

# **TEACHER WEBINAR SERIES - THE PROJECT #2**

**GD EDUCATION**

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This classroom resource is for educational purposes only. All information is based on publicly available reporting from RTÉ, the CCPC, and other reputable news sources. No inference of wrongdoing is intended for any business mentioned.

# Review of stage 1

## Services sector

- Gyms and personal trainers
- Hairdressers and beauty salons
- Banks and credit unions
- Insurance providers
- Telecom and broadband providers
- Streaming services (Netflix, Spotify, etc.)
- Food delivery platforms (JustEat, Deliveroo)
- Online tuition or grinds companies
- Hotels, B&Bs, Air BnBs
- Couriers



## What is ethical practice in marketing?

Ethical practice means being honest, fair, and responsible in how a business promotes itself.

### Examples of good ethical practice:

- Showing real results e.g. authentic before/after images for gyms
- Being transparent about full costs (no hidden charges)
- Using testimonials with permission and accuracy
- Being honest
- Respecting consumer privacy (not misusing personal data)
- Not ripping off customers

### Examples of bad ethical practice:

- Exaggerating results or making false promises
- Adding hidden fees at checkout ("drip pricing")
- Using fake reviews or testimonials
- Exploiting fears or insecurities in advertising messages
- Making cancellation difficult to trap customers into contracts
- Paying social influencers to lie about results/promote the service without using it

# Potential ideas

Ethical practice means being honest, fair, and responsible in how a business promotes itself.

## Starting points for projects

### Food Cloud



### Ticketmaster/MCD, Hotels, Flying

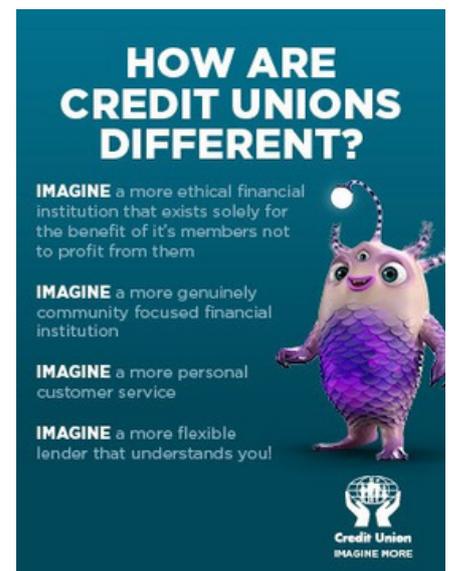
**Dynamic Pricing - ethics of it - In Ireland its not legal in taxi driving at rush hour (used in USA), but is for other things like Hotels etc...**

**Lacks fairness and transparency - fans weren't told in advance.**

**Abuse of market power as a dominant company?**

### An Post

### Credit Unions



### Deliveroo/Just Eat Pricing

**Comparing in store menu prices to app prices, then additional fees / the prices being shown and when to customers e.g. some not shown in the process until the end.**

**Ethics of then having a pop-up asking if they'd also like to add XYZ to their basket when they have pushed confirm order.**

# Stage 2: Developing a research question

## Stage 2: Developing a research question (1-2 hours)

**Goal for this stage:** To create a clear, focused research question that directly connects to the brief, can be answered using real data, and is realistic to complete in the time available.



**SMART objectives** should be applied to any suggested lines of research you have and will help you refine your question and **clarify exactly what you want to research** before starting.

SMART Criteria	Guiding Questions
Specific	Is my question linked to the theme? Is it clear and focused?
Measurable	Will I be able to gather enough information to answer it?
Achievable	Are the resources I need accessible? Can I realistically gather the data?
Relevant	Does my question deepen understanding of the theme?
Time-Bound	Can I answer this question within the time available?

**Take-home point:** A strong research question is specific, focused, and clearly linked to the theme. It is realistic to investigate and will guide your project in a clear direction.

## Go from broad to specific, iteratively, until you have a clear question / outcome

Starting point - Are concert goers treated fairly and ethcially when buying tickets to concerts?

Look at articles from Oasis tickets that mention dynamic pricing and if prices were advertised in advance or if consumers only got the prices when buying tickets online after queueing - check the advertised prices e.g. €87.50 and what some were sold for of equal standard. Investigate if pressure to buy was felt as consumers had queued which could encourage impulse buying.

### Articles

<https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2024/0906/1468795-oasis-ticketmaster/>

<https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2024/0902/1467863-ticket-pricing-oasis/>

<https://www.ccpc.ie/consumers/2024/09/06/ccpc-opens-investigation-into-ticketmaster-sale-of-oasis-tickets/>

# Stage 2: Developing a research question

## CCPC opens investigation into Ticketmaster sale of Oasis tickets

📅 SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) has opened an investigation into Ticketmaster Ireland and its handling of the sale of Oasis tickets on the weekend of 31 August 2024. This follows a review of more than 100 complaints received by the CCPC helpline.

Brian McHugh, Chair of the CCPC, says:

"The CCPC has reviewed more than 100 contacts from consumers who are very disappointed and frustrated about their experience of buying tickets for Oasis concerts. While companies in Ireland are allowed to respond to market demand, there are legitimate concerns over how consumers were treated and we have decided that an in-depth investigation is necessary. If we find that consumer protection laws were broken we will take action.

The CCPC is grateful to consumers who have taken the time to call or email our helpline to share their experiences with us as their stories have helped us develop a picture of last weekend's events."

The CCPC would welcome written comments and any supporting materials from consumers about their experience of buying, or attempting to buy, Oasis tickets on the weekend of 31 August 2024. Consumers can send this to the investigation team at [CEDinvestigation@ccpc.ie](mailto:CEDinvestigation@ccpc.ie)

As an investigation has now been opened, the CCPC cannot provide further comment at this time.

In a statement, Ticketmaster Ireland said: "We are committed to cooperating with the CCPC and look forward to sharing more facts about the ticket sales with them."

Yesterday the UK's competition watchdog launched an investigation into Ticketmaster over ticket sales for the band's British concerts.

The Competition and Markets Authority said it would examine whether Ticketmaster breached consumer protection laws or engaged in unfair commercial practices.

It also said it would try to establish whether people were given clear and timely information to explain that the tickets could be subject to so-called "dynamic pricing".

The authority said it would engage with Ticketmaster and gather evidence from various other sources, which may include the band's management and event organisers.

The competition watchdog has opened an investigation into Ticketmaster's sale of Oasis concert tickets last weekend.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) said the move followed a review of more than 100 complaints received by its helpline.

"The CCPC has reviewed more than 100 contacts from consumers who are very disappointed and frustrated about their experience of buying tickets for Oasis concerts," said Brian McHugh, Chair of the CCPC.

"While companies in Ireland are allowed to respond to market demand, there are legitimate concerns over how consumers were treated and we have decided that an in-depth investigation is necessary."

"If we find that consumer protection laws were broken we will take action."

Tickets for the reforming band's two Irish gigs next year went on sale on Saturday morning.

But soon after fans took to social media and other platforms to vent frustration at the sales process, including the high

## Stage 2: Developing a research question

Tickets for the gigs were advertised as being priced from €86.50 (subject to service charge) and limited to four per transaction.

However, soon after the tickets went on sale, consumers reported various issues including Ticketmaster's "dynamic pricing" model which hiked ticket prices, long queues and technical issues with the website.

One person said they "hurriedly" purchased four tickets for "€490.50 each excluding booking of €25 per ticket" because of a timer at the checkout, meaning that if they did not buy those tickets, they would be forced to queue all over again.

"In hindsight, I'm ashamed and embarrassed I have paid this level of money for standard seats.

"My original objective was to purchase four standing tickets for €175 each, however under the circumstances and with the limited ticket options available to purchase in a limited purchase timeline I proceeded," they said.

However, a different buyer said they decided not to buy "in demand standing" tickets for the increased price of €415 because "I thought that this price was too high" after queuing for two hours.

They added: "The standing tickets are the same so why can they change the price due to the tickets being in demand?"

In a letter sent to the competition watchdog, a consumer described the situation as a "scandal" and themselves as "one of the gullible victims".

They suggested that Ticketmaster and other ticket sellers should have to "display the current price of the tickets while queuing" so consumers can make "an informed decision".

Another person told the CCPC that their wife felt "compelled" to purchase tickets at the higher price, rather than the advertised €175, after waiting in the queue for so long.

"After waiting online for over four hours the tickets were then selling at €400 per ticket - obviously she felt compelled to continue, despite the inflated pricing due to the time investment," they said.

However, the practice of dynamic pricing has been used by Ticketmaster to deter ticket touts from purchasing and re-selling tickets, as the higher price means a lower return for touts.

# Stage 2: Developing a research question

Complete a Business Alive Investigative Study and Report based on the following brief:

In today's competitive and socially aware marketplace, ethics play a vital role in shaping modern marketing decisions.

Stakeholders are demanding greater transparency and accountability, placing businesses under growing pressure to align their marketing practices with ethical principles. At the same time, changing consumer needs are transforming how businesses engage with consumers, requiring constant innovation and awareness. In this dynamic environment, maintaining a competitive edge means not only keeping up with digital trends but also building trust through responsible and ethical marketing.

You are required to explore how ethical considerations impact marketing for a business of your choice operating in the service sector in Ireland.

**A service business operating in Ireland**

**Ethical behaviour that can impact  
marketing**

**Marketing Mix / Process linked in**

# Stage 2: Developing a research question

SMART Criteria	Guiding Questions	Applied Example (Student Thinking)
Specific	Is my question linked to the theme? Is it clear and focused?	Yes, it links to ethical marketing. I'll focus on the <i>Oasis concert ticket sale in Ireland</i> and the company <i>Ticketmaster Ireland</i> .
Measurable	Will I be able to gather enough information to answer it?	There are <i>Irish news articles (RTE, Irish Times), CCPC statements, and consumer reactions online (Reddit)</i> that I can use as evidence.
Achievable	Are the resources I need accessible? Can I realistically gather the data?	Yes, I can collect <i>secondary data only</i> from RTÉ, the Irish Times, and the CCPC website. No survey needed, potential to do one?
Relevant	Does my question deepen understanding of the theme?	Yes, it explores <i>how ethical pricing and transparency of a sales process affect marketing</i> in a service business in Ireland (touches on ethics, digital transformation, entrepreneurial thinking)
Time-Bound	Can I answer this question within the time available?	Yes the event happened in 2024, so I can study it over a few weeks using published sources."

Broad Idea	Too wide – can't investigate fairly.
Narrowed Focus	Pick one company/event (Oasis & Ticketmaster Ireland).
Ethical Angle	Fairness, transparency, impulse buying.
Investigative Aim	Examine process, consumer reaction, regulator response.
SMART Question	<b>How might ethical considerations around the pricing and process of Oasis concert ticket sales inform Ticketmaster Ireland's future marketing decisions?</b>

**How might ethical considerations around the pricing and process of Oasis concert ticket sales inform Ticketmaster Ireland's future marketing decisions?**

## Stage 2: Developing a research question (1-2 hours)

**Goal for this stage:** To create a clear, focused research question that directly connects to the brief, can be answered using real data, and is realistic to complete in the time available.



**SMART objectives** should be applied to any suggested lines of research you have and will help you **refine** your question and **clarify exactly what you want to research** before starting.

SMART Criteria	Guiding Questions
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**Take-home point:** A strong research question is specific, focused, and clearly linked to the theme. It is realistic to investigate and will guide your project in a clear direction.

### Step 1: Writing your starting research question

Write your first idea here, it doesn't have to be perfect yet, but you need a starting point to apply the SMART principles to.

### Step 2: Applying the SMART principles to your starting research question

#### Is it SPECIFIC?

Is my question linked to the brief? (why and how is it linked?)

Is my question clear and focused? Does it state exactly what I want to find out?

Is there anything I can change to make my question clearer?

## Is it MEASURABLE?

Will I be able to find enough information from enough sources to answer my question?

Should I use primary or secondary sources of information?

Will I be able to assess or measure changes in the information I am researching?

## Is it ACHIEVABLE?

Where can I find information on my question?

Will I be able to access the information I need to answer my question?

## Is it RELEVANT?

Is my question going to develop a greater understanding of the theme within the brief?

Is there a link from my question to something that I am learning in my business class or in the world of business around me?

## Is it TIME-BOUND?

Do I have enough information so far to map out a project plan for my investigation?

Will I have enough time to complete my research or should I narrow down or re-consider my research question?

Is my question set to a certain defined time period for my research?

You might need to repeat this process several times, refining your question step by step until it meets all five criteria.

### Step 3: Finalise your SMART research question

## Stage 2: Ongoing Monitoring & Reflection

What changes did I make to my research question and why? Was it difficult to meet all SMART criteria? What helped me improve it?

### Checklist before moving to stage 3

#### checklist

- My research question links to the brief
- It is clear what my research question is trying to find out
- I've checked that there's enough data or information available to answer my question
- I'll be able to measure something with the data/information I gather
- I will be able to link the data/information to either (a) some part of the business course I have studied or (b) some part of the business world (locally, nationally or internationally) that I am familiar with
- I will have enough time to complete the research in the time frame allowed

### What if I'm stuck?

**I'm stuck -> I can't get my question to fit all the SMART criteria.**

Try changing the scale of your question. Make it more focused (e.g. change "How do businesses reduce their costs?" to "How have Irish restaurants reduced their energy costs since 2020?")

**I'm stuck -> I'm not sure if the question connects to the theme.**

Re-read the brief and highlight key words. Then check if your question responds directly to them. Chat with other students in your class to see how their questions relate to the theme to get ideas.

**I'm stuck -> I don't know what to research.**

Look back at the brainstorming and mind map completed in stage 1. Was there a topic that stood out? Use the examples in the textbook, watch some YouTube videos that relate to the brief or read some relevant news articles for inspiration.



# Stage 3: Developing a Project Plan

## Research Aims

### 1. Investigate the pricing and process used for Oasis concert tickets

- Describe the pricing and process used during the Oasis ticket sales.
- Identify how the pricing worked and whether consumers were told about it clearly / when they found out what they had to pay / urgency of the process.

### 2. Investigate the response from different stakeholders

#### Customers:

- What complaints or reactions did fans share online or through the CCPC helpline, Reddit, social media etc...
- How did they describe the fairness and transparency of the process and fairness of the pricing?
- What impact might this have on future trust in Ticketmaster?

#### Media:

- How did news outlets (RTÉ, Irish Times, etc.) report on the issue?
- What themes appeared most often (e.g. fairness, consumer frustration, regulation)?
- Were journalists generally critical, neutral, or supportive?

#### Regulators:

- What actions did the CCPC or European Commission take?
- What ethical or legal standards did they highlight?
- How might their investigations or statements influence future marketing practices?

#### The business

- Was there any press release with more information
- Did they announce any change in process/pricing

# Stage 3: Developing a Project Plan

## Step 1: Set Your Main Objectives

**What is the purpose of my project? What am I aiming to discover or understand? What are smaller targets within the project to achieve to help me complete it?**

**How will I know if I've done this well? What would success look like for me? What will I be checking for later on?**

## Step 2: Break the Project into Tasks

## Step 3: Identify the Resources You'll Need

## Step 4: Build a Realistic Schedule

## Step 5: Carry Out a Risk Assessment

## Step 6: Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation Of Your Plan

## Stage 3: Developing a project plan (1-2 hours)

Links to U3.1, U3.2, U3.3

**Goal for this stage:** To create a simple but structured project plan that will guide your work, help you stay organised, and support ongoing reflection as your study progresses.

You don't need to submit your project plan but you **will be expected to reflect on how well your plan worked**, so keep it up to date and refer back to it often.



**Take-home point:** Strong projects set clear goals, use realistic timelines, and adjust plans as challenges arise. Ongoing monitoring is as important as the plan itself.

### Step 1: Set Your Main Objectives

These are the overall aims of your research -> what you want to find out and why. Your objectives should:

- Respond directly to the theme of the brief
- Be relevant to business at a local, national, or international level
- Connect to your SMART research question
- Align with one or more cross-cutting themes (e.g. Ethics and Sustainability, Entrepreneurial Thinking)

What is the purpose of my project? What am I aiming to discover or understand? What are smaller targets within the project to achieve to help me complete it?

### What else should I do when planning? Define Your Criteria for Success

Success criteria are the standards you set for judging the quality of your work.

How will I know if I've done this well? What would success look like for me? What will I be checking for later on?

**Take-home point:** Strong projects define clear success criteria from the start and use them to reflect honestly on what went well and what could be improved.

**Step 2: Break the Project into Tasks (Roles & Responsibilities)**

List the key tasks you need to complete, in what order, and by when.

- What steps will I take, and in what order?
- What tools or supports will I need?
- How will I stay organised?
- What have I learned previously that might help me?
- What will I need to do?
- What skills will I need in doing this study?
- What competencies might I develop in doing this study?
- How will I organise my work and keep records?
- How will I monitor and evaluate my progress?

Task	Start Date	Due Date	Notes

**Step 3: Identify the Resources You'll Need**

Resources include data, tools, people, and platforms. Good planning means identifying these early. What sources or tools will I need to complete my research? When will I need them, and how will I access them? Will these sources give me different perspectives?

**Step 4: Build a Realistic Schedule**

Break your project into stages across your available time.

**Prompt questions:**

- When will I complete each step of the project?
- Have I allowed time for unexpected delays?
- How and when will I check my progress?



**Step 5: Carry Out a Risk Assessment**

Think about what might go wrong and how you'll deal with it.

**Prompt questions:**

- What could delay or block my progress?
- What steps can I take now to reduce that risk?
- What's my backup plan if something changes?

Risk	Potential Impact	Backup Plan

**Step 6: Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation Of Your Plan**

You'll be expected to show that you checked and adapted your plan as you went.

Make sure to build in monitoring and evaluation check-ins at different points. This will provide you with much stronger and real reflection from the process instead of trying to write it all at the end of your project.

What's going well so far, and how do I know? What needs to improve? Do I need to revisit my objectives, resources, or schedule?

**Take-home point:** Students should be able to show that they didn't just follow their plan, they reflected, adjusted, and improved it as they progressed.

## Stage 3: Ongoing Monitoring & Reflection

How did the project plan help me stay on track?  
 Did I make any changes? Why?  
 What would I do differently if I was starting again?

### Checklist – Before Moving to Stage 4

### checklist

- I've written clear objectives that link to the brief and my research question
- I've defined how I will judge success
- I've listed key project tasks in a realistic order
- I've identified the tools and resources I'll need
- I've created a timeline that works with my availability
- I've thought about risks and how to respond
- I've built in time to check and adjust my plan
- I've reflected on how useful this plan will be

### What if I'm stuck?

**I'm stuck -> I don't know what tasks to include.**

Break your project into steps: finding sources, gathering data, analysing it, writing conclusions. Your SMART question should guide your tasks. Create a list of smaller tasks that you can work through so that you don't feel overwhelmed by the overall project.



**I'm stuck -> I'm not sure how to set a timeline.**

Start with your submission deadline and work backwards. Assign rough time blocks to each stage. There is a guide to the amount of hours you would expect to spend at each stage at the start of this planner.

**I'm stuck -> I didn't plan well and now I'm behind.**

That's okay. Update your plan and explain how and why it changed. That *adaptation* is part of what's assessed – how you respond and work around the challenge will help in your reflection.