

Brief

MultiBrands is a globally successful consumer products company, which has built up a reputation based on “Honesty, Quality and Innovation”. Since it started operation ten years ago, it has launched at least two new, high-quality products in different markets every year. However, managers are currently reviewing company policy because of a recent dramatic fall in profits and share price performance. Shareholders believe that this is due to over-diversification, rising costs and failing consumer confidence as a result of complaints that product quality is declining. Shareholder recommendations are:

- Freeze current policy of developing new products
- Concentrate on consolidating current successful brands
- Improve quality or reduce prices
- Freeze recruitment but avoid layoffs
- Reduce current budget by 15%

Task 1: Speaking

Form 4 groups of 3-4* students. Study the information given to you by your teacher and prepare to role-play a meeting to discuss where budget cuts and reallocations could be made. **The aim is to achieve a 15% reduction in total operating costs.** Each student should play the role of the head of one of the following departments: **HR, Sales and Marketing, Production**, and there must also be a **Managing Director** who will lead the meeting (introduce the subject, make sure all views are heard, clarify participants’ proposals, take decisions, allocate tasks). **Each role-play should last 20 minutes.** **If your group has only 3 members, eliminate the MD role.*

- **Consider all the above shareholder recommendations before making a final decision.**
- **Draw new visual aids in the form of graphs to support your arguments, but avoid using notes during the role-play.**

Marking criteria

- **Content:** Do you meet the requirements of the task above? Do you know the subject well? Are your arguments convincing? (5 points)
- **Interaction:** Do you react to what the other participants say? Do you defend your arguments? (5 points)
- **Language:** Do you use specific terminology? Is your grammar accurate? Do you speak fluently with correct pronunciation? (10 points)

The role-plays will take place on 27th January.

Task 2: Writing

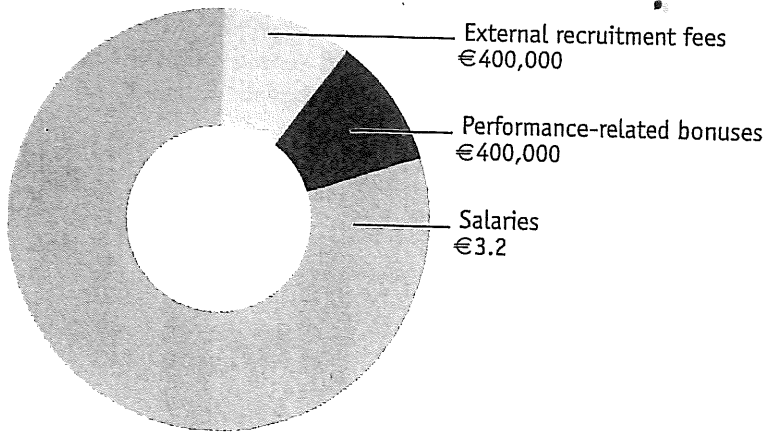
Following your meeting, each student must write a report to summarize your proposals and the decisions taken. Include graphs and charts to help illustrate and support your ideas. Follow the instructions in the “short reports” document attached. Your report should be about 500 words in length, excluding graphs and charts.

Marks will be given for the structure and content of your report, as well as for the grammatical and lexical range and accuracy.

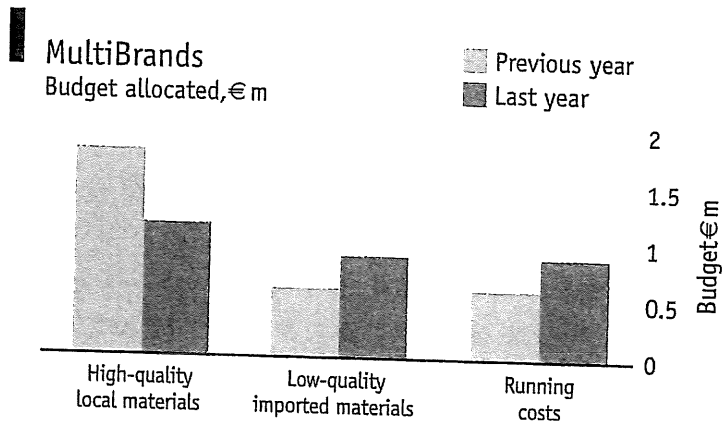
Deadline for the report: 3rd February, 9.00 am on AREL. WORK RECEIVED LATE WILL BE MARKED OUT OF 12. NB:

These tasks will contribute to your continuous assessment mark.

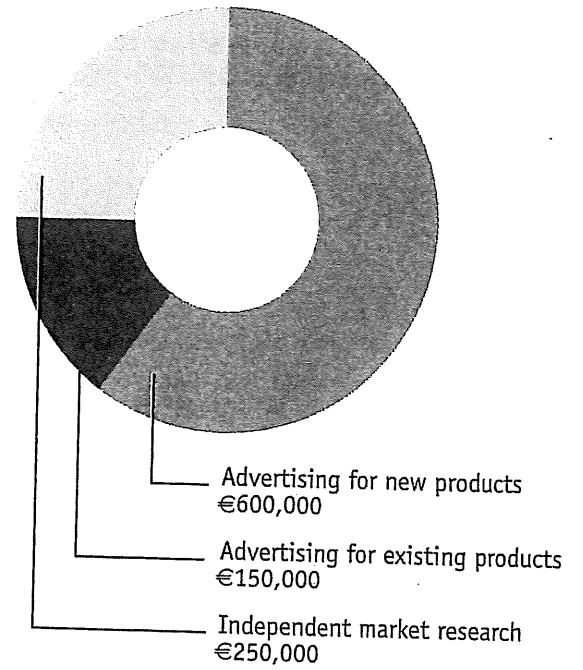
1 Human Resources costs



2 Production operating costs



3 Sales and Marketing costs



Short reports

Short reports are used to summarise information that has to be communicated to people inside or outside an organisation. They are designed to provide an overview which can be read and assimilated quickly. Many different subjects can be presented in a short report and some of the most common types of short reports are project / progress reports, business proposals and summaries of research or results. Although the length of a short report will vary depending on the amount of information and commentary that it contains, most short reports will be between one and six pages long. They should be clearly structured so that the reader can find the relevant information quickly. Short reports may also include graphic material and are often used as the basis for an oral presentation.

Layout

Title page – indicates the subject that is being dealt with, in large font, with the name and position of the author of the report clearly indicated at the bottom of the page, together with the date of its publication.

Summary – gives a concise presentation of the report, the reasons for writing it, the most important information it contains and a general idea of its main findings. For a short report this can be simply one or two sentences.

Introduction – presents the overview, showing why the report was written and how it has been constructed.

Development section – includes the main body of information which may be divided into several subsections.

Conclusion – presents the results of the report. This might take the form of a recommendation for future action or draw the reader's attention to problems that need to be addressed.

Language styles

Short reports are documents that use a formal writing style. They should not contain contracted verb forms like it'll or don't but use the full forms of verbs.

The language of the report should be as clear as possible. It is not necessary to use long and complicated sentences or obscure vocabulary. Using simple language in short sentences will make it easier for the reader to assimilate your message.

Try to avoid using the personal pronoun I too much. Although it is true that 'you' wrote the report, it will only put your readers off if you refer too often to your own role. Use neutral phrasing instead.

Useful phrases

Connect sentences by

- showing contrast:

However, this does not necessarily mean that ...

On the other hand, it is true that ...

While these results may appear to ...

- showing cause and effect:

This has been mainly due to ...

Consequently, additional data was obtained which showed that ...

As a result of this, it has not been possible to ...

- following on to the next point that you wish to make:

Moreover, in this particular case ...

In addition to this, the survey included ...