



National  
Qualifications



# Business Management

## Assignment

### Assessment task

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This is the assessment task for the assignment Component of Higher Business Management Course assessment.

Pupil Name



# ASSIGNMENT

It is never too early to start the process of planning your Higher Business Management Assignment.

The assignment requires you to research an organisation and a business issue. The organisation chosen can operate in the **PRIVATE, PUBLIC** or **THIRD SECTOR** of the economy. The issue should be directly related to a topic and/or concept studied as part of the mandatory Course coverage of Higher Business Management. You will gather, select and analyse information relating to the issue chosen, from primary and/or secondary sources, in order to produce the report.

You also have to provide conclusions and recommendations relating to the business issue in terms of how this might meet the purpose of the report and/or the future needs of the organisation's internal and/or external stakeholders.

The Assignment will take the form of a report. An issue will be identified and, following market research, conclusions drawn will be identified and, recommendations made.

This Assignment counts for **30% of the overall SQA mark** and therefore it is vital to secure high marks if you hope to achieve a good grade in Higher Business Management.

Assignments are submitted to the SQA for marking towards the end of March, but the SQA have made the marking scheme quite clear and so by following some general principles a high mark can be achieved.

The Course will be graded A-D. Marks for the completed assignment will be awarded as follows:

⊙ Introduction	2 marks
⊙ Research	4 marks
⊙ Analysis and Interpretation	12 marks
⊙ Conclusion and Recommendations	10 marks
⊙ Collating and Reporting Findings	2 marks

The Assignment has **2** stages:

- Planning and Gathering Evidence— this should take about 6.5 hours
- Producing the Report – this should take about 1.5 hours (under exam conditions)

Your teacher will let you know how this assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it.

The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to work independently to demonstrate your planning, research, use of sources, analysis and decision making skills. You will use these skills to produce a business report.

**TOP TIP**

Make sure you use the section headings in your report as marks are allocated for the appropriate use of headings.

## PUPIL CHECKLIST

### INTRODUCTION (2 MARKS)

- Name of the business
- Start by stating the purpose of the investigation  
Also justify why you are investigating this issue
- Provide details of the analytical technique used in the Analysis and Interpretation section - you **MUST** say what it is.  
Reference should be made to Appendix 2, where full detailed notes should be held
- Justify the use of this analytical technique in investigating the issue

### RESEARCH/FINDINGS (4 MARKS)

- Provide a **MINIMUM** of 3 sources of information.  
Market research can be primary, secondary or a combination of both.
- You should assess the suitability of the research method / source and explain why you used it.  
Remember: make the value relevant to your situation
- Reinforce the reasons for and against the suitability of each source  
And explain why each source is suitable
- Reference to sources of research should be made to Appendix 3

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION (12 MARKS)

- Marks will be credited for each interpretation you make but it must be linked to the market research or the analytical technique used.
- You **MUST** link each point made to the purpose of your report (as stated in the introduction).
- Referencing is very important here “from my questionnaire (appendix 1)...”
- No marks awarded for recommendations here! Only facts and findings.
- You will be awarded marks even if you state your research was inconclusive, as long as it is justified.



## PUPIL CHECKLIST

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (10 MARKS)

- One mark will be given per conclusion and/or recommendation that is directly linked to the research undertaken.
- Always give a reason for each recommendation.
- Concise, conclusive statements are best here!
- Do not write anything here that is not already featured in your assignment.

### APPENDICES

#### Appendix 1

Synopsis/setting the scene:

- Provide a brief summary of the history of the business and location(s)
- Give a short description of the activities the enterprise is engaged in, along with a statement of the business structure, for example, public limited company, social enterprise etc

#### Appendix 2

- Include details of the analytical tool used.  
You might, for example, show a SWOT analysis.

#### Appendix 3

- Include details of research gathered.  
For example, questionnaires and/or URL of websites used.

#### Appendix 4

- You can include one more Appendix of your choice.

### COLLATING AND REPORTING (2 MARKS)

- One mark will be awarded for the use of the headings
- One mark for business terminology being correctly applied
- Remember to stick to the page limit - excessive length will be penalised!



## TOP TIP

While an Appendix will not receive any marks in your report, it is normally the first place the SQA marker will look to get an outline of the business.

## INTRODUCTION

Choose a business and identify an issue or problem with the enterprise that you wish to base your investigation and conclusions or recommendations on. This is the crucial stage of your whole Assignment will rest on choosing an appropriate business venture.

Higher Business Management focuses on large businesses, so choose an enterprise that has a medium-to-large operation. There is no need to be concerned about the structure of ownership, although a sole trader might not be able to provide enough sources of information for you to build a report on. It can be any of the following:

- Private Limited Company (LTD)
- Public Limited Company (PLC)
- Charity
- Social Enterprise
- Local or National Government Organisation

## INTRODUCTION

Decide on some aspect of the enterprise to report on. At this point you should do some background research to see if there is data out there that links your business with the topic.

Suitable topics could be:

- Quality measures to be adopted to ensure customer satisfaction
- Pricing strategies
- Benefits of social responsibility
- Sources of finance to support expansion
- Developing product/service ranges
- Mergers or takeovers

Examples of issues/analytical techniques could include:
How effective is the product portfolio of xxxx?
Should xxxx create a website for online selling?
Should 'The Fenwick Hotel' expand to include Spa and Leisure Facilities?
Are the quality measures used by xxxx providing appropriate customer satisfaction?
'Do Kellogg's maintain an efficient quality checking process for their corn flakes'
'Does Nestles product portfolio provide customer satisfaction for their consumers'
'Has the extension strategies used by Smarties been effective in maintaining their sales levels'.
'Would it be viable for Thornhill Golf Club to open a pro shop'
'Should FUN Leisure Facility increase the size of it's gym'.
'Should Station 49 create a website to allow online sales.'

## INTRODUCTION

Choose a business analytical tool that will be most suitable for your chosen issue. An analytical tool is simply a formal process used by businesses to firstly gather data, draw conclusions and then make recommendations from.

It would be advisable to start - as early as possible - to gather articles, news reports, press releases, government statistics etc on your business and the topic you are going to investigate. Some of these will be refined into the analytical model of your choice while others sources of data can be used for your next stage of research. The final version of your analytical tool should be included as an Appendix.

Your teacher will give you advice on the different types of analytical techniques that can be adopted and what would be most suited for your investigation.

Examples of analytical tools are:

- SWOT analysis
- Analysis of production processes
- Product life cycle extension strategies
- Product portfolio analysis (Boston Matrix)

You will be expected to explain what your chosen tool shows and how it will be used to support your conclusions and recommendations.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Decide on the sources of information you will need to use and how you will collect the information. You need to use a minimum of 2 research sources.

You will be expected to identify the sources used, but the important aspect is why you used them.

**EXPLAIN** why you chose the source:

- **Why** the information found would be of use in terms of your report
- The **credibility** of the source

Do not simply repeat a list of common phrase like reliable, relevant, up-to-date, objective, accurate, but link it directly to your investigation and say why in this case it was (for example) relevant. Here is an example:

- The first research source I used was the business website [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)

*I chose this website as it was entirely relevant to my report because it is the business' own website. I used the website to gather details of the wide range of products that Tesco has for sale, to help me identify the extent of their product portfolio. The information was accurate as it is constantly being updated and it gave me prices as well. However, some information about the business could be biased, such as the "price promise" in order to attract potential customers.*

	<i>Source</i>	<i>How is it appropriate?</i>	<i>Is the source reliable?</i>	<i>Why is the source of value?</i>	<i>Advantages and Disadvantages</i>
Source 1 - business website	<a href="http://www.coca-cola.co.uk">www.coca-cola.co.uk</a>	Gives me relevant information on the products they sell and also gives me background information.	Yes as it is coming from the companies main website the information is also always being updated.	I used this website because it is the official website for coca cola and I thought this would give me information about the business and what type of products they sell.	An advantage of using the company website is that you can access the information instantly and 24/7. A disadvantage of using the company website is that the data may be bias.
Source 2					
Source 3					
Source 4					

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Here you will analyse and interpret the research sources and information gathered.

You should report on your findings in relation to the issue you are investigating, and the analytical tool you are using. Your findings should be in-depth and comprehensive. It would add weight to your findings if different sources supported the same conclusions. Here are some examples:

- *From my research source 1 (the business website) I found out that:*

*Pricing strategies used vary from one season of the year to another according to customer demand for certain products. For example, in Summer there is more demand for cold drinks and ice-cream, therefore these products were not selected for promotional pricing strategies.*

- *From my research source 2 (survey) I found out that:*

*60% of customers had complained in the last three months  
45% of customers had complained in the last two months  
30% of customers had complained in the last month.*

*This is shown in the graph/pie chart. This suggests to me that the business is not meeting their needs and must address the issues they are complaining about quickly, in order to restore customer confidence in the business.:*

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Here are some other sample phrases you can use to demonstrate that you have analysed and interpreted your findings:

- *I noticed that the business ... this therefore means that ...*
- *It was clear to me from the pictures/graph/table on the website that ...*
- *From the feedback page on the website I found out that customers said ... this means that ...*
- *My survey results show that X% of respondents are unhappy ... I feel this means that the business will have to ...*
- *The article in the newspaper proves to me that ...*
- *Overall my evidence shows me that ...*
- *I am confident that these figures mean that ...*



<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Concluding Point</i>
<i>E.g. From my survey I noticed that 2/10 (20%) had seen the borders advert on TV due to timing of when the adverts are on tV and the programs they are advertising on.</i>	<i>This shows me that Borders must think about when they advertise as they are not reaching enough of their target audience.</i>	<i>E.g. I suggest that the business must change when they advertise and also expand their product range to appeal to an older segment of the market e.g. 65-75 age groups.</i>	<i>I feel by doing so, this would address the lack of sales to customers in this segment of the market.</i>
From question 1 of my survey ...	This is significant as I was able to discover ...		
From question 2 of my survey ...	I feel this means that the business will have to ...		
From question 3 of my survey ...	This demonstrates to me there is ...		
From use of the company website ...	This shows me that ...		
From use of the competitors website ...	This shows me that ...		

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify conclusions and recommendations based on your evidence and the analysis you have undertaken. These should relate to the overall purpose of the report but also how they might meet the needs of internal or external stakeholders. Sample phrases:

- *I have come to the conclusion that XXX business should ...*
- *I suggest that the business does ...*
- *Summing up my evidence, the conclusions I can make are ..*
- *I would recommend that the business does the following ...*
- *The business should think about doing ...*
- *The course of action the business should now take is to ...*
- *The business should offer ...*



However, each conclusion or recommendation should be based on your evidence and have justification or explanation of the effect it will have, for example,

*Based on the findings from the business website I suggest that the business conducts training for its employees on customer service. This should mean that the number of complaints reduces, and that customers will be happy to return and shop there again.*

*The course of action that the business should now take is to expand their product range to appeal to an older segment of the market, for example 65-75 age group. This will address the lack of sales to customers in this segment of the market.*

*I recommend that the business employs more staff in the Operations department to carry out quality assurance. Quality assurance checks will mean that fewer problems are identified at the end of the production process and there will be no need for product recalls in the future.*

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Concluding point</i>
E.g. I suggest that the business must expand their product range to appeal to an older segment of the market e.g. 65-75 age groups.	By doing so, this would address the lack of sales to customers in this segment of the market.
I recommend that the business ...	This would address the lack of ...
I also propose that from my evidence, the business ...	This will positively impact the business as ...
The course of action that I feel the business should take is ...	This would mean that ...
I have come to the conclusion that Coca Cola's business would benefit from lowering their price ...	By doing this they would get a greater amount of sales and customers would return more often than usual.
I would recommend that by offering more discounts such as BOGOF to their customers as many people feel that their prices are too high ...	This would prevent them from buying their products regularly.
I have also come to the conclusion that having a more variety of flavours of each brand such as a tropical flavour of Coca Cola ...	This would benefit the business as you are reaching a wider market.

## PRESENTATION OF REPORT

The assignment report should be arranged under the following headings:

- Introduction
- Research
- Analysis and Interpretation
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Appendix

It should be word-processed formatted in 1.5 line spacing and, depending on font and line spacing should be about 6-10 pages long (marks will be deducted if the report is not concise).

Include graphs, charts, tables, statistics and images that will enhance the quality and presentation of the report.



There should be no more than 4 Appendices. They can include notes, pictures, tables, graphs, charts, questionnaires as well as lists of website, books and articles. Make sure that you reference the appendices so that it is clear what research you are referring to.

Use the following checklist to mark your Assignment report against the criteria used by the SQA. Ensure that you are meeting the minimum standards and then try to exceed the criteria by providing more than the minimum.

### TOP TIP

Use appropriate business terminology throughout the Report as marks are awarded for appropriate business terms.