

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION PAPER
JULY, 2018

TITLE OF PAPER : STRATEGIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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

TIME ALLOWED : THREE (3) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS:
1. THE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS IN THIS PAPER = FIVE (5)
 2. SECTION A IS COMPULSORY.
 3. ANSWER ANY TWO (2) 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

CONDOR INDUSTRIES

Condor Industries is a Fortune 500 firm that was founded in the 1920s as a manufacturer of such rubber as automobile radiator hoses and fan belts. It grew steadily and, in the 1950s, began diversifying by acquiring firms in other industries. There is an automobile battery company in Chicago, a printing company in Hong Kong, a can company in Denver, a brewery in Mexico City, and an electronics firm in Taiwan. The parent company in Trenton, New Jersey, has a large computer operation consisting of multiple mainframes, and each of the subsidiary companies has at least one super mini. There are many PCs in each organization, but they are generally located in administrative offices and used for data processing and offices automation. Most of data processing is performed in Trenton. The subsidiaries transmit financial data to Trenton at end of reporting periods, using high-speed data communications circuits. The vice president of information services for Condor is Walter (Walt) Schwartz. He has a staff of more than 200 information specialists. The information services units of the subsidiary organizations are much smaller, and those information specialists report to directors of information services at the subsidiary locations.

The condor executive committee is composed of the president (Alvin Baker), the vice president of manufacturing (Robert Schein), the vice president of marketing (Mary Winkle), and the CFO (Merle Golden). Schwartz reports to Golden.

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

April 23

Baker: Well, that takes care of all the important matters we need to discuss this week except for one. Walt is coming up for his annual performance review and I would like to get your input. Do any of you have anything that I should know about?

Winkle: you know my feelings. Marketing has a hard time getting applications on the computer. For the past year or so, IS has been so tied up on Robert's computer-integrated manufacturing project that haven't been able to take on any new jobs. It seems that any time they start to get caught up, they have to pull all of their resources into maintain Merle's data processing programs. I don't think we have enough information specialists.

Schein: The reason the CIM project took so much of Walt's resources is because we were trying to implement an integrated system in all of the subsidiaries at the same time. We've just about got that project completed, so things should get better.

Golden: Mary's right about the maintenance. That's a bottomless pit. We've been adding applications for the past thirty years, each time we add one our maintenance responsibilities increase. It's preventing finance from putting any new jobs on the computer as well. We would really love into expert systems. Plus, all of us have expressed an interest in an EIS. There's no way Walt is going to be handle those kinds of activity with his backlog.

Baker: I think Walt's doing the best he can with what we've given him. Realistically, I can't see that situation changing until the economy gets better and our profit performance improves. Does anybody have anything positive to say about Walt?

Winkle: Walt's in-house training program for users is working out fine. If it weren't for that, I don't know what marketing would do. It has really saved us far as decision support is concerned. Most of our managers are checked out on spread sheets, and they can retrieve data form the main database and prepare special reports using FOCUS. Some have their own databases: almost everybody is using the graphics capabilities. Walt deserves a lot of credit.

Golden: Walt runs a tight ship. He may a long time implementing a system, but it's always a good one. I can't remember the last time one of his system failed a postimplentation review. He's a stickler for controls and security. The internal auditors all think he does a great job.

Schein: I hate to be a wet blanket, but I don't think Walt is a good planner. You know he's always coming in with requests for money-all during the year. He knows we don't change budgets once they are set. It seems to me if he did a good job of planning he would have what he needed.

Baker: Merle, since Walt reports to you, how do you see his planning ability?

Golden: I think he's a good planner. We're just not giving him enough to base his plans on. We only give him a three-year plan, and only the first year is spelled out in detail. I think we've got to do better than that.

Baker: That will come in time as we get the bugs out of our strategic planning system. In the meantime, he will just have to be patient, like everybody else. Anybody else have anything to say about Walt?

Golden: One more thing. Walt has been sending me articles about a CIO, a Chief information officer. I think he'd like to have that title.

Baker: I don't see any problem with that. After all, you're the CFO. Walt can be the CIO. Maybe that will make him happy. Well, this gives me a lot to go on. I appreciate your comments. And next week we have the audio conference hook-up with the presidents of the subsidiaries. We're probably going to hear some more requests for computers. So get ready.

Golden: Do you think Walt should sit in on that?

Baker: That issue has come up before, and we have always decided against it. I don't think we should open up our meetings to non-members. Why don't we see if we can handle it ourselves? I think we have a good track record in that regard. See you next week.

- 1) Recommend a solution for the company 25 marks
- 2) Briefly outline the steps for implementing the solution. 25 marks

SECTION B

Question 1

The Swaziland science Park Research Centre wants to outsource the centre to some Indian company. Why would the Research centre enter into a large scale relationship with the Indian company? 25 marks

Question 2

What are the projects dimensions that influence implementation risk when managing IT project 25 marks

Question 3

Discuss the 3 drivers that contribute towards better IT 25 marks

Question 4

How can IT change the nature of relationship and the balance of power in buyer-seller relationship 25marks