

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**  
**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**  
**MAIN EXAMINATION 2011/2012**

**TITLE OF PAPER:      MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS 1**  
**COURSE CODE:        BA317/BA215**  
**TIME ALLOWED:      3 HOURS**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1. This paper consists of Sections A & B**
- 2. The Case Study Section A is compulsory**
- 3. Answer any three questions from Section B**

**Note:**

**THIS EXAMINATION PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED  
BY THE INVIGILATOR**

100 systems analysts and programmers. Almost all the code for application development projects is written in VISUAL BASIC programming language. Software Associates both develops and maintains its custom software products. The president of the company, Edward Simelane, has very little information available for determining how well the firm is doing, whether new marketing efforts are paying off, and whether projects are being completed on time and within budget. Because the firm has grown so rapidly, internal information systems are crude and almost no management reporting systems exist. Edward has decided to use the critical success factors method to determine his information needs for planning new activities for the firm as well as monitoring existing operations. With the help of a consultant, Ed has been able to determine the following critical success factors:

- Ease of use of software products
- Company morale
- Project completion within budget and time constraints
- Quality of sales literature
- Risk recognition in major contracts for software development

In the software design business, software products must be easy to use to ensure that information systems will be accepted and used. Company morale is important because Software Associates relies heavily on the technical know-how of its experienced and programmers and analysts. One of the major CSFs of the firm is the ability to complete software programs within budgetary and time constraints. In addition, Ed wants the sales literature to provide a high-quality image of the firm. Ed does not want to take on projects with such a high risk that they might not be completed successfully. A significant cost overrun or project failure would hurt the company's reputation in a highly competitive marketplace.

**Required:**

- a. Recommend measures that Ed can use to determine how well the firm is doing in achieving each of the critical success factors. (25 marks)
- b. Comment on the applicability of this (CSF) method for this organization compared to the ends/means analysis. (15 marks)

**SECTION B**

Answer any *three* questions from this section.

**Question 1**

Why is an understanding of the value chain important in information systems planning and management? (20 marks)

**Question 2**

Fully explain the usefulness of the Five competitive forces model as proposed by M.E. Porter in assessing the impact of IT on competitive advantage? (20 marks)

**Question 3**

How would a manager differentiate a good decision support system from a bad one? (20 marks)

**Question 4**

Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of distributed databases (20 marks)