**Stage 1: Strategic Use of Technology**

Before you begin work on this assignment, be sure you have read the Case Study on Maryland Technology Consultants (MTC). MTC is a fictional company created for IFSM 300’s Case Study. It is also recommended that you review the additional Stages (2, 3 and 4) as well as the vendor brochure provided for Stage 4. This will help you understand the overall report and potential solution.

**Overview**

As a business analyst in the Chief Information Officer’s (CIO's) department of Maryland Technology Consulting (MTC), you have been assigned to conduct an analysis, develop a set of system requirements, evaluate a proposed solution, and develop an implementation plan for an IT solution (applicant tracking or hiring system) to improve the hiring process for MTC. This work will be completed in four stages, and each of these four stages will focus on one section of an overall **Business Analysis and System Recommendation** (BA&SR) report to be delivered to the CIO.

**Section I. Strategic Use of Technology** (Stage 1) - The first step is to look at the organization and explain how an IT system could be used to support MTC's strategies and objectives and support its decision-making processes.

**Section II. Process Analysis** (Stage 2) – Next you will evaluate current processes and workflow and explain how MTC can use IT to improve its processes and workflow.

**Section III. Requirements** (Stage 3) –Then you will identify key stakeholder expectations for the new technology solution to support MTC’s hiring process and develop a set of requirements.

**Section IV. System Recommendation** (Stage 4) – Finally, you will review the provided Vendor brochure for a proposed applicant tracking system and explain how it meets the requirements and what needs to be done to implement the system within MTC.

The sections of the BA&SR will be developed and submitted as four staged assignments. For stages 1, 2, and 3, only the material associated with that stage will be graded. The stage 2, 3, and 4 submissions will include the stage that is due, which will be graded according to the assignment requirements and rubric criteria, as well as include all previously submitted stages with any revisions made. It is recommended that when preparing stages 2, 3, and 4, you review any feedback from previous assignments to help improve the effectiveness of your overall report and increase the likelihood of a well-written final submission. For stage 4, the complete BA&SR submission includes grading criteria for evaluating if the document is a very effective and cohesive assemblage of the four sections, is well formatted across all sections and flows smoothly from one section to the next.

**Assignment – BA&SR: Introduction and Section I. Strategic Use of Technology**

Write an appropriate Introduction to the entire BA&SR Report (guidelines are provided below). Section I of the BA&SR document contains an organizational analysis and identifies ways in which an information system to improve the hiring process can help MTC, the organization in the case study, meet its strategic goals and meet the information needs of various levels of management.

Using the case study, assignment instructions, Content readings, and external research, develop your Introduction and Section I. Strategic Use of Technology. To start, review the readings in Weeks 1 and 2. The case study tells you that the executives and employees at MTC have identified a need for an effective and efficient applicant tracking or hiring system. **As you review the case study, use the assignment instructions to take notes to assist in your analysis.**

**Use the outline format, headings and tables provided and follow all formatting instructions below. For Stage 1, create a title page and reference page that will be used for all 4 stages.**

Apply specific information from the case study to address **each** area.

**Introduction**

Begin your report with a clear, concise, well organized introduction to explain why you are writing and what is to come in the complete BA&SR report (not just Stage 1). This should briefly set the context for MTC – business purpose, environment, and current challenges related to hiring. Then **specifically** provide what is to come in the full report. Keep your audience in mind – this is an internal report for the CIO of MTC. Provide an introduction in **one paragraph** that engages the reader’s interest in continuing to read your report.

# **Strategic Use of Technology**

1. **Business Strategy** – In this section, you should clearly present – at a broad level – what MTC’s business strategy is (refer to case study information), then what issues the current manual hiring process may present that interfere with achieving that strategy, and how improving the hiring process will benefit MTC and support its business strategy. (Use two to three strong sentences that explain how the system would support the strategy and justify your position with specifics from the Case Study.)
2. **Competitive Advantage** - First, provide an overview of the competitive environment that MTC is currently operating in based on information from the case study. Then explain how and why MTC can use the new hiring system to increase its competitive advantage and help achieve its overall business strategy. Your explanation should demonstrate your understanding of what competitive advantage is as well as how improving the hiring process will help achieve MTC’s competitive advantage. Include how MTC can use the type of data or information that will be in the hiring system to improve its competitive advantage. (Paragraph of 4-5 sentences)
3. **Strategic Objectives**- Review the four Strategic Goals presented in the Strategic Business Plan section of the MTC Case Study. The CIO has asked you to come up with an example of an objective to help meet each goal and explain how a new hiring system would help achieve that objective. As you can see from the example provided in the table below, an objective is a statement that is clear (not vague) and is something that can be measured or evaluated to determine whether it has been met or not. An important part of setting objectives is that they are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). In order to evaluate whether an objective has been achieved, it’s important to be able to measure it. Consider this difference – Student wants to get a degree (non-specific and not measurable) vs. Student wants to earn a degree in Information Systems Management by May 2020. (This objective provides specific what and when.) First, insert an introductory opening sentence for this table. Then, for each of the rows listed below, complete the table with the requested information. (Provide an introductory sentence and copy the table. Create an objective for each of the 3 remaining goals and explain using 2-3 complete sentences for each.) **Note**: This is not about an objective to implement a hiring system or broad business goals but rather the focus is on objectives that would be supported by the use of a technology solution to support/improve the hiring process.

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| **Strategic Goal**  **(from case study)** | **Objective**  **(clear, measurable and time-bound)** | **Explanation**  **(2-3 sentences)** |
| Increase MTC Business Development by winning new contracts in the areas of IT Consulting |  |  |
| Build a cadre of consultants internationally to provide remote research and analysis support to MTC’s onsite teams in the U. S.  **EXAMPLE PROVIDED – (Retain text but remove this label and gray shading in your report)** | Increase international recruiting efforts and employ 5 research analysts in the next 12 months. | The new hiring system would allow applicants from around the world to apply online, increasing the number of international applicants. It would enable the recruiters to carefully monitor the applications for these positions, identify the necessary research and analysis skills needed, and screen resumes for these key skills. Recruiters could quickly view the number of applicants and identify when additional recruiting efforts are needed to meet the objective. |
| Continue to increase MTC’s ability to quickly provide high quality consultants to awarded contracts to best serve the clients’ needs |  |  |
| Increase MTC’s competitive advantage in the IT consulting marketplace by increasing its reputation for having IT consultants who are highly skilled in leading edge technologies and innovative solutions for its clients |  |  |

## **Decision Making** - In the reading, “How Information Supports Decision Making,” you were introduced to the information requirements of various levels of the organization. First, insert an introductory opening sentence for this section. Then, for each of the management roles listed below, complete the table with the **appropriate level** (as defined in the reading – one word is all that is required in this column), an example of a **specific decision** **supported by the Hiring System to be made at that level**, and **what type of information from the hiring system would be needed to support that decision**. Think about what information the hiring system could provide about applicants, etc., and then identify an example of a decision that might be made by each level of management. A decision is a choice or conclusion that the management might make about business operations or future planning. This is not about the decisions about implementing a new technology solution or about general responsibilities of each role. **Example:** A decision example could be stated as: *CEO decides to expand MTC’s services to include cybersecurity*. He can make this decision because the hiring system provides information that many applicants have the needed skills, certifications and experience to enable MTC to easily recruit IT consultants in this area. **(Provide an introductory sentence then copy the table and insert information within, writing in complete sentences.)**

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| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Role** | **Level as defined in Course Content Reading** | **Example of Possible Decision Supported by Hiring System** | **Example of Information the Hiring System Could Provide to Support Your Example Decision** | | **Senior/Executive Managers**  *(Decisions made by the CEO and the CFO at MTC supported by the hiring system.)* |  |  |  | | **Middle Managers**  *(Decisions made by the Director of HR and the Manager of Recruiting supported by the hiring system.)* |  |  |  | | **Operational Managers**  *(Decisions made by the line managers in the organization who are hiring for their projects supported by the hiring system.)* |  |  |  | |

**Formatting Your Assignment**

Consider your audience – you are writing in the role of an MTC business analyst and your audience is MTC and your boss, the CIO. Don’t discuss MTC as if the reader has no knowledge of the organization. Also do not reference “stage #” or “case study” – these are class terms and would not be in a business report. **Use third person consistently throughout the report**. In third person, the writer avoids the pronouns I, we, my, and ours. The third person is used to make the writing more objective by taking the individual, the “self,” out of the writing. This method is very helpful for effective business writing, a form in which facts, not opinion, drive the tone of the text. Writing in the third person allows the writer to come across as unbiased and thus more informed.

* Create a **title page** that includes: The title of report, company name, your name, Course and Section number and date (revise date with each submission).
* In Stage 1, you are preparing the first part of a 4-stage report. Use the structure, headings, and outline format provided here for your report. Use the numbering/lettering in the assignment instructions as shown below.

Introduction

1. Strategic Use of Technology

A. Business Strategy

B. Competitive Advantage

C. Strategic Objectives

D. Decision Making

* Write a short concise paper: Use the recommendations provided in each area for length of response. It’s important to value quality over quantity. Assignment should not exceed 4 pages excluding title and reference pages.
* Content areas should be double spaced; table entries should be single-spaced.
* To **copy a table**: Move your cursor to the table, then click on the small box that appears at the upper left corner of the table to highlight the table; right click and COPY the table; put the cursor in your paper where you want the table and right click and PASTE the table.
* Ensure that each of the tables is preceded by an introductory sentence that explains what is contained in the table, so the reader understands **why** the table has been included.
* Use **at least** two resources with APA formatted citation and reference. Use at least one external reference and one from the course content. Course content should be from the class reading content, not the assignment instructions or case study itself. Refer to *APA Requirements for IFSM 300 Classes* that is posted under Content>Course Resources>Writing Resources for specifics related to citing from the class content. For information on general APA format, refer to Content>Course Resources>Writing Resources.
* Begin a Reference Page for resources required for this assignment. Additional research in the next stages will be added to this as you build the report. The final document should contain all references from all stages appropriately formatted and alphabetized. Use APA format for your reference page.
* Running headers are **not** required for this report.
* Compare your work to the Grading Rubric below to be sure you have met content and quality criteria.
* Submit your paper as a Word document, or a document that can be read in Word. Keep tables in Word format – do not paste in graphics.
* Your submission should include **your last name first in the filename:**  **Lastname\_firstname\_Stage\_1**

**GRADING RUBRIC:**

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| **Criteria** | **Far Above Standards** | **Above Standards** | **Meets Standards** | **Below Standards** | **Well Below Standards** | **Possible Points** |
| **Introduction**  *Describes the organization and provides an introduction to the overall Report* | **16 points**  **14.4-16 Points**  The introduction is very effective; is clear, logical, derived from the Case Study; and demonstrates a sophisticated level of writing. | **13.6 points**  **13.6 Points**  The introduction is clear, logical, and derived from the Case Study. | **12points**  **12 Points**  The introduction is adequate and is derived from the Case Study. | **10.4 Points**  **10.4 Points**  The introduction is not clear, logical and/or derived from the Case Study. | **0 points**  **0-8 Points**  Content missing or extremely incomplete, did not reflect the assignment instructions, showed little or no originality, demonstrated little effort, is not derived from the Case Study; and/or is not original work for this class section. | 16 |
| **Strategy**  *How the system will support the organization’s strategy as derived from the case study* | **32 points**  **28.8 - 32 Points**  The explanation is clear, logical and fully supported with information from the Case study and using a sophisticated level of writing. | **27.2 points**  **25.6 - 27.2 Points**  The explanation is clear, logical and supported with information from the Case study. | **24points**  **22.4 - 24 Points**  The explanation is provided and supported with information from the Case Study. | **20.8 Points**  **19.2 - 20.8 Points**  The explanation is not clear, logical and/or supported with information from the Case Study. | **0 points**  **0 - 17.6 Points**  Content missing or extremely incomplete, did not reflect the assignment instructions, showed little or no originality, demonstrated little effort, is not supported with information from the Case Study; and/or is not original work for this class section. | 32 |
| **Competitive Advantage**  ***Explanation of how the system and its data can be used for competitive advantage*** | **24 points**  **20.8 - 24 Points**  Clear, complete, logical, derived from the Case Study, and demonstrates sophisticated analysis and writing. | **20.4 Points**  **20.4 Points**  **Complete and accurate; derived from the Case Study,** demonstrates analysis and effective writing. | **17.52 Points**  **16-17.6 Points**  Explanation is provided and related to the Case Study, may lack specifics and/or clear logic. | **14.4 Points**  **14.4 Points**  Explanation is not clear, logical and/or supported with information from the Case Study. | **0 points**  **0-12.8 Points**  **Content missing or extremely incomplete, did not reflect the assignment instructions, showed little or no originality, demonstrated little effort, is not supported with information from the Case Study; and/or is not original work for this class section.** | 24 |
| **Strategic Objectives**  *Three objectives derived from Strategic Goals in Case Study with explanation of how new hiring system would help achieve.*  *Generally, 0-5 points per objective. Both quantity and quality evaluated.* | **24 Points**  **20.8 - 24 Points**  Objectives are clear, measurable and time-bound and are strongly and fully explained using a sophisticated level of writing. | **20.4 points**  **20.4 Points**  Objectives are clear, measurable and time-bound, and are clearly explained. | **17.52 Points**  **16-17.6 points**  Objectives are somewhat clear, measurable and time-bound, and are explained. | **14.4 Points**  **14.4 Points**  Objectives are not clear, measurable and/or time-bound, and/or are not explained. | **0 points**  **0-12.8 Points**  Content missing or extremely incomplete, did not reflect the assignment instructions, showed little or no originality, demonstrated little effort, is not supported with information from the Case Study; and/or is not original work for this class section. | 24 |
| **Decision-Making**  *Types of decisions supported by the system for each of the three levels of the organization*  *Generally, 0-5 points per decision example. Both quantity and quality evaluated.* | **24 Points**  **20.8 - 24 points**  Identified correctly and fully, clearly and logically explained; are derived from the Case Study; and demonstrate sophisticated analysis and writing. | **20.4 Points**  **20.4 Points**  Identified correctly and clearly and logically explained; are derived from the Case Study; and demonstrate analysis and effective writing. | **17.52 Points**  **16-17.6 Points**  Identified correctly and explained and are derived from the Case Study. | **14.4 Points**  **14.4 Points**  Not all provided; and/or are not correct and/or not derived from the Case Study. | **0**  **0-12.8 Points**  Content missing or extremely incomplete, did not reflect the assignment instructions, showed little or no originality, demonstrated little effort, is not supported with information from the Case Study; and/or is not original work for this class section. | **24** |
| **Research**  *Two or more sources--one source from within the IFSM 300 course content and one external (other than the course materials)* | **16 points**  **14.4-16 Points**  Required resources are incorporated and used effectively. Sources used are relevant and timely and contribute strongly to the analysis. References are appropriately incorporated and cited using APA style. | ****13.6 points****  ****13.6 Points****  At least two sources are incorporated and are relevant and somewhat support the analysis. References are appropriately incorporated and cited using APA style. | **12 points**  **12 Points**  Only one resource is used and properly incorporated and/or reference(s) lack correct APA style. | **10.4 points**  **10.4 Points**  A source may be used, but is not properly incorporated or used, and/or is not effective or appropriate; and/or does not follow APA style for references and citations. | **0 points**  **0-8 Points**  No course content or external research incorporated; or reference listed is not cited within the text. | 16 |
| **Format**  *Uses outline format provided; includes Title Page and Reference Page* | **24 points**  **20.8-24 Points**  Well organized and easy to read. Very few or no errors in sentence structure, grammar, and spelling; double-spaced, written in third person and presented in a professional format. | **20.4 points**  **20.4 Points**  Effective organization; has few errors in sentence structure, grammar, and spelling; double-spaced, written in third person and presented in a professional format. | **17.52 points**  **16-17.6 Points**  Some organization; may have some errors in sentence structure, grammar and spelling. Report is double spaced and written in third person. | **14.4 points**  **14.4 Points**  Not well organized, and/or contains several grammar and/or spelling errors; and/or is not double-spaced and written in third person. | **0 points**  **0-12.8 Points**  Extremely poorly written, has many grammar and/or spelling errors, or does not convey the information required. | 24 |
|  |  |  |  |  | **TOTAL Points Possible** | 160 |