

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION PAPER

JULY, 2014

TITLE OF PAPER : STRATEGIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

COURSE CODE : BA 402/502 FULL TIME, 502 IDE

TIME ALLOWED : THREE (3) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1. THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS IN THIS PAPER FOUR (6)**
 - 2. SECTION A IS COMPULSORY.**
 - 3. ANSWER ANY THREE (3) QUESTIONS IN SECTION B**
 - 4. THE MARKS TO BE AWARDED FOR EACH QUESTION ARE INDICATED ALONGSIDE THE QUESTION.**

NOTE: MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH, AS WELL AS FOR ORDERLY AND NEAT PRESENTATION OF WORK. FURTHER MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR USE OF RELEVANT EXAMPLES.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: NONE

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION A

Xylo, Inc. Creates Work/Life Solutions

"The remarkable, and partly fortuitous, coming together of the technologies that make up what we label IT-information technologies-has begun to alter, fundamentally, the manner in which we do business and create economic value, often in ways that were not readily foreseeable even a decade ago," remarked Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve System, to university students in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "As a consequence, growth in output per work hour has accelerated, elevating the standard of living of the average American worker."

Being more productive has been a morale booster for U.S. workers. A recent survey of U.S. adults over the age of 18 showed that 92 percent found meaning and purpose in their work. But as people become more involved with their careers, they often find it difficult to participate fully in their career and have enough time for their other life obligations. Work commitments may compete with life commitments, known as the work/life dilemma. A college student experiences this dilemma when he or she has to pass up an outing with friends to finish a class project due the next day. Working students have an even more complex dilemma by having to balance school commitments, work commitments, and a personal life-the work/student/life dilemma. As we take on full-time careers and full-time family responsibilities, the stakes in this balancing act become high. With the increase in dual-income homes and single working parents, employees are feeling the pull between work and home responsibilities more than ever. Businesses have recognized this problem and are investing in tools to help their employees successfully meet this challenge.

Xylo, Inc., is a leading provider of Web-based work/life solutions used by Fortune 500 and other leading companies to attract and retain employees. Xylo clients include Charles Schwab, EDS, Eddie Bauer, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, Nordstrom, Northwest Airlines, Sodexo, and many more. "These companies are gaining a competitive edge in the labor market and sending a powerful message to employees about their strong commitment to work/life," said Xylo Senior Vice President of Marketing Judy Meleliat.

Work/life solutions such as Xylo's provide the tools for employees to strike a balance between their work demands and personal lives, while allowing their companies to increase loyalty and reward their employees' commitment. Xylo provides its clients with a custom-designed, password-protected Web site tailored to fit the client's corporate objectives, culture, and values. The Web site offers employees direct access to a wide variety of services and information. It also includes a link to the company intranet for access from any computer with an Internet connection. The Web site is organized into three areas:

1. Co-worker Connection: Join a Company Team or Interest Group, Post a Classified Ad, Join a Carpool
2. My Company: Company News, Company Links, Employee Birthdays, Suggestion Box, On-line Surveys
3. Discounts & Services: The Mall, Travel, Entertainment, Financial Matters, Healthy Living, Family Matters

The Co-worker Connection area nurtures a community atmosphere among the members of the organization. The My Company area provides two-way communication between members and management and also can act as a gateway to the corporate intranet. Discounts & Services offers employees a convenient place to shop, make travel arrangements, and access helpful information. This area offers discounts from well-known Xylo marketing partners in travel, entertainment, and retail industries, and it can be edited to include local advertisements and discounts from the client company's own corporate partners.

Some might argue that allowing employees to shop on-line during work hours is distracting and counterproductive. But in the new work environment, with employees juggling so many responsibilities, many employers are finding that when they take an active role in helping employees handle work/life issues, employees become more content and focused, and the whole company benefits. Work/life solutions such as Xylo's exploit the benefits of modern-day telecommunications to build community, commitment, and contentment in the workforce.

Questions

1. What types of industry would benefit most from a work/life solution such as Xylo's? Is there any type of business in which this solution might be inappropriate? 20 marks
2. Many companies establish policies regarding appropriate use of the corporate intranet and the Internet. What policies would you create to accompany a product such as Xylo's? 20 marks

SECTION B

ANSWER ANY 3 QUESTIONS

Question 1

What drives the investor confidence in IT? 20 marks

Question 2

What drives an organisation towards better IT governance? 20 marks

Question 3

Discuss the key issues that are needed for a successful arrangement between client and vendor when outsourcing. 20 marks

Question 4

Discuss the three dimensions that are important in implementation risk 20 marks

Question 5

What are the questions that executives can use as they leverage IT to drive business models strategy? 20 marks