

Section 2

Question 1

StarBorn is a small independent business producing high-quality jackets and raincoats for men using locally sourced fabrics. At the request of a regular customer, one of *StarBorn*'s tailors made a coat for the customer's dog using leftover pieces of fabric. Following the dog's appearance on social media, *StarBorn* had a surge in inquiries about dog coats. Before deciding if it should add dog coats to its range, *StarBorn* would like to know more about the market.

- a) Identify at least three sources of existing information that would help *StarBorn*. For each source, explain what information it could provide and why the information you suggest is useful to *StarBorn*.

(Weighting: one-third of total)

Minimum requirements

To achieve a Pass in this task, answers should include a minimum of three sources of information (see below for examples) and at least a basic rationale for the inclusion of the source/s. Stronger answers may identify a wider range of sources, and/or may discuss the sources and their usefulness in more detail with stronger ties to the context. Weaker answers may provide a limited or narrow range of sources not closely linked to the business issue.

Some potential sources of information and rationale for inclusion:

Overview of the market

- Sources: Published reports by research companies on the market for dog clothing/coats
- Garment industry/trade press websites and publications
- Dog world/dog accessories trade press, forums etc

Rationale: To get an overview of the market, to understand scope, size, key manufacturers/likely competitors, popular products, trends, to identify possible gaps, to help determine feasibility of launching own product.

Competitors and their products

Sources: Websites, social media and other marketing materials, e.g. brochures, from companies already in the market, analysis of content, levels of traffic etc

Rationale: To help understand what key players do, who produces what products, what designs there are, what fabrics are used, information on price point, packaging, promotions - to understand in more detail what the market comprises, what sells, what is popular, to help gauge if it could deliver a viable product offer.

Customers' views and trends

Sources: Social media listening to understand/monitor competitor/brand mentions, customer sentiment and feedback, preferences, trends

Rationale: To understand what buyers/users/potential customers think/do etc to help with potential product design, pricing, advertising & marketing etc.

- b) Describe how you would use AI tools and technologies to gather and analyse the information *StarBorn* needs. Identify the limitations involved and how you might address them. Give reasons for the suggestions you make.

(Weighting: two-thirds of total)

Minimum requirements

To achieve a Pass in this task, answers should describe at least three uses of AI in gathering and analysing the information needed along with at least two limitations and how the limitations might be addressed. Stronger answers may present greater detail on how various AI tools or technologies might be used, rationale for their use, and a more detailed critical evaluation.

Uses of AI for gathering and analysing information needed

Candidates should note the need for appropriate AI tools: e.g. for use on external data, search connected, reputable AI.

Overview of the market/competitors and products

- *Could design/use a set of AI prompts/AI agent to gather data and prepare a SWOT analysis of the current market for dog coats*
- *Could use automated web scraping tools to gather data on competitors and their products including pricing, product types and descriptions, and stock availability*
- *Could use AI technologies to analyse online advertising and marketing to determine what strategies are used and which work best*
- *Could use visual AI analysis/computer vision tools to analyse competitor product images and packaging design to identify the visual themes that work well with potential target group.*

Customer views and trends

- *Could use social media listening AI to gather data from social media including reviews for dog clothing*
- *Could use data mining technology to analyse customer reviews, customer forums etc to understand what customers like and dislike about particular products and brands*
- *Could use predictive AI tools to identify trends, e.g. increase in searches for bespoke clothing for dogs*

Rationale for use of AI tools and technologies

This might include speeding up the research process by automating the data collection and the analysis and synthesis of the data; being able to find and analyse a wider range and volume of data than might have been possible without use of AI.

Limitations or risks

These may include the following:

- *Issues related to data integrity and accuracy, e.g. hallucinations, out of date or irrelevant or incomplete or flawed data, embedded bias*
- *Existence of useful data that AI cannot access (i.e. in closed systems)*
- *Ethical, legal issues such as data protection, copyright, Intellectual Property*
- *Potential for lack of critical evaluation/over-reliance on the AI output*

Main way to address issues: AI not to be relied upon solely. AI outputs must be checked and validated by a human i.e. the professional in the loop (PITL). Professional human overview and insight needed to contextualise, interpret with knowledge of the business and its aims and its needs.

Strong answers should not present AI as a substitute for business judgement. They should explain how AI can support faster and broader research and show the need to validate findings through reliable sources, human review, small-scale testing, and direct customer feedback.