

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
SUPPLEMENTARY 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

SECTION A

This section is compulsory

Mariposa Products

Mariposa Products, a textile and apparel manufacturer acquired its own computer in 1996. The first application to be developed and implemented was production and inventory control. Other applications that were added in succession were payroll, accounts receivable and accounts payable. The applications were not integrated as a result of the piecemeal manner in which they were developed and implemented. Nevertheless, the system proved satisfactory for several years. Generally, reports were prepared on time, and information was readily accessible.

Mariposa operates in a very competitive industry. A combination of increased operating costs and the competitive nature of the industry have had an adverse effect on profit margins and operating profit. Sam Dladla, Mariposa's president, suggested that some special analyses be prepared in an attempt to provide information that would help management improve operations. Unfortunately, some of the data were not consistent among reports. In addition, there were no data by product line or by department. These problems were attributable to the fact that Mariposa's applications were developed piecemeal, and as a consequence, duplicate data that were not necessarily consistent existed in Mariposa's computer system. Dladla was concerned that Mariposa's computer system was not able to generate the information his managers needed to make decisions. He called a meeting of his top management and certain data processing personnel to discuss possible solutions to the company's problems. The consensus was that a new information system that would integrate Mariposa's applications was needed.

Mariposa's controller suggested that the firm consider a database system that all departments would use. As a first step the controller proposed hiring a database administrator on a consulting basis to determine the feasibility of converting to a database system.

Required:

- a. Identify the characteristics that constitute a system under the database approach. (10 marks)
- b. List the benefits and drawbacks to Mariposa Products of converting to the database approach. (10 marks)
- c. What steps should be taken in converting to the new system? (10 marks)
- d. What are several key duties of the database administrator? (10 marks)

SECTION B

Answer any *three* questions from this section.

Question 1

Discuss the major benefits brought by internet to business. (20 marks)

Question 2

Discuss the importance of the strategic grid in information technology management. (20 marks)

Question 3

Critically analyse the use of business systems planning as an information needs assessment tool. (20 marks)

Question 4

- a. How can information technology contribute to an organisation's competitive edge? (10 marks)
- b. What are the advantages of CIM? Why does there seem to be lack of interest among production executives in CIM? (10 marks)