

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
SUPPLEMENTARY/ RE-SIT EXAMINATION 2016/2017

TITLE OF PAPER: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS I
COURSE CODE: BUS211/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**

CASE STUDY

This section is compulsory

The Brown Company

The Brown Company of Ezulwini, Gables, is a medium-sized regional distributor. Over the past 10 years its sales have increased more than 100%; however, its profits have not kept pace with the growth in sales. The lag in profits began about the time the founder died, five years ago. He had managed largely on instinct, or "by the seat of his pants," as he put it. His successors apparently have not had his intuitive sense about the business, and they have blamed the slower growth of profits on inflation. Other ominous signs have recently appeared. For instance, the firm borrowed funds at high rates of interest two years ago to build a warehouse. The intentions were to obtain higher sales penetration in the area surrounding the warehouse and to reduce shipping costs. However, inventory costs and operating costs at the warehouse have been higher than expected; also the monthly payments on the loan have proved to be quite burdensome. Furthermore, the firm has been paying its suppliers immediately on receipt of invoices, apparently out of pride rather than necessity. As a result, the firm is currently encountering a cash squeeze in addition to the profit decline mentioned earlier.

Required

Describe specific information that, if more accurate and available in a timely manner, would have helped to avert the firm's current problems. (25)

Section B

Answer any three questions from this section.

Question 1

Discuss the role of information technology in improving the performance of value chain activities. (25)

Question 2

Discuss the benefits and challenges of distributed systems. (25)

Question 3

Under four headings, explain how an organisation like UNISWA can benefit from electronic market systems. (25)

Question 4

Why might a firm decide to implement only certain modules in an ERP system rather than a complete implementation. (25)