

Q 1: (40 pts)

Suppose you decide to start a business that recruits students for summer jobs. You will match available students with available jobs. You need to learn what positions are available and what students are available for filling those positions. In starting your business, you know you will be competing with local newspapers, Craigslist (www.craigslist.org), and with your college. You will probably have other local competitors as well.

- a. Analyze the structure of this industry according to Porter's five forces model. (15 pts; 3 pts for each of the five forces, should identify each force correctly or the answers should make sense)
- i. **Competition from vendors who manufacture substitutes** - If there is an untapped market and demand for a new company/business that could recruit and match students for summer jobs at different companies, there will be new companies that create an application that will attempt to fill the untapped market. Linked In, Indeed, and Handshake are a few of the many companies that are designed to match people to positions in different companies which makes the job application simple and more convenient.
 - ii. **Competition from new competitors** - There are many different new companies that match students who meet specific qualifications with different employers that are looking for those qualities. One of the most well-known sites is LinkedIn which is a company that matches people who are looking for jobs and internships with employers that are looking to fill positions in their company. LinkedIn is very popular and almost everyone has one which means that it is a big competitor along with Craigslist and the local newspaper. Knowing that there are huge competitors that are doing the same thing that we wish to do, it is going to be very difficult to succeed in the business environment especially because LinkedIn is an application that could be utilized year-round.
 - iii. **Competition from existing rivals** - One well known existing rival in this market already would be Craigslist. Craigslist is home to many ads/postings of employers searching for future employees. In particular, it is very common for a large increase of postings during the summer directed towards students on break. Craigslist is already an established competitor in the summer employment market.
 - iv. **Bargaining power of suppliers** - When it comes to the power/force that the suppliers have, the main driving force is going to be what it is they have to offer and how differentiated and specialized the products or services they are offering are. For example, in the scenario of our new business the power that we would have as the supplier would be our differentiation compared to other competitors. Unlike Craigslist or Handshake who both tend to be the actual employers seeking out future employees, our business focuses on not attempting to fill positions for ourselves but rather to help those students seeking jobs to match with those wanting help in their own business. In a way our business is acting as a "matchmaker" between the two parties. This differentiation is what gives us the bargaining power as the supplier of this service.

- v. **Bargaining power of customers** - With so many different platforms to search for a summer job, the bargaining power of the customers increases with the higher number of options they have in seeking a job for the summer. For instance, a student on summer break can try and find a job through our business, Craigslist, college employment applications such as Handshake, or any other competing platform that offers students these jobs.
- b. Given your analysis in part a, recommend a competitive strategy. (5 pts)
 - i. Due to the heavy competition in this industry from Craigslist, the local newspaper, Linked In and Indeed, we would recommend that we focus on how we are different compared to our competitors. Most of these companies are year-round applications that could be used by anyone who is looking for a job. In order to make our business stand out from the competitors, we should gear our business strategy towards a specific segment, students, and emphasize its summer job opportunities. By gearing the business towards students, we could find and recruit companies that are looking for young students who are willing to learn instead of employers who are trying to find people who are extremely experienced. This would make it easier and more efficient for students who are looking for summer jobs because most of their search will be filtered and they would not need to go to interviews just to hear that they are not experienced enough for the job.
- c. Describe the primary value chain activities as they apply to this business. (5 pts)
 - i. **Inbound Logistics:** The Inbound Logistics of this business would be student profiles that are looking for summer jobs. Their profiles could consist of contact information, education, experience, skills, and other qualities that might interest employers.
 - ii. **Operations/Manufacturing:** In the Operations portion of the value chain, the students who are looking for summer jobs would be matched with the employers depending on what they are looking for and their qualifications.
 - iii. **Outbound Logistics:** Outbound Logistics will be profiles of different companies that are looking to employ students over the summer. This could include the available positions that they are looking to fill, what qualifications they are looking for, and other requirements that would like fulfilled by students who are going to have these summer jobs.
 - iv. **Sales and Marketing:** In order to make the business more popular than its competition, it should distinguish their differences being focused on allowing students to find jobs during the summer.
 - v. **Customer Service:** If the business is not meeting the expectations of the consumers, both the students and employers, the business should have thorough customer service to understand specific scenarios and how to address this issue whether it be finding more employers who match what students are looking for or to provide critical feedback to students who might not meet the requirements of these different employers.
- d. Describe a business process for recruiting students. (5 pts)
 - i. Using a sales and marketing business process, interest surveys could be used in order to analyze the market, which in this case would the students that are being

recruited. These interest surveys could determine the types of jobs that students are more qualified for and are better matches for the students in terms of time and ability. These interest surveys would prove to be more appealing to students due to the meticulous placements that would appeal more to the students on a personal level.

- e. Describe information systems that could be used to support the business process in part d. (5 pts)
 - i. An information system that could be used to support the business process is an online data system. This would be more easily accessible for students to complete and would be a more efficient way for the business itself to store data and pair students with jobs.
- f. Explain how the process you describe in part d and the system you describe in part e reflect your competitive strategy. (5 pts)
 - i. The sales and marketing process and system that were chosen for this business are catered to the personal interests of the students. Catering towards the personal interests of students could distinguish this business from competition through the factor that this business is willing to show personal interest towards students and would lead them to lean towards wanting to choose this business more.

Q 2. (20 pts; 5 pts for each question)

Suppose that your father asks you to help him purchase a new computer. He wants to use his computer for email, Internet access, downloading pictures from his digital camera, uploading those pictures to a shared photo service, and writing documents to members of his antique auto club.

- a. What CPU, memory, and disk specification do you recommend?

I would recommend dual-processor because speed and function would be better than a computer with a single CPU. Although the dual-processor is going to be more expensive than a single CPU, it will be worth the cost because he needs to ensure that the computer speed is fast enough even after he fills up the storage with his pictures. Moreover, he wants to use his computer with two main functions: write documents (including emails and search online) and upload photos. Therefore, he needs the dual-processor. I would also suggest him to purchase 8GB RAM because his computer has various things to “memorize” including every word he types for his antique auto club and every picture he downloads from his digital camera. For hard disk space, I would ask him to purchase 256GB because pictures from his digital camera would take up a considerable amount of space.

- b. What software does he need?

He needs application software because it will allow him to create documents, do online research, send emails, and work on the pictures he uploaded from his digital camera. In terms of operating system, I believe it depends on personal preference, but I would recommend him to use Windows if he only plans to upload pictures. However, if he wants to edit pictures as well, I would ask him to purchase macOS since it does a better job on editing pictures than Windows

does. Gmail and Google Chrome are the best choices for sending emails and accessing the Internet. He could also use Google Docs for writing documents and Google Drive for downloading and uploading pictures. Since these applications are all managed by Google, it would be convenient for him to use.

c. Shop www.dell.com, www.hp.com, and www.lenovo.com for the best computer deal.

d. Which computer would you recommend and why?

I would recommend to purchase ThinkPad X270 from Lenovo because its price (starting at \$429.00) is reasonable based on its technological specifications. It matches with my recommendations for CPU, memory, and disk specification because it has Intel Core i5 dual-processor with 8GB RAM and 256 GB hard disk space. In addition, the operating system is Windows 10 Pro, so applications he will use on his laptop are going to be up-to-date. The screen size is 12.5" HD (1366*768), which is a reasonable size to take the laptop anywhere. I also noticed that laptops with the same screen size from other companies are much more expensive than ThinkPad X270, making it competitive. Battery for this laptop lasts 13 hours and it only weighs 2.9lbs, so it is convenient to use at anytime and at any place. Since ThinkPad X270 offers all the necessary functions that he needs with an affordable price, I would strongly recommend him to purchase this.

Q 3. (40 pts)

Suppose you work at a company called GearUp and Emily asks you to create a list of the top five features needed by the GearUp iOS application. Visit a company similar to GearUp, say Woot (www.woot.com), to get a sense of the requirements. If you have access to an iPhone or an iPad, download Woot's iOS application and study it. List what you think are the application's top five features and functions and briefly describe them.

1. An important feature of the Woot App is that they have separated all of their products into their own categories, such as computers, home & kitchen, sports & outdoors, and all deals to make it easier for their customers to find what they need. Woot has all sorts of products, so when you decide to build an app similar to Woot you would want to categorize your products for easier navigation throughout the app.
2. On the Home page of the Woot App customers are bombarded with "Daily Deals", "Best Sellers", and "Deals Under \$25" that are customized to the customer's liking. The first thing a customer sees when they open their app are the "Daily Deals" which are products the company views as the best bargains and represent products from all of the categories. Including this section right when the customer first opens the app is beneficial because these are usually products that customers are always looking for and represent the most popular products on the market. The "Best Sellers" section simply displays the products that have sold the most over the past couple days or weeks. Including this section is important because it most directly represents the most popular products on the market. Lastly on the Home page, you can find a section titled "Deals Under \$25", which like the title conveys, displays good deals on quality products that are less than \$25. Including this section is smart because it adheres to customers of all social and economic classes.

3. Another interesting feature that the Woot application has to offer is a “Forums” section for its users. Under this section, the application offers a platform for users of the app to discuss, get opinions and reviews, and discover some of the best user rated deals. This is a powerful feature that they have to offer since it is one thing to have good ratings on a website that can sometimes give skewed information, but it is another thing to be able to discuss first hand with other real users that may have already interacted or used a certain product and see how their experience went with the product featured. This is different from many other deal sites since the others usually offer only a posting for the featured deals and not a way for people to share their first hand experiences with ease. Implementing a forums feature similar to Woot’s would be beneficial to the GearUp application since it will enhance the user’s experience.
4. Another top feature that the Woot application has to offer is the ability for their users to score a daily deal from playing a simple digital game on their app or by participating in a survey they are conducting. This feature allows for a deal on a designated product for interacting with their application in a fairly simple manner. The user does not know what the daily reward will be when they start the game which is why it is helpful in gaining more users to interact with this section. Although it is usually not a significant deal on a very popular item, the chance that the deal could be of use to the user is what keeps the users checking each day. This feature provides extra motivation for the application user to check the Woot app daily to make sure they never miss a deal they could possibly utilize. The GearUp application can use a similar feature/strategy to increase the number of web visits each day and interactions with certain featured products.
5. One of the interesting features of the Woot App is it allows a section under the “More” tab that allows their consumers to provide feedback about the App. A lot of companies will have this section on their website/app, however it’ll be tough to find, whereas Woot makes this section very accessible and easy to find. Receiving feedback from consumers is imperative in improving your business because it allows you the opportunity to hear from consumers on what they would like to see. Without this section Woot would have to trust their gut and predict what they believe consumers would like to see. Also, by having this section Woot is able to not only improve their products and deals, but also the app in general to adapt to the ever evolving needs of their consumers.