

Practical assignment 1.1

Determining the information needs

Activities

Analysing information or existing information analyses

Collecting and sorting information

Studying the procedures and means used in the organization, and taking these into account

Reporting, informing and documenting

Qualification dossier	ICT management 2007 - 2008
Position	ICT Manager
Core task 1	Developing (parts of) information systems
Work process 1.1	Determining information needs



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Introduction

In practical assignment 1.1 you are going to chart the information needs (/supply) within (a section of) the organization. You will achieve this by studying company processes and the existing information (supply) system, by carrying out interviews and/or surveys with the different types of user and with the management, and by analysing the incidents coming in to the service desk.

In this practical assignment *Determining information needs* you will find the following components:

- an overview of the qualification dossier (QD);
- assignments;
- support in the assignments:
 - *questions;*
 - *the step-by-step plan that you can use in preparing and carrying out the assignments;*
 - *tips carrying out the assignments.*

Overview of the qualification dossier

ICT management

Core task Work process		ICT Manager	Network Manager
1 Developing (parts of) information systems			
1.1	Determining the information needs	x	x
1.2	Producing a design for (part of) an information system	x	x
1.3	Drawing up a plan of action	x	x
1.4	Creating a test environment	x	x
2 Implementing (parts of) information systems			
2.1	Drawing up an implementation plan	x	x
2.2	Carrying out an implementation plan	x	x
2.3	Providing support for acceptance tests	x	x
2.4	Evaluating an implementation	x	x
3 Managing (parts of) information systems			
3.1	Preventing disruptions / malfunctions	x	x
3.2	Localizing and remedying disruptions / malfunctions	x	x
3.3	Dealing with and rounding off incidents reported	x	
3.4	Drawing up and monitoring procedures	x	x
4 Setting up and organizing a service desk			
4.1	Making a service desk operational	x	
4.2	Managing a service desk	x	
4.3	Drawing up users' instructions	x	

Activities

- Analysing information or existing information analyses
- Collecting and sorting information
- Studying the procedures and means used in the organization, and taking these into account
- Reporting, informing and documenting

Assignment 1: Determining information needs

In this assignment you are going to chart the information needs within one or more company processes.

Acquaint yourself fully with these company processes and the information flows that play a role in them, in other words gain for yourself a picture of the functional design of the existing information system (or the relevant part of it).

Study, by means of well thought out interviews, the work processes of the different sorts of users and tasks they perform (end users, helpdesk and IT personnel)

Pay great attention to their wishes, needs and complaints about the information system. When doing so, take into consideration the mail system (performance and spam mail), the Internet and intranet site (uptime, quality and currency) and security (incidences of viruses and spy ware attacks), etc.

After they have logged in, how long does it take before the users' work environment is operational, and is this then complete (printers, home folders, mail, etc)?

Do all login scripts always work completely?

Complaints and wishes can also be the result of the technical configuration at the workstation, so include in your study exactly what the information system can and cannot do.

Use all this information to create a clear inventory in a report that you will later use in drawing up a proposal for change in a functional design.

Support in the assignments



Questions

You can use these questions in preparing the assignments. The subjects will come up again in the review discussions with your practical tutor.

1. You might be confronted with all sorts of matters that make it difficult to carry out your assignment well. These could be what the work actually involves (for example dealing with confidential information), contacts with others (colleagues, clients) and the circumstances under which you have to work (for example working against the clock). What plays a role in your work situation, and how do you deal with it?
2. Is there a description, diagram or suchlike of the functional (and technical) design of the present information system?
3. Does a study that has been made of the information needs form the foundation of this design?
4. Are the results of the interviews that were carried out to determine the information needs available for perusal?
5. Is there a description (diagram) of the company structure, the company processes, functions, types (and numbers) of users, etc.?
6. What are the company's procedures or guidelines that are applicable to the activities to be carried out?



Step-by-step plan

You can refer to this step-by-step plan when preparing and carrying out the tasks required for this practical assignment.

Analysing the company processes and information flows

Step 1 Describe the structure of the organization (departments and functions).

Step 2 Describe the different principal processes within the company process.

Step 3 Describe the primary process and its details.

Step 4 Describe the sub processes.

Step 5 Describe the sorts of users, their duties and activities within the above-mentioned processes.

Step 6 Examine which separate or individual applications are used to support the various company processes.

Step 7 Describe the relationship between the different elements named above by using, for example, diagrams, models and/or techniques that are currently in standard use within the organization.

Interviews with different sorts of users (end-users, helpdesk and IT personnel and management)

Step 1 Determine what information should be acquired from whom.

Step 2 Draw up a list of questions (the current situation, wishes and complaints) about:

- the duties, work processes and activities of those interviewed
- the information supply (too little or too much, sufficiently up-to-date, on time, etc.)
- the information system (aspects of its use performance, currency, etc)
- data storage (local (back-up procedures) or on server)
- training and support (is the user master of his system and, if not, does he receive sufficient support?).

When drawing up your list of questions, think for example about the following areas:

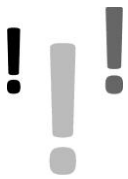
- mail system: accessibility, performance, spam, presence of PDAs and their synchronization, security
- intranet and Internet: uptime and/or downtime, currency, stability of the web applications, etc.
- security: virus attacks, spyware, frequency and timing of antivirus and spyware updates

- workstation: configuration, ergonomics, technical possibilities and impossibilities

Step 3 make a plan, in consultation with the involved parties, for conducting the interviews.

Step 4 Make a brief report of the discussion, in which is contained a well-organized overview of the information gained.

Step 5 Make an inventory of the results of the interviews in a well-organized report.



Tips

- Ensure that you have spelled correctly the names of the people you interviewed. You could also ask him/her to check this. State their position/function in the company.
- If you have to acquire information in English, make a note of any English terms or complete questions in English.
- Always be service-oriented.
- Include control questions in your question list.