Unit:
Information Systems and Organisations

Assignment title:
Strategic Report on Airline Merger

Sample Assignment

Important notes

- Please refer to the Assignment Presentation Requirements for advice on how to set out your assignment. These can be found on the NCC Education *Campus*. Click on Policies and Advice in the left-hand menu and look under the Advice section.
- You must read the NCC Education documents 'What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates' and 'Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates' and ensure that you acknowledge all the sources that you use in your work. These documents are available on *Campus*. Click on Policies and Advice in the left-hand menu and look under the Policies section.
- You **must** complete the **'Statement and Confirmation of Own Work'**. The form is available on *Campus*. Click on Policies and Advice in the left-hand menu and look under the Policies section.
- Please make a note of the recommended word count. You could lose marks if you write 10% more or less than this.
- All electronic media will be checked for plagiarism.

Case Study: Airline Merger

Comfort Airlines (CA) is a well-established full-service European airline that has a fully developed global route network with premier class facilities and customer loyalty programmes. It is a highly reputable airline established a long time ago, that is already competing well with other similarly operated traditional airlines. However, CA have now taken a strategic decision to merge with Budget Travels (BT) which is a much smaller, low priced and no-frills airline, but otherwise a highly successful enterprise doing much better than its competitors. It is agreed that after the merger, although, BT will become a subsidiary company, they will keep some autonomy.

This merger appears a strange alliance in the sense that the business aims, operational strategies, organisational structures and the Information Systems (IS) portfolios of the two companies are very different. Nevertheless, both companies see huge advantages inherent in the merger.

CA and BT are both currently looking into the differences in their operational and strategic processes and are developing a strategy to generate a framework for a workable merger of these. After the merger, there will be numerous changes in the work practices and the working environment.

Some of the major existing differences can be summarised as follows:

- CA is a traditionally run airline with an older workforce, whereas BT can be regarded as a 21st century organisation with a much younger and more enthusiastic workforce
- CA management style is highly autocratic with lumbering bureaucracy, whereas BT management is much more open to suggestions and democratic
- CA have many stand-alone and legacy enterprise systems, run on mainframe computers, whereas BT operate highly integrated information systems operating in distributed computing environments
- CA organisational structures and work practices are highly rigid, whereas BT operates a less restricted, entrepreneurial culture within a flatter managerial structure.

CA and BT are now seeking solutions, and expert advice, to bridge the gaps in managerial and operational matters. To this end, they have employed a consultancy firm to suggest a strategy for the merged organisation that is acceptable to both airlines and to their workforce.

Introduction

Assume that you are working as an advisor with the said consultancy firm and you have been given some relevant questions regarding the CA-BT merger concerns to answer and to provide solutions. Questions are detailed within the following tasks.

You are required to write an academic report. It should be well researched, with appropriate references provided at the end of the report and correct citations within the report. Present your answers to the tasks as separate sections within the academic report ensuring that all tasks are clearly labelled.

The word count for this assignment is 4000 words, each question is equally weighted and so you should allocate **800 words per response**. This report is worth 100% of the overall unit grade.

Task 1 – 20 Marks

Write a short report convincing the Board of Directors of CA that they need to make changes to become more like a 21st century organisation.

In particular the document should address:

- The characteristics of a 21st century organisation
- Types of information systems required
- The impact of these on these on the organisational structures and working practices
- Overall benefits to the organisation

Task 2 – 20 Marks

There are many information systems (IS) in the CA portfolio that are either legacy or stand alone. Thus, there is much inefficiency present in the portfolio.

a) Provide TWO (2) examples of typical legacy/standalone IS that you would expect to exist already in CA, clearly explaining their purpose in the organisation. (6 marks)

b) Explain why these legacy/standalone IS may be regarded as inefficient and not very effective. (6 marks)

c) Suggest how Enterprise Applications Integration (EAI) and a balanced portfolio can prove advantageous for the organisation's IS. (8 marks)

Task 3 – 20 Marks

If CA were to replace some of their stand-alone and legacy systems, they would need guidance on the best ways to develop or acquire, and implement new information systems (IS).

Write a short report that discusses the various approaches to developing or acquiring, and implementing a new IS. Also provide recommendations for the best approaches for CA to follow.

Task 4 – 20 Marks

There are noticeable differences in the *management style* and *hierarchical structures* of BT and CA. The BT staff fear that, after the merger, there might be significant changes to these, altering their working environment.

Discuss the possible changes to the methods of *management and control* **and** any *structural* changes that may occur, highlighting any negative effects this could have on staff morale.

Additionally, suggest how information systems and the latest technologies can help with any required staff training following the merger.

Task 5 – 20 Marks

Enterprise Systems (ES) within CA are mainly for the use by data centre personnel within the organisation. Customer interaction with the ES is rather limited.

Discuss how the ES could be developed to improve user acceptance through human computer interaction (HCI) and highlight any benefits that might result.

Guidance

Consult with your tutor if you are uncertain about any aspect of this assignment.

Submission requirements

- A single word processed document containing all reports and answers to all tasks.
- The word count for this assignment is **4000 words (+/- 10%)**.
- The document should be properly structured.

Candidate checklist

Please use the following checklist to ensure that your work is ready for submission.

Have you read the NCC Education documents 'What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates' and 'Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates' and ensured that you have acknowledged all the sources that you have used in your work?	❑
Have you completed the 'Statement and Confirmation of Own Work' form and attached it to your assignment? **You must do this.**	❑
Have you ensured that your work has not gone over or under the recommended word count by more than 10%?	❑
Have you ensured that your work does not contain viruses and can be run directly?	❑