

Appendix 1

Initial Interview with the Staff Supervisor

Question 1: What functions are you and your team responsible for carrying out in the factory?

Response 1: Paper bundles and rims arrive at our premises, bearing the name of the client that sent them. These paper bundles/rims are stocked in our storage facility and soon either a mail or phone call is received, telling us the item that needs to be printed and the amount of paper that needs to be used in order to print the required item. Items printed in our factory are books, newspapers, magazines, calendars etc. therefore when the client calls to place the order, members of my team have the responsibility of recording the job details such as paper size, paper type, plate required, forms to be printed etc. on a sheet of paper that is put into separate hardbound files, bearing the name of the client. Members of my team also have the responsibility of deciding and informing the machine manager who will be printing the item requested by the client with his team.

Question 2: Are there any short comings or difficulties that you face using this method?

Response 2: Currently we operate manually, using sheets of papers and hardbound files to store all the order and their details that arrive at our factory. This requires storage space and sheets of paper on which order details are stored are often lost or misplaced when they are circulated in the factory for approval by other supervisors. It is also difficult to track which order was assigned to which machine manager by a other members of the factory who are reviewing the order that needs to be printed, as member of the staff may forget to record the name of the machine manager when updating the sheet. Paper rims and bundles kept at one location in the storage facility that have been sent by client A, are confused with those sent by other clients, as in the current method, the staff member do not record the space that was designated to a particular client's paper. There is a time lag between the time the client sends the paper and the time they send the order details of the item that needs to be printed, therefore, each information is stored in separate pieces of papers and therefore it becomes hard to match these two papers.

Question 3: What tasks are carried out by machine managers

Response 3: In the printing industry, the machine managers are called team leaders of the site, as not only they head a team of four or five but they are also responsible for printing the clients order on the machine they specialise in. Currently, this facility has about 13 machines and 5 team leaders each heading a team of four to six members. They are assigned orders by the staff members of the factory, who further give them the order details. They identify each order by the name of the item that needs to be printed (so if a book by the name 'Maths for Class XII' is to be printed, they refer to the book by its name). Once the item has been printed, the team leader has the responsibility to inform the staff members in the office building.

Question 4: Would you prefer a computer based solution to make the current method more efficient?

Response 4: Yes, staff members of the team work tirelessly using the current method due to the complexity of the information that needs to be processed. Moreover, it will be easier for us as supervisors to generate reports and search for orders in the past.

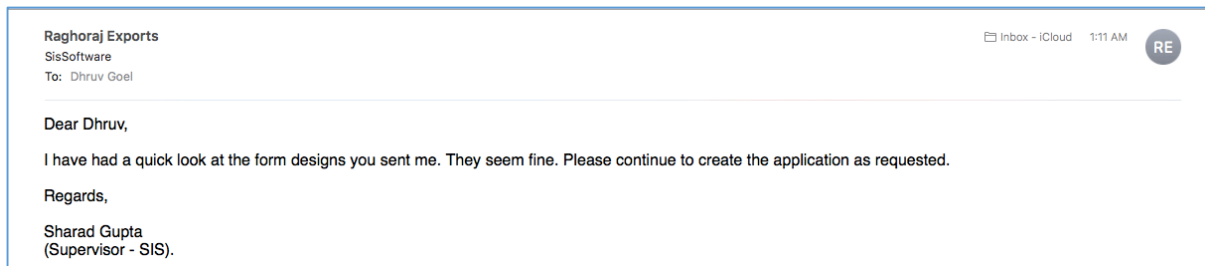
Question 5: Would you prefer that the solution to give different levels of access to you (Supervisor) compared to your staff?

Response 5: Yes, staff members should be given the responsibility to input all the client and order details. Whereas, the supervisors, should be given the functionality to search for all or particular orders using the client name by which the order was given by, the date the order was placed, the date the order needs to be delivered etc. It would be vital for the computerised solution to be user friendly, as the staff may lack skill in handling a complex computerised application.

Question 6: What would be the challenges that you would want to overcome using the new computerised solution

Response 6: At first, the staff should be able to add all the details of the order and client that has placed the order. This information is essential and should be detailed enough so that no information is left out. This would then mean that a supervisor is able to generate reports that are detailed enough and carry correct information. The solution should solve the problem of allocating storage space for all the paper rims/bundles that arrive at the factory, so that, in future, there is no confusion about the place that paper rims and bundles are stored. Furthermore, any supervisor of the factory must be able to find all the orders handled by a particular machine manager or team leader at any instant in time.

Screen shot that verifies form designs created for the solution



Final Interview with Supervisor

Question 1: Does the software developed fulfil the requirements of the staff and the supervisors of the company?

(The supervisor was asked to make comments on the success criteria)

Response 1: The product delivered is efficient and to a large extent does fulfil the purpose for which it was made for. The staff members are now able to record all the client and order details in much less time and no information is missed out. The different levels of access ensure that the supervisors are able to search the database using desired fields and monitor the team leader (machine manager) and the client relationship. To an extent, the problem of storage space is now sorted as there is no longer confusion in the area in which paper rims/bundles are stored. It is easy to keep track of all the ordered that arrived at the factory.

Question 2: Any shortfalls or improvements that you suggest should improve the product?

Response 2: Overall, the software developed does well to improve the efficiency of the staff and the supervisor. The shortfalls and improvements include:

- I would like the reports generated to be printed automatically using the software.
- The graphical representation of the storage space in one of the staff forms could be made more realistic, as for now, it provides a vague picture of the storage faculty.
- A feature could be added in the staff form that allows the staff to change status of an order from 'pending' to 'ready' with the click of a button, without navigating to the specific form.
- There should be an option to delete a comment in the admin form, everytime, the supervisor should not have to navigate to the corresponding file.
- When considering to make the product in the future, all the orders that have already been delivered should transfer to another database so that there are two databases, one for current orders and the other that contains the history of all the orders.