

MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice

Preparing for the Exam: Section 2 Q4- Answer Guide & Sample Answers

This answer guide was developed to provide support for examiners in marking the **Section 2 Question 4**. It is not intended as a 'model answer' or a completely exhaustive list of all points which could be made. Instead, it summarises a range of points which candidates may be expected to include in answers.

The key to an effective answer is to provide information which is both relevant and clearly justified. If, when writing your practice answer, you have made points which are not included in this summary, don't worry. Examiners are briefed and trained to take into consideration all relevant points in their marking.

Similarly, don't worry if you have not included all the points mentioned in the answer guide. Again, the examiners will be looking for a range of points in which your rationale is clear. Credit will be given for all relevant points which you have made.

In Section 2 there is a recommended time of 100 minutes and answers account for two-thirds of the total marks.

Candidates are required to answer any TWO questions from the six, giving a full answer to each of the questions you choose.

Section 2

QUESTION 4: ANSWER GUIDE

4. Rowbury, a major confectionary company, has recently acquired Maybury's, a small company which produces fine chocolates using essential oils for flavouring. Maybury's employees have been guaranteed employment with Rowbury. Rowbury now needs to decide whether to rebrand Maybury products as 'Rowbury fine chocolate'. It has approached an insight provider to help the company gain the insight needed to inform the decision.

a) Describe what you understand by the term 'insight' and how it differs from more traditional market research. Illustrate your answer with examples.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

Examiners should note that this section of the question is worth one-third of the overall total.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of 'insight' as a term which covers the development of an understanding of issues through information gathered from a wide variety of sources, i.e. that insightful research will generally result in more than the sum of the individual research outputs. Stronger answers might point out that there is no single definition. However, there are some general points which emerge.

At pass level, candidates should identify that insight attempts to create a 'fuller' understanding of issues, for example information which:

- *informs the client's actions*
- *relates to client strategy*
- *applies knowledge to help drive growth*
- *leads to commercial improvement*
- *assists in client decision-making etc, rather than simply providing data. For example, candidates might also talk about having an extremely good understanding of the client, their business issues and the market in which they are operating – over and above what might be deemed necessary /acceptable for traditional research.*

Stronger answers might also identify that some writers (e.g. David Smith) allow for the inclusion of 'intuition' – i.e. the researcher's own insight gathered from small 'nuggets' of information which may have been gathered from outside the main research activity.

Candidates are also expected to make some comparison with traditional views of market research. These might include:

- *the use of a single method (e.g. quantitative or qualitative project, rather than a combined approach), whereas insightful research might combine
 - *information from primary and secondary sources*
 - *both qualitative and quantitative data**
- *the difficulty of accounting for 'additional' information (i.e. Smith's 'intuition')*
- *the expectation that researchers or research teams developing 'insight' will need to develop a perspective which is broader than looking purely at either qualitative or quantitative data.*

- b) Describe the types of research information that the insight provider might use to help Rowbury make their decision, and how that information could be gathered. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

Examiners should note that this section of the question is worth two-thirds of the overall total.

The success of an answer to this section is likely to depend on the breadth of definition included in section (a). At pass level, candidates are expected to identify at least three types of information which might include some/all of the following:

*Secondary data: Existing market research reports on Maybury chocolates
Existing sales figures for the different types of chocolate made by
Maybury
Newspaper/magazine reviews of Maybury products*

*Quantitative: Survey of Maybury distributors, gauging reaction to the
Rowbury brand
Survey of Maybury consumers, gauging reactions to Rowbury*

*Qualitative: Focus groups with Maybury employees, gauging their perceptions
of the Maybury brand values
Focus groups with consumers, again gauging their
reactions/perceptions to both companies
Focus groups and/or in-depth interviews with distributors.*

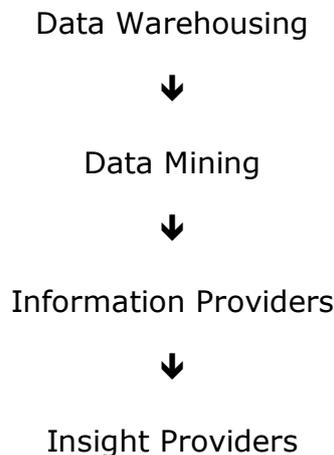
Stronger answers are likely to provide a wider range of sources and/or types of information, or greater reflection on how the different types of data might work together to help produce greater insight. Weaker answers are likely to provide only a limited range of data sources and not relate this to how it would generate insight in this context.

Section 2 – Q4

Sample answer 1: This sample answer was awarded a mark in the MERIT band.

Question 4a

Evolution of Market Research



The team 'insight' refers to certain fundamental knowledge that provides a deep understanding into a marketing problem or phenomenon.

2 classic examples from India (BOTH ACTUAL CASE STUDIES)

→ Punjab in Northern India had higher sales of washing machines than any other state in India → DATA MINING

Market Research provided the above information and profiled the target audience, segmented them by sex, age, income etc. and presented the same to the client → INFORMATION PROVIDERS

A closer investigation into why this was happening revealed that people from that region were using the washing machines to make 'Lassi' a milkshake traditionally consumed by the local population there. They would add the milk, sugar and necessary ingredients and use the temperature and spin option to make the milkshakes in large quantities → MARKETING INSIGHT

Example 2

Sanitary napkins sales in Kerala in Southern India were higher than anywhere in the rest of the country → INFORMATION PROVIDING

It was noticed that there was a far greater incidence of purchase by men than by women → DATA MINING

Further investigation revealed that a vast majority of labourers/workers were purchasing them and using them as sweat absorbers due to the heat and humidity in that region → MARKETING INSIGHT

Question 4b

Types of Research Information

- Awareness of Maybury → (TOM, Spontaneous Awareness)
- Awareness of Rowbury ↗

The above information will help gauge the awareness of the 2 brand names.

- Usage of Maybury → How often consumed, quantity consumed
- Usage of Rowbury ↗
- Likes/Dislikes of Maybury name/Rowbury name
- Associations/Brand Imagery of both names
- Impact of Name change → Ask Respondents their opinion on rebranding
- Dislikes → If they exist, why so?
- Demographics of the audience – Examine how the profile of Rowbury and Maybury users are similar or different and segment the data accordingly to understand which segments prefer the name change/are neutral do it vs those who oppose it.

Methodology for Information gathering

Recommend a qualitative study – preferably Depth Interviews with consumers, possibly even employees of Maybury to get their opinions on the product. These opinions/ideas would help in attitude generation for the Brand Imagery sections of the qual phase and will also provide information on underlying factors among people reluctant to have the name changed.

The Qual findings then need to be validated by a full fledged quantitative study. This will ensure that the findings match with a large and representative part of the population.

Rowbury should then make it's decision based on the findings from the above.

Section 2 – Q4

Sample answer 2: This sample answer was awarded a mark in the **DISTINCTION band.**

Question 4a

'Insight' is a fluid concept still, and may mean different things to different users; overall it seems to imply an approach to research (being 'insightful') rather than any specific one piece of information.

Delivering insight means delivering information which is new, which opens clients eyes to their business, which can travel through that business and make a genuine, practical change for the better.

Insightful research begins to differ from traditional market research in respect of this practicability – whereas large surveys of the '50's' or '60's' might be handed over to client marketing or customer teams with little discussion or analysis, the emphasis in insight is precisely on the creative interpretation of data, delivering novel but practical solutions to the client. Insightful research must really mean something to the business that commissions it.

Question 4b

Quantitative data would provide useful information for Rowbury. A large scale survey would examine brand awareness, giving relative measures of the public awareness of the Rowbury and Maybury brands. If this showed either brand to have a significant lead in terms of public awareness, this would recommend using that brand for the new chocolate line. A survey such as this could also cover public attitude towards, as well as knowledge of, each brand identifying what products are associated with it, how likely respondents are to consider buying either brands product, and even probe emotional responses (perhaps with some agree/disagree statements). This information could be collected through a variety of means – on an omnibus, a CATI interview or an online survey. An omnibus/or telebus is a series of questions relating to a range of issues, products or services but which are asked in a single block. Adding a small number of questions relating to Maybury/Rowbury would be a cheap way to gather some basic results on public awareness. Attitude questions might demand an ad hoc computer assisted telephone interviewer, with a more complex script for detail, or an online survey, which may attract younger, more brand-savvy respondents.

Qualitative data may provide more abstract individualised data for the business, allowing it to dig down into the issues of brand identity and re-branding. Focus groups of 8 – 10 respondents led by an interviewer, could discuss their personal responses to the Maybury and Rowbury brands in detail. Projective or semiotic techniques provide creative depth at this stage, which could inform future marketing or branding strategies. Stimuli in the form of proposed or existing marketing materials would be used, giving the business concrete insight into its options.

Alternatively, secondary research into high-profile confectionery brand changes (i.e. Starburst) could be conducted, giving the business a cheaper, more general idea of the issues it faces.

