-2022, they continued focusing on selling franchises. Their strategy was to increase BV's growth, which is exactly what they're doing with all these actions. Therefore, their growth strategy and actions to achieve it have also contributed to effective strategic management.
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Examiner comments

- 9 The candidate offers another piece of application by relating this to Rohit paying employees through the pandemic. As long as it is relevant, and knowledge has been demonstrated, candidates can gain their AO2 marks using any of the data given in the context. At this point in the response, all of the AO2 marks are awarded.
- 10 The candidate attempts to define what strategic management is, and is awarded with AO1 marks. To gain all of the AO1 marks in this question, knowledge about both leadership and strategic management has to be demonstrated. This candidate does this, so all of the AO1 marks are awarded.
- 11 The candidate's response loses focus on the question. The fact that BV sold 45% to a venture capitalist and became a public limited company (PLC) may be relevant, but the candidate has not made the relevance clear. In fact, the candidate states 'all this is not about employees or being a good leader'. Perhaps they mean that therefore this shows that leadership did not contribute to the strategic management of BV, but this is not clear.
- 12 The question asks about the extent to which leadership contributed to the effective strategic management of BV. The candidate may have been trying to argue that it did not, because other things were more important. However, because they do not state this, their answer does not answer the question.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

13	To evaluate leadership did contribute to BV's effective management because employees felt more involved and thus were more likely to support the business and less likely to resist change, such as growth strategies. However, the growth strategies themselves were very important, because without them, BV wouldn't have anything to strategically manage to start with.
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Examiner comments

- 13 The candidate states what they are doing. 'To evaluate' is a perfectly reasonable way to start a piece of evaluation and makes it very clear what skill the candidate is attempting to demonstrate.
- 14 This paragraph achieves Level 2 AO4. It contains a judgement with better than limited supporting evidence. There is some development, bringing together some of the arguments that were attempted earlier in the response. Although good evaluation often does follow on from good analysis, we are assessing each skill separately in this examination. Therefore, despite the relatively weak attempts at analysis earlier in the response, this conclusion is awarded Level 2 AO4.
- Mark for AO1 = 3 out of 3
- Mark for AO2 = 2 out of 2
- Mark for AO3 = 2 out of 8
- Mark for AO4 = 3 out of 7
- Total mark awarded = 10 out of 20**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- Marks could only be awarded for what the candidate wrote, there can be no 'reading between the lines' or attempts to interpret what they may have meant. It was essential that every sentence the candidate wrote in answer to a question was linked to answering that question. Sometimes this might make an answer sound repetitive, but it keeps the candidate on track and it is not unreasonable to continuously refer back to the wording of that question to make sure it is being answered. Candidates must be very careful to keep their answer relevant.
- The skills of analysis and evaluation are separate and, in this examination, did not depend on each other. Too often, candidates mixed up their analysis and evaluation and did not really know where one finished and the other started. Teaching the clear distinction between analysis and evaluation would help candidates be more successful in this examination.

Example Candidate Response – low

1	1	Back in 2009, Rohit had come up with the idea for BV and made it a reality.
	2	As time progresses and he wins Entrepreneur of the Year for his emotional intelligence, which demonstrates he is in the right position in his company and knows what he's doing it becomes more apparent that he is confident in his work and is able to make decisions and justify them.
	3	During the pandemic, he still displayed a strong work ethic by agreeing to start the takeaway business. A very clever and innovative idea. He also ensured his employees were taken care of during those hard times by continuing to pay them throughout closure.
	4	Also due to the popularity of vegan food in the U.S., Rohit's decision to have the takeaway business was an incredibly smart choice.
	5	As a leader, you have to be ready to make choices for a company that stands on your shoulders. Rohit did exactly that when he sold 45% of BV in 2011 to help finance growth.
	6	
	7	

Examiner comments

- 1 This is not linked to answering the question and the candidate cannot be awarded marks for any of the skill areas.
- 2 The candidate shows some knowledge of decision-making as an aspect of leadership.
- 3 The candidate shows knowledge about a leader needing a strong work ethic.
- 4 The candidate applies their knowledge of the data about BV and Rohit's decision to pay his employees throughout the pandemic. However, they do not analyse why this is important, or the effect this has on BV.
- 5 Stating that his decision was a 'smart choice' lacks the sophistication required as it does not explain why it was a smart choice or how it helped the business to have a motivated and loyal workforce that reduced labour turnover. Candidates should understand what leadership is and also how good and bad leadership can effect a business. This is the skill of analysis that is being examined here.
- 6 The candidate shows more knowledge of leadership. However, as they already show two pieces of knowledge about leadership, the only way to improve their AO1 mark is to show knowledge of the other part of the question which is strategic management. Every aspect of a question must be covered to be awarded all of the marks for AO1.
- 7 The candidate offers a second piece of application. All of the AO2 marks were awarded by this point.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

	8	He is incredibly hands on and actually cares about what happens to and goes on within his company.
	9	He continues to display great leadership skills through BV's 2016 organisational structure by ensuring that everything that happens is for the better of the company whilst also making sure his employees and everyone inbetween all know where they're at and are on the same page.
	10	Overall, I think leadership contributed strongly to BV's effective strategic management and allowed and encouraged the company to flourish into the booming success it is today.

Examiner comments

- 8 This is a common-sense approach to this question and suggests that the candidate is not using the skills required at this level to answer it.
 - 9 The candidate does not offer a real impact on the business at the expected level. 'For the better of the company' is too vague as an impact of leadership.
 - 10 The final sentence is awarded Level 1 AO4 for 1 mark. It is a judgement and there is a touch of limited supporting evidence, however, it is very limited.
- Mark for AO1 = 2 out of 3
Mark for AO2 = 2 out of 2
Mark for AO3 = 0 out of 8
Mark for AO4 = 1 out of 7
- Total mark awarded = 5 out of 20**

How the candidate could improve their answer

- Candidates sometimes find it difficult to start answers to questions such as these. There was no one optimal way, but a definition would be a good way to start an answer. It could help the candidate think about the right area of the syllabus and, as long as it is relevant and correct, should guarantee some AO1 marks are awarded. Each sentence of a response should add to the marks awarded.
- It was expected that candidates who have studied A Level Business develop an appropriate vocabulary. This does not just mean using the words from the syllabus, but also a vocabulary that can analyse and evaluate. The average person who has not studied this subject will often say that a business is 'good' or 'bad', but International A Level Business candidates should be able to delve deeper. Chains of analysis should be built using concepts such as revenue, profit, motivation, success, and many others.

Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

A strategy is a combination of many elements. When candidates are asked to analyse and evaluate strategy, we expect them to bring those elements together and develop arguments about the strategy as a whole. This is one of the main differences between the other papers in this suite of examinations and this one. The strategic approach required to be successful in this paper must be recognised and candidates should be taught to widen their answers to encompass more than just individual strands of analysis and evaluation.

Question 2

Example Candidate Response – high

Examiner comments

2	When choosing to enter an international market, businesses need to decide by keeping a standardised identity and going with a pan-global marketing strategy or adapting and choosing a local-globalisation strategy, meaning adapting a strategy suitable for a new market, where there are different political, economic, social and cultural factors.
1	
	IF choosing a Pan Global marketing strategy when entering the market in Country X, BV will only have to spend \$2 million in comparison to \$4 million if using a local-globalisation strategy. Substantia. Therefore it can be argued a pan global strategy will be a more cost effective marketing strategy, allowing BV to pre reduce opportunity costs when expanding to Country X, by reducing costs BV can put a stronger amount of finance into other aspects which can help growth in Country X. From the decision tree constructed, if the project is successful BV will make \$5 million, meaning a \$3 profit can be made, which can be used to drive further growth and capitalise on further opportunities. Furthermore there is little competition in the Vegan market in Country X, so it can be argued that substantial costs of a pan local-globalisation strategy may not be required, as a pan-global marketing strategy is also likely to attract customers, leading to a higher profit margin potential as lower costs can be put in to achieve similar results.
2	
3	
4	

1 The majority of this introduction repeats the question and data. However, the candidate shows some AO1 knowledge at the end of the paragraph when they assert that the local-globalisation strategy may be suitable where there are different external influences.

2 Selectively using appropriate figures from the data can be AO2 application and, on this occasion the data shows that the pan global strategy would be more cost effective.

3 The candidate offers a chain of analysis about the impact a more cost-effective strategy would have on BV.

4 Level 3 AO3 requires not just the analysis of one piece of data, but of the entire strategy. The candidate brings together the higher profit margin with the cost-effective element to give a wider piece of analysis and reaches Level 3.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

	However developing a marketing strategy to maintain local differences in Country X can allow for other potential benefits. By adapting to local culture tastes, the marketing strategy for BV will be reduced as shown by the decision tree; when due to when adapting to local tastes, the consumers are likely to be more attracted and have a desire, leading to higher potential sales. Furthermore as Country X has very low brand awareness of BV, it would seem that employing a strategy adapting to local needs is more appropriate. However, a significant disadvantage to BV employing a strategy adapting to local tastes, BV will need to to finance a much higher cost, this increase in cost will reduce opportunity for enjoying economies of scale, allowing for costs to be reduced but rather having to spend double on this marketing strategy, creating an opportunity risk, leading to a potentially higher risk, as more sales will be needed to make a profit in Country X.
5	
	Both strategies have clear advantages and disadvantages to BV when choosing to enter to operate in Country X. I would advise for the board or directors to use a Pan-global strategy when BV enters the market in Country X, for based on quantitative factors. Quantitative benefits of using a pan Pan-global marketing strategy include lower cost and a possibility to make a profit of \$3 million rather than \$2 million, despite facing a 10% higher risk of failure. This will mean that however BV
6	

5 The question asks for candidates to 'advise' the Board of Directors. In this case, the candidate states that a strategy adapted to local tastes would be 'more appropriate'. This is a clear judgement and a valid route into AO4. What follows is discussion over the validity of this argument which brings this into Level 2 AO4. This could be improved by more explicit use of context within the evaluation.

6 The candidate offers another piece of AO4 Evaluation, giving a specific judgement and advice for BV's Board of Directors. The use of numbers gives this Level 3 AO4 and justifies the judgement made by the candidate.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

may not suitably adapt towards demands as effectively in Country X which may lead to potential revenue lost, however will allow for a consistent and focused marketing strategy to be implemented, allowing BV to globally exposure consumers to a clear brand identity and continuing to operate ethically will allow for a high quality brand image to be sustained, which will lead to positive PR and possibly increase revenue.

Examiner comments

Mark for AO1 = 3 out of 3

Mark for AO2 = 2 out of 2

Mark for AO3 = 7 out of 8

Mark for AO4 = 6 out of 7

Total mark awarded = 18 out of 20

How the candidate could improve their answer

This response only had one piece of Level 3 AO3 Analysis which showed that the quality of the skill was more important than the quantity. Although the candidate did not use the majority of the data, or the full range of possible points, it was assumed that the candidate had been selective and chosen the arguments that best supported the conclusions made. This allowed the candidate to focus on a judgement that could be justified within the time given for this examination.

Example Candidate Response – middle

2. Marketing strategy refers to the marketing objectives and how to achieve ~~the~~ and implement these strategies. ~~the~~ Marketing strategy means the need to develop a marketing plan which consists of the budget of marketing department or the objective and plan of the marketing department. Core competencies refer to the capabilities that offer a business competitive advantage while force field analysis refers to the positive forces for a decision or negative forces against a decision in introducing a new product.

Using core competency will show the internal strengths of BV which will be crucial when implementing a marketing objective to work towards. This is because core competency will analyse the factors which BV can use to create competitive advantage over rivals in country X. ~~the~~ For instance, core competency analysis will ~~also~~ show the board of Directors factors such as clear corporate identity as ethical business which will affect the objective which may be to ~~start~~ have sustainable ways to produce vegan burgers and wraps in order to achieve enough market share so as to survive in country ~~the~~ X. As a result with a brand awareness of only 5%, BV can achieve customer loyalty which will increase sales all while increasing brand awareness in the long

Examiner comments

1 The candidate gives two pieces of AO1 knowledge in this introductory paragraph; the knowledge of the contents of a marketing plan and what is involved in force field analysis.

2 The question asks candidates to advise the Board of Directors on a marketing strategy, not to analyse and evaluate approaches to developing a business strategy. This candidate does not follow this instruction and spends a significant amount of time answering the wrong question.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

3

term. Furthermore, core competency will allow BU to ~~be~~ ~~an~~ analyse workers' motivation which is shown by ~~high~~ ~~quality~~ excellent customer service shown in the analysis and hence, the board of directors won't need to allocate resources in recruitment. However, core competency does not show external factors which could affect sales in country X which could have been shown by using ~~past~~ ~~for~~ instance, macroeconomic factors which can increase average income from £24,000 in country X which BU could have used to increase selling prices and quickly cover prices of opening restaurants in country X.

4

Force field analysis shows the factors for and against decision of opening restaurant in country X. ~~It~~ ~~shows~~ ~~is~~ crucial as it weighs the ~~restraining~~ ~~driving~~ forces against the ~~driving~~ ~~restraining~~ forces to show a final ~~at~~ result. BU can use force field analysis which will show that ~~vegan~~ market is expected to double in the next three years. This will allow BU to understand that even though forecast economic growth of country X is only 5% ~~per~~ ~~year~~, ~~vegan~~ food market will be ~~over~~ ~~over~~ double in the next 3 years which ~~will~~ ~~will~~ result in BU covering costs of ~~opening~~ ~~opening~~.

3 Despite the majority of this point being focused on the wrong question, there is some knowledge (AO1) and application (AO2) that is relevant to this question.

4 The candidate uses the data in the force field analysis to analyse which strategy is likely to be more successful. This is just one element of the decision and the analysis does show development, but only of this one piece of evidence and not the strategy as whole. This is why the candidate's answer does not reach Level 2 AO3.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

5

advertising to increase 5% awareness in the long run and that resources can be diverted to opening new restaurant in country X. With government expecting to support ~~vegan~~ food, this ~~will~~ ~~shows~~ ~~that~~ contingency planning cost will be reduced which ~~will~~ ~~directors~~ wouldn't know if they used ~~the~~ core competency strategy. Furthermore, force field analysis will also show restraining forces such as ~~the~~ customers may not like BU's product range which implies BU should introduce a new product based on taste and preferences of consumers in country X. However, knowing the ~~forces~~ ~~all~~ the driving forces and restraining forces will depend on the skills of the ~~marketing~~ ~~manager~~, for instance, the manager may not be skilled enough to ~~be~~ ~~be~~ able to analyse all forces and this could lead to ~~the~~ ~~strategy~~ ~~not~~ being effective.

6

I would highly recommend BU to use core competencies as this will ~~give~~ ~~BU~~ ~~a~~ ~~guidance~~ ~~on~~ ~~how~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~is~~ ~~less~~ ~~clear~~ since BU will know what features will attract and retain customers in country X, such as recruiting highly skilled and ~~moderate~~ ~~continue~~ ~~workers~~ ~~in~~ ~~order~~ ~~to~~ ~~offer~~ ~~excellent~~ ~~customer~~ ~~service~~ ~~also~~ ~~even~~ ~~though~~ ~~the~~ ~~core~~ ~~competencies~~ ~~strategy~~.

5 This analysis contains some good potential impacts on BV but, as it is only about one individual strategic element, it cannot get into Level 3 AO3 regardless of the amount of detail involved.

6 'Depends upon' is a useful way to show that the different elements and perspectives of a judgement have been thought about in coming to a judgement. Although the analysis is not as focused on a strategy as it should be, the candidate is given the benefit of the doubt (BOD) that their judgement depends upon the skills of the manager and this will impact the effectiveness of the chosen strategy.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

7 may become ineffective due to changes in consumer demands in ~~technology~~ EU should use core competency strategy as force field analysis ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~long~~ ~~run~~ ~~is~~ ~~due~~ ~~to~~ ~~changes~~ ~~in~~ ~~technology~~ ~~market~~ ~~will~~ ~~core~~ ~~competency~~ ~~strategy~~ ~~to~~ ~~prepare~~ ~~high~~ ~~quality~~ ~~product~~ ~~which~~ ~~can~~ ~~afford~~ ~~country~~ ~~2~~ ~~the~~ ~~domestic~~ ~~firms~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~long~~ ~~run~~ ~~and~~ ~~hence~~ ~~the~~ ~~driving~~ ~~forces~~ ~~such~~ ~~as~~ ~~government~~ ~~policies~~ ~~will~~ ~~change~~.

Examiner comments

7 The candidate makes it clear what their recommendation is. However, it is not focused on a marketing strategy. Using core competencies is an approach or a tool, not a strategy by itself. It is vital that candidates answer the question.

Mark for AO1 = 3 out of 3

Mark for AO2 = 2 out of 2

Mark for AO3 = 4 out of 8

Mark for AO4 = 3 out of 7

Total mark awarded = 12 out of 20

How the candidate could improve their answer

Many candidates did not fully read and understand the question. In this example, this led to an unfocused answer that did not provide a coherent strategy for BV. Benefit of the doubt marks were awarded where possible. Candidates needed to understand what each question was asking and to target their analysis and evaluation to answer this question set. It can help to break each question down so that it is clear who is being advised and about what. A plan for the answer can also help candidates avoid going off on a tangent and answering the wrong question.

Example Candidate Response – low

2

1 the board of directors can make more adjustments on the franchises of their company but with including culture into it. Back to the adjustments in 2015 for BV they are going globally so they need to include more cultures. They also need a mission statement when entering country X so they will need a marketing strategy. On use SWOT analysis and SMART objectives or PEST. In SWOT analysis it will cover the strength, weakness, organisation and threats. Those will help BV with their new plan. SMART objectives will also help that will cover the specifics of their aims of the business like what are BV's specific aims and goals. Entering the new market M is measurable. BV needs to set up a schedule like when to promote themselves and a time limit for their goals. A is achievable. Their aims should be achievable like making an ad today and reaching more than 1000 consumers. R is realistic. Being realistic will help BV not to waste their time with unrealistic goals. A realistic goal for BV could be decreasing the failure rate a bit little by little. And finally at last it is time, BV needs to know what is the time limit for their process to their goals.

3 After doing all of the goals setting and vision and mission statement BV should have a unique selling point. Country X have other companies competing so BV needs to be different and what they bring to the market should be unique. Understanding the marketing and consumers will also be my advice for BV. By understanding consumers demand can help BV's supply to make what the consumers want. BV then will need to take action into their business. BV should have a soft launch then a full launch for their company taking in customers perspectives ~~when~~ ~~it~~ ~~will~~ ~~also~~ ~~benefit~~ ~~BV~~ ~~and~~ ~~make~~ ~~sure~~ ~~what~~ ~~they~~ ~~are~~ ~~putting~~ ~~out~~ ~~is~~ ~~good~~.

Examiner comments

1 Marketing strategy includes many different elements and, as the question is open, any marketing knowledge shown can be awarded. This knowledge about advertising is relevant and correct.

2 The candidate moves away from marketing knowledge and shows irrelevant knowledge about mission statements, SMART objectives, and PEST. This seems to be a case of a candidate stating things they know and not focussing their knowledge on what is most relevant to answering the question.

3 The candidate shows some more marketing knowledge (AO1) involving USP and market research.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued	Examiner comments
BOD's marketing strategy should also include a way to reach target audience or which website or paper they should promote on. Doing research could help them not waste time and reach the consumers that is interested in BV. Since BV is BV should look at data that shows information about country X. In the table only 20% of country X population is over 50 so they should not make products for old people. The average income is \$24000 so their product they are launching should be affordable. Overall BOD needs to build a foundation and get all of their information on country X and demands this is my advice to the board of directors on marketing strategy for BV's new entrance in country X.	4 The candidate gives a brief analysis about the benefit of market research. There is no chain of analysis and this does not build into a coherent argument for or against a marketing strategy. 5 The candidate chooses two pieces of context and is awarded both AO2 application marks. Mark for AO1 = 3 out of 3 Mark for AO2 = 2 out of 2 Mark for AO3 = 1 out of 8 Mark for AO4 = 0 out of 7 Total mark awarded = 6 out of 20

How the candidate could improve their answer

This answer was unfocused and did not present a marketing strategy in answer to the question. While there was a reasonable base of knowledge and some use of the given context, the candidate did not pull it together to argue for or against a specific strategy. If the candidate had organised their data to do this, then they may have had more success with their response.

Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Many candidates answered this question as if it had asked for an approach to develop a strategy. This hindered many answers and did not allow candidates to answer the question set. As with any examination, a range of questions could be asked and candidates must be prepared for whatever question, within the confines of the examination structure and syllabus, is asked.
- When candidates are asked to advise on something (in this case a strategy) there is no need to cover every possible outcome. Candidates, in the time given for this examination, needed to be selective and focus on what they believed to be most relevant. Choosing what to include and what not to include is an essential skill and one that can be seen in a good evaluative answer.