FEED BACK LETTER – ASSIGNMENT ONE

ASSIGNMENT 01 - TOTAL MARKS 50
This assignment covers the following units/modules/topics
a. Introduction to information systems in organizations
b. Information systems organizations and strategy
c. IT infrastructure and emerging technologies

The leaning outcome for this specific assignment is to:
Demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts of information management systems at organizational level;

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the three elements of an information system (hardware, software, and persware) that managers must consider. [6 marks]

Hardware is centred on the input and output components of an information system.
Software is centred on the processing component.
Persware is centred on the feedback component and on how employees can effectively use an information system.
All three are important. However research has shown that most information Systems fail because of Persware or people. So much attention can be given to Persware by managers.

2. You work for an auto manufacturer and distributor. How could you use information systems to achieve greater customer intimacy? [4 marks]

You could create a Web site that allows customers to customize cars, communicate with support personnel and other car owners.

You could create an automated e-mail service reminding car owners to take their car in for periodic checkups.

You could have an information system that tracks customer preferences in local areas, so you can provide cars that reflect local customer needs and desires.

3. What is the difference between information technology and information systems? Describe some of the functions of information systems. [6 marks]

Information technology (IT) consists of all the hardware and software that a firm needs to use to achieve its business objectives. Information systems are more complex. An information system can be defined technically as a set of interrelated components that collect (or retrieve), process, store, and distribute information to support decision making and control in an organization.

An information system:

- supports decision making, coordination, and control
- helps employees analyze problems
- helps employees visualize complex subjects
- Helps create new products

4. Describe at least two benefits of using enterprise systems [4 marks]
Benefits of an enterprise system include a consolidated view of the organization, unified platforms, more efficient operations, and customer-driven business processes.

5. How can a transaction processing system help an organization’s management information system and decision-support system? [3 marks]

A transaction processing system gathers data about the day-to-day operations of the organization from all functional areas. The data can be fed into the other systems to help the business meet its objectives. It can also help prevent islands of information in the organization.
6. Discuss the impact new information systems may have on organizational culture and organizational politics. [3 marks]

Political resistance is one of the great difficulties of bringing about organizational change—especially the development of new information systems. Employees have different viewpoints about how resources, rewards, and punishments should be distributed and information systems can bring about significant changes in strategy, business objectives, business processes, and procedures.

Organizational culture encompasses a basic set of assumptions about what products to produce, how to produce them, where, and for whom. Because technological changes can disrupt these basic assumptions, organizational culture is severely threatened. Therefore, employees will resist the changes.

7. Value chain analysis is useful at the business level to highlight specific activities in the business where information systems are most likely to have a strategic impact. Discuss this model, identify the activities, and describe how the model can be applied to the concept of information technology. [12 marks]

The value chain model identifies specific, critical leverage points where a firm can use information technology most effectively to enhance its competitive positions. Exactly where can it obtain the greatest benefit from strategic information systems? What specific activities can be used to create new products and services, enhance market penetration, lock in customers and suppliers, and lower operational costs?

This model views the firm as a series or chain of basic activities that add a margin of value to a firm's products or services. These activities can be categorized as either primary activities
or support activities.

- **Primary activities** are most directly related to the production and distribution of the firm's products and services that create value for the customer. Primary activities include: inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, sales and marketing, and service.

- **Support activities** make the delivery of the primary activities possible and consist of: organization infrastructure (administration and management), human resources (employee recruiting, hiring, and training), technology (improving products and the production process), and procurement (purchasing input).

8. Identify and describe five or more of the current trends in contemporary software platforms. [12 marks]

Growing use of Linux and open-source software — Open-source software is produced and maintained by a global community of programmers and is downloadable for free. Linux is a powerful, resilient open-source operating system that can run on multiple hardware platforms and is used widely to run Web servers.

2. **HTML5** — This is the next evolution of HTML which simplifies embedding multimedia, rich media, and animation in the browser.

3. **Cloud-based services** — In cloud-based services and software, users rent applications or storage space from online providers rather than running these applications or themselves or using local storage.

4. **Web services and service-oriented architecture** — Web services are loosely coupled software components based on open Web standards that are not product-specific and can work with any application software and operating system. They can be used as components of Web-based applications linking the systems of two different organizations or to link
disparate systems of a single company.

5. Software outsourcing — Companies are purchasing their new software applications from outside sources, including application software packages, by outsourcing custom application development to an external vendor (that may be offshore), or by renting software services from an application service provider.

6. Cloud-based services — Companies are leasing infrastructure, hardware, and software from vendors, paying on a subscription or per-transaction basis.

7. Mashups and apps — Mashups are programs created by combining two or more existing Internet applications. Apps are small programs developed for mobiles and handhelds, turning them into more robust computing tools.

[THE END]