

## Hiatus in the Hyacinths



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**The summer break is traditionally the time when those engaged in academic pursuits unwind. This is the period in which batteries are re-charged and sun tans topped up. It is a time to relax, perhaps take a well earned holiday and experience a different culture or way of life.**

But there is a risk in enjoying this hiatus in the hyacinths too much!

The summer can also be an excellent opportunity to broaden horizons in more ways than one. These months present a great opportunity to extend the scope of one's reading away from the core texts into areas of specific interest. Arduous flights and the boredom of airport waiting lounges can be alleviated by dipping into the work of some of the leading thinkers in the fields of marketing and strategy. Whilst the thought of picking up a paperback focused on marketing rather than action or romance may appear curious, such books are generally well written and enjoyable (honest!).

The structure of the Professional Diploma assumes an even distribution of effort over the 12 month period; Chartered Institute of Marketing assignments are due on a strict six-monthly rotation. With a submission date in November, those who do not give any attention to their chosen assignments until September will significantly increase the time pressure that they are under. Putting oneself in a situation in which 100% of the work has to be done in 50% of the time that was originally available is generally not a smart move. Inevitably, performance levels will reduce. In some cases, the delay may even be the difference between making the grade or falling just below it.

Such a situation can be avoided by adopting a more structured approach and treating the completion of the session's assignments as a marathon rather than a sprint. This will involve, to an extent, project management skills, determination and resilience. These are all attributes which are vital for success in the world of work as well as the academic realm.

Fortunately, there are tools available that will greatly assist in helping to structure available time. For example, the Cambridge Marketing College provides a proforma assignment planning template. This breaks down each module into bite-sized chunks and sets out a manageable programme of work, on a week-by-week basis. By making a commitment to do "a little and often" a far more comfortable path to qualification can be charted.

Enjoy the smell of the hyacinths but don't be mesmerised by it!

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