

BOTSWANA COLLEGE OF DISTANCE AND OPEN LEARNING

In collaboration with
THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration

Commonwealth Executive Masters in Public Administration

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE (EC321)

SESSIONAL EXAMINATION

Marks – 100

Time allowed: 3 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The examination consists of **two** sections: Part A and B
2. Begin each answer to a new question on a new page.
3. Answer questions according to instructions given in each section
4. Write answers in the answer booklet provided
5. Write in grammatical English

Part A: Case study

[40 marks]

Carefully read the article below and answer ALL the following questions.

Using IT to energise sales and marketing: A Bryant Homes case study

Bryant Homes is a large organisation with developments from Scotland to the south coast. Within Bryant Homes, the 13 regional offices and 120 housing developments struggled to maintain accurate and timely information. To avoid any feeling of isolation, the Intranet was set up and opened a whole new vehicle for communication by linking together all 'sales centres' and regional offices with the head office.

The Intranet facility also helps to make the whole buying process quicker and smoother by providing an Internal Sales System. Each sales centre is connected to Bryant Homes' head office and its solicitors through the Internal Sales System designed to service all customer needs and requirements. Customer details, development details and legal information can all be accessed and processed in a way which improves customer satisfaction. Each site has a personalised Sales System showing the external elevations, selected rooms, floor plans and 'walkaround' for each house type available on that site.

The sharing of information between each development, regional offices and head office, enables staff at Bryant Homes to respond more quickly to the needs of customers and also share best practice through the process of benchmarking. Not everyone has access to the Internet. Therefore, to ensure as wide an audience as possible could be reached, Bryant produced a Bryant Homes Product Portfolio CD-ROM. The CD-ROM used the same format and content as the website and features an 'electronic walkaround' for the majority of house types.

The 'walkaround' facility allows customers to turn through 360 degrees in order to view a room from every angle to provide a true representation of each home with the use of real photography. This provides customers with the opportunity to view a house type for which there is not a show-home on a particular development. On each PC, in every sales centre, Bryant Homes has introduced a corporate screensaver that has moving images reinforcing the Bryant product and brand messages.

Bryant Homes also uses 'virtual reality'. Virtual reality provides a way of both visualising and experiencing something. It is the next best thing to being there. Customers can see what a development will look like before it is completed.

Use of the Internet has become widespread, as more providers allow people access to the system. Increasingly, before making a major purchase, they use it as a source of information and an opportunity to undertake their own consumer research.

Bryant Homes' website was launched at the Evening Standard Homebuyers Show at Olympia, London in March 1999. It is a useful information source and a good starting point for people wishing to purchase a house. It is also a selling tool and an opportunity to increase brand awareness.

The website's main dedicated system for customers is named 'Homefinder'. Homefinder is a system that will perform a search against consumer needs and requirements to locate a house type and location to suit their lifestyle. It contains images and floor plans of the entire Bryant Homes product portfolio. The information on Homefinder comes directly from a central database and is updated every 24 hours.

Input arrives from all levels within Bryant Homes, i.e. out on site by sales negotiators via the sales system, by sales departments who may want to input prices and also from site staff releasing production dates and targets. Though releasing prices and build dates into the public domain is a brave step, the information is updated daily directly from Bryant Homes' central database.

One of the benefits of 'surfing the web' for customers is that they drive the information, Bryant Homes doesn't tell the user what to look at. It is a good way of issuing press releases and improving the focus of publicity. Bryant Homes' website is also advertising space and is capable of reaching a wider international audience. This is particularly useful for attracting those wishing to relocate to the UK from overseas as such comprehensive information would be difficult to obtain otherwise.

Source: <https://businesscasestudies.co.uk/bryant-homes/using-it-to-energise-sales-and-marketing/promotion-through-an-intranet.html> (Retrieved September 2018)

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

- a. Explain what Bryant Homes did when the firm struggled to maintain accurate and timely information. **(3 marks)**

- b. Discuss any **two** main benefits of the Intranet facility? **(3 marks)**

- c. Discuss any **two** advantages that arise when a firm uses 'virtual reality' **(4 marks)**

- d. *"The sharing of information between each development, regional offices and head office, enables staff at Bryant Homes to respond more quickly to the needs of customers"*

and also share best practice through the process of benchmarking. Not everyone has access to the Internet.”

(i) How did Bryant homes ensure that a wide audience is reached? (2 mark)

(ii) If you were one of the managers at Bryant home, what **two** things would you have done to reach a wider audience? (4 marks)

e. *“The website’s main dedicated system for customers is named ‘Homefinder’. Homefinder is a system that will perform a search against consumer needs and requirements to locate a house type and location to suit their lifestyle. It contains images and floor plans of the entire Bryant Homes product portfolio.”*

(i) Describe any **two** likely challenges that could come up when customers use Homefinder. (2 marks)

(ii) Give possible solutions to the **two** likely challenges mentioned above. (2 marks)

(iii) In your opinion, what **two** other challenges could emerge when customers use Homefinder. (4 marks)

(iv) Give possible solutions to the **two** other challenges that could emerge as in (iii) above (4 marks)

f. Suppose you were asked to become the marketing manager for Homefinder

(i) Discuss **three** advantages of the firm using a website to reach and serve its customers. (6 marks)

(ii) Discuss **three** disadvantages of the firm using a website to reach and serve its customers. (6 marks)

Part B: Essay and Structured questions

[60 marks]

Choose any three (3) questions

- * 1. a. Suppose that you are requested to write down an overview of ethical issues, write down four (4) questions that fall under each of the categories below:
- i) Privacy Issues (4 marks)
 - ii) Accuracy Issues (4 marks)
 - iii) Property (4 marks)
 - iv) Accessibility (4 marks)
- b. Discuss ways in which the Internet can be used to gather information. (4 marks)
- * 2. a. Discuss **five** benefits and **two** dangers of e-commerce to customers. (7 marks)
- b. What is a value chain? (1 mark)
- c. Compare and contrast internet and the World Wide Web. (4 marks)
- d. Explain with examples each of the following types of client/server computing services:
- i) File server
 - ii) Database server
 - iii) Transaction server
- (6 marks)
- e. Discuss the concept of Fat servers or fat clients (2 marks)
- * 3. a. *“Intellectual property is the intangible property created by people or companies and protected by copyright, trade secret, and patent laws.”* With the aid of relevant examples, explain the meaning of **copyright**, **trade secret**, and **patent laws**. (6 marks)
- b. Distinguish between express written terms and implied terms. (2 marks)
- c. Distinguish between legal & ethical issues and social issues in E-Commerce. (4 marks)

d. Think of how the following types of businesses could possibly benefit from online collaboration, and justify who they should linkup with for the maximum advantage:

- i). flower shop
- ii). Airline
- iii). Bookshop
- iv). Private educational institution

(8 marks)

4 a. Explain with examples any **three (3)** of the following B2C business models:

- i) 1-to-1
- ii) 1-to-many
- iii) Many-to-1
- iv) Many-to-many
- v) Sell side models
- vi) Buy side models

(6 marks)

b. Distinguish between push and pull technology. Use specific examples.

(4 marks)

c. With the aid of examples, briefly discuss each of the following marketing strategies:

- i) Market targeting
- ii) Strategic positioning
- iii) Relationship strategy
- iv) Planning for new products

(8 marks)

d. There is a special kind of relationship strategy, called *sponsorship*.

Explain it with use of an example?

(2 marks)

END OF EXAMINATION