UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MAIN EXAMINATION PAPER

DECEMBER 2019

TITLE OF PAPER : STRATEGIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

COURSE CODE : BA 402 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 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.

Where There's Demand There's a Business

While many twenty-somethings in the late 1990s focused their efforts on creating the hottest new dot-com and launching the next huge IPO (initial public offering) of stock, others drew inspiration for their success from unfulfilled practical desires involving a decades-old piece of technology. The story of one San Franciscan who worked as a freelance cameraman for a local TV station illustrates what can happen when imagination, strategic planning, and IT development mix. Babak Farahi noticed that the station where he worked consistently rejected viewers' requests for tapes of their children, friends, or pets that had appeared on the station's news broadcast the day before. But, he thought, if there is a demand for such television snippets, why not sell them? So the 24·year· old set up four VCRs in his parents' home, recorded the news every day, and persuaded the TV station's receptionists to refer viewers to him when calling to request a copy. The plan worked. His clients included small businesses, especially restaurants, and, of course, many parents who wanted copies of their children's TV appearance.

The cameraman did not grow complacent with his success. He took his business to a whole new realm after something caught his eye while waiting for a flight at San Francisco International Airport. He noticed that the TV monitor in the waiting area had printed text at the bottom of the screen. Could he expand his business by creating a closed-caption database of company products and names for sale to clients interested in monitoring press coverage of their business? This data- base would actively store televised references to companies without having to wait for specific companies to request the service. Since the captions were stored in digital form, he could use them to do an electronic search for words, and therefore for business names.

Further research uncovered two important findings essential for his new idea to thrive. First, Congress had recently passed a law that would soon mandate that broadcasters and cable operators provide closed captioning for each show with text at the bottom of the screen. This meant that companies could know if they were mentioned in a national news show on CNN or on a local channel in Baton Rouge. The less satisfying discovery was that there was no closed-caption data- base software. So the cameraman shut down his video recording business, committed himself fully to the new venture, and hired a couple of programmers to build the hardware and software for closed-caption text capture and searching.

Within a year, a new company was born, Multivision. Based in Oakland California, Multivision enables companies to automatically receive TV clips with closed captions that mention their companies via the Internet. Clients can receive all TV mentions or ones that are specific to certain fields, like a show, a network, or a time of day. Multivision has eight offices throughout the United States and records over