

Ollscoil na hEireann, Gaillimh

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

SUMMER EXAMINATIONS 2001

Masters of Accounting

Management Information Systems (MS509)

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Professor J.F. Collins

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Time Allowed : Three Hours

Candidates are required to answer Four questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Question 1

Maam Valley PLC is located on the Galway/Mayo border and is the third largest firm in the Irish food sector. Maam Valley began as a co-operative over sixty years ago and grew rapidly to become a key player in the dairy sector. As the largest bulk milk processor in the country it enjoyed considerable success in the early 1980's and in 1985 became a public company with a listing on the Irish stock exchange. Mike Staunton was appointed Group Finance Director in August of this year and replaces Dan O' Keefe who has been promoted to Group Chief Executive. Dan joined Maam Valley in 1979 as a management accountant and was part of the management team, which took the organisation public in 1985.

Maam Valley has made several large acquisitions over the past three years and now has over fifty operating sites in Ireland and the UK. These have recently been reorganised as Strategic Business Units (SBU's). Mike Staunton feels that while the existing management reporting systems are fine for financial control and stewardship purposes he is worried that they do not allow Maam Valley managers to effectively manage costs and revenues.

You are required to prepare a briefing memo for Mike Staunton on the potential contribution, which a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System could make to improve the companies operations. In particular Mike has asked you to address the following issues;

The functionality, which the ERP systems should provide

(10 Marks)

The type of benefits which the firm should expect to achieve from the ERP systems it is planning to install.

(10 Marks)

The issues to be considered when evaluating ERP vendors

(5 Marks)

P.T.O

Question 2

The Managing Director of a large multinational electronics firm has recently announced that the company intends to embark on an Intranet development programme. In preparation for this the plant manager of the local manufacturing operation here in Ireland has asked you to prepare a short report on Intranets for the senior management team. Your report should address the following issues:

The fundamental features of an Intranet.

(10 Marks)

The benefits and the risks associated with Intranets

(8 marks)

The types of applications, which are suited to the Intranet environment.

(7 marks)

Question 3

Write a short note on **two** of the following topics:

Manufacturing information Systems

Shared Service Centres

Human Resource Information Systems

(25 marks)

Question 4

You are required to make a presentation to the Finance manager of a medium size organisation on the risks associated with the development of end user applications by staff in the finance function. The firm has a network of fifty PCs and two servers. The network is connected to the firm's AS400 computer which in turn hosts the core transaction processing systems. Email and document transfer to headquarters is via a separate Mail server on the LAN. The firm also has a hi speed connection to the Internet . The firm currently has no policy on the question of application development by end users and has asked you for some practical advice on the control risks associated with the applications which have developed on the local area network.

You are required to prepare a short memorandum for the Finance manager addressing the following issues:

The risks associated with end user application development

(10 Marks)

An appropriate strategy for dealing with those risks including advice on dealing with control issues in small computer environments such as the one described.

(15 Marks)

P.T.O

Question 5

The Managing Director of a large multinational electronics firm has recently announced that the company intends to embark on a data warehousing project. In preparation for this the plant manager of the local manufacturing operation here in Ireland has asked you to prepare a short report on data warehousing for the senior management team. Your report should address the following issues:

The key features of a data warehouse.

(10 marks)

The benefits and the risks associated with data warehouses and;

(10 marks)

The types of challenges which data warehousing projects pose for finance staff.

(5 marks)

Question 6

A medium sized accountancy practice is currently in the process of upgrading its computer facilities. Since 1990 the firm has had in excess of 25 pcs running on a novell LAN. While the network server has been upgraded on at least three occasions in the past there has been only a limited programme to replace the pc clients. The network has four printers and a recently installed email gateway to an internet service provider (ISP). The server hosts a number of applications including software for accounts preparation, tax computations and practice management. In addition a number of the staff in the office have laptops which they use for audit working papers on a standalone basis. The senior partner in the practice has asked for your advice on developing an IT strategy for the practice. In particular she has asked you to address the following issues:

The hardware and network architecture which the firm needs to put in place

(7 marks)

The types of applications which the firm should consider implementing

(8 marks)

The likely impact of the web and e-commerce on the activities of the practice

(10 marks)