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Project Management Plan for “GH Buy”: A Proposed Online Shopping Platform

Samuel Antwi

June 10 2020

Executive Summary

E-commerce is one of the fastest growing discipline in the world. E-commerce or online shopping is born from the traditional or offline marketing. Globally, e-commerce business keeps on increasing year after year. In 2018, the percentage of consumers who made at least one purchase online in the previous 12 months grew to 93% of internet users in the U.S., 97% in the UK, and 92% in China. In 2019, retail e-commerce sales worldwide amounted to 3.53 trillion US dollars and e-retail revenues are projected to grow to 6.54 trillion US dollars in 2022. E-commerce business in developed countries are mostly in maturity stage and it is now emerging in most developing countries. Despite the successive story of e-commerce business worldwide, much cannot be said about Ghana. Ghana is a developing country located in the western part of Africa and it has about 30 million population. Trade is one of the most popular venture in the country. It appears there are no or there are a very few local online shopping platforms in Ghana that integrates all the various trade and commerce businesses into a single platform. In this project management plan, the researcher developed a proposed website which aim to integrate all trade and commerce activities in Ghana into a single platform to enable consumers place their order online and it would be delivered to them via their delivery address. The name of the online shopping platform shall be called GH Buy. In the future, a mobile app would also be developed for the platform in addition to the website. The proposed website shall be easy to navigate, an integrated multiple payment system, delivery options, and others. The proposed project is expected to take 13 weeks to complete.

Keywords: Project Management Plan, Trade and Commerce, Online Shopping Platform

1.0 Overview

This section gives an overview to the project to be undertaken. The background of the e-commerce business as well as the characteristics of the project to be undertaken shall be discussed.

1.1 Background

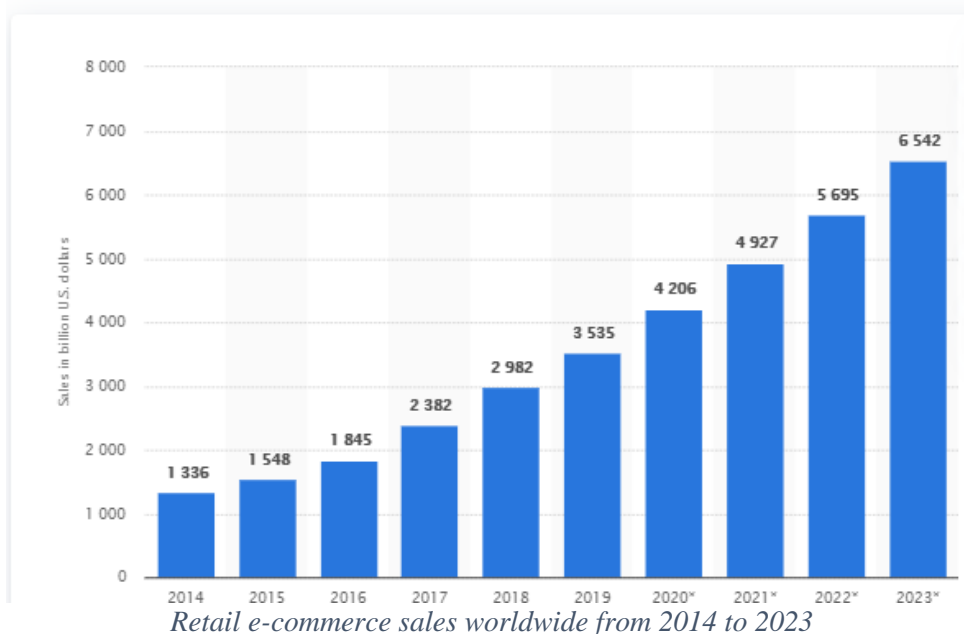
E-commerce business is one of the popular and booming business in China and other developed country. The E-commerce business can be seen as an innovation and also improvement in the area of commerce. Commerce involves the exchange of goods, services or something of value, between business or entities. Thus, the sale or purchase of a single item by a consumer is defined as a transaction, while commerce refers to all transactions related to the purchase and sale of that item in an economy. Unlike the commerce, the e-commerce means buying and selling of goods, products, or services over the internet. E-commerce is also known as electronic commerce or internet commerce. E-commerce can be seen as a replacement or an improvement to the traditional way of doing business.

Globally, e-commerce business keeps on increasing year after year. In 2018, the percentage of consumers who made at least one purchase online in the previous 12 months grew to 93% of internet users in the U.S., 97% in the UK, and 92% in China. The market of developed countries is in its maturity phase, and the competition among eCommerce players is extremely high and cost-intensive. Marketplaces like Amazon and AliExpress are flourishing, while many stand-alone retailers struggle to find their USP as brand and store loyalty are decreasing and cart abandonment rate in the industry is at 75% (eCommerce worldwide Statista). Revenue in the eCommerce market amounts to US\$2,284,974m in 2020 and is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2020-2024) of 8.1%, resulting in a market volume of US\$3,122,333m by 2024.

In 2019, retail e-commerce sales worldwide amounted to 3.53 trillion US dollars and e-retail revenues are projected to grow to 6.54 trillion US dollars in 2022. Online shopping is one of the most popular online activities worldwide (Clement, 2020).

Retail e-commerce sales worldwide from 2014 to 2023

(in billion U.S. dollars)



It is evident that e-commerce is one of the most profitable business world-wide. Individuals, businesses and organizations keeps buying products and services online.

Despite the successive story of e-commerce business worldwide, much cannot can be said about Ghana. Ghana is a developing country located in the western part of Africa and it has about 30 million population.

Trade is one of the most popular venture in the country. It appears there is no or there are a very few local online shopping platforms in Ghana that integrates all the various trade and commerce businesses into a single platform. The number of internet users in Ghana have seen a sharp rise in recent times. For example, the number of internet users in Ghana in the year 2000 was 28,918 users. This figure rose to 1.90 million in 2010 and in 2015, the figure stood at 6.98 million users. Internet users in Ghana as at January 2020 stood at 14.76 million users. The number of internet users in Ghana increased by 7.5% (about 1 million users) between 2019 and 2020 and the internet penetration in Ghana stood at 48% in January 2020.

1.2 Project Characteristics

This project involves developing a website which aims to integrate all trade and commerce activities in Ghana into a single platform to enable consumers place their order online and it would be delivered to them via their delivery address provided. The name of the online shopping platform shall be known as **GH Buy**. In the future, a mobile app would also be developed for the platform in addition to the website. The project shall have the following characteristics;

- The website shall be easy to navigate. By this, users shall be able to look for the products they want to buy at ease. Also, users shall be able to access the website on their computers, mobile phones, tablets and iPads at ease.
- The website shall have an integrated online payment system with enhanced security system. The project management team shall ensure that they build a secure e-commerce platform.
- Another is the delivery options which shall all be available in the website.
- Most popular products shall be showcase and also promotion of similar related products.
- Another characteristics of the projects shall be high-resolution photos and videos. The project management team shall ensure that the website would be compatible with a high-resolution images and videos to be uploaded by suppliers.
- Again, the website shall have a user-generated reviews which means customers shall have the option to provide a feedback after receipt of goods and/or services from a buyer.
- Wish Lists where users shall be able to add a product they may need right away into it and later buy it.
- The website shall also have a find-in-store function. When a user sees a product, he/she can trace the product to the seller store and see other products the seller offers for sale.
- Also, the e-commerce website shall in addition to the above have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) where some popular questions which shall be asked by users would be addressed.
- Other characteristics of the website shall include special orders, related items as well as scheduled delivery

2.0 Scope Management Plan

This section shall focus on the collection of processes that shall be used to ensure that the e-commerce website project includes all the tasks required to complete the project. Specifically, the objectives and the project deliverables shall be discussed in this section.

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the project shall be classified into two: Business objectives and Technical objectives. The first three points represents the business objective of the project and the last point represents the technical objectives of the project.

- To significantly improve trade and commerce in Ghana in an innovative way. Traditionally, most Ghanaians do engage in trade and commerce. What they currently need is a more improved way of doing a business which shall help them generate more revenue.
- To save individuals, businesses and organizations time. Time is a vital thing in the world of business because some companies pay their workers based on the number of hours worked. The proposed project shall offer the opportunities for businesses and other organization to sit at the comfort of their office and order stocks/materials and other materials and it shall be delivered to them.

- To put Ghana on the global digital/electronic market. The world is gradually changing to the digital market and this project shall pave way for Ghana to be part of the market.
- The technical objective is to successful develop and implement a website that shall integrate all sellers in the area of trade and commerce into a single platform. This would reduce some costs in the operation of business and speed up business activities.

2.2 Project Deliverables

The deliverables that the client and the stakeholders expect at the end of the project is the e-commerce website. In order to achieve it, the project management team has proposed the following deliverables which in is line with a project life cycle.

The first phase of the project shall be the **Initiating Phase**. The main elements include; secure the necessary approval and resources; authorization of the project; set overall direction; define top-level project objectives, commit organization to project or phase; and assign project manager. The deliverables to be achieve at this stage is the project charter, business requirements, projects scope, project assumptions and constraints.

The next is the **Planning Phase**. Also, the main element under this stage is to Define Project scope; Refine Project objectives; define all required deliverables; create frame for project schedule; provide forum for information sharing between project team members; define all required activities; identify required skills and resources; estimate work effort; risk analysis and avoidance; define and estimate all required costs; obtain project funding approval; communication plan. The project management team intend to achieve a project plan, work break-down structures, critical success factors and as well as project schedules as key deliverables at this stage.

Under the **Executing Phase**, the project management team intend to coordinate the resources, team development; quality assurance; select subcontractors; distribute information; work the plan which is to develop a website for an e-commerce or online store. The key deliverables in this phase includes actual efforts and project deliverable completion.

The fourth phase which is the **Controlling Phase** shall focus on the management of the team on the work, measurement of progress and also to monitor the performance of the team. All corrective actions shall be taken where necessary and there shall be performance report and communications. The deliverables in this phase of the project includes performance status reports, measurement metrics, risk management, corrective actions and issues management.

The last phase which is the **Closing Phase** shall focus on finalizing the completion of the e-commerce or online store website and contract close out including resolution of open items and final formal acceptance. The key deliverable under this phase is the deliverable acceptance and lesson learned.

During the project management lifecycle, project team members shall select and implement a phase product development lifecycle methodology in accordance with the laid-down procedures. A business strategy survey shall be conducted to define goals, business processes, critical factors, current environment, sizing requirements, current vendor environment, number of users, work processing requirements, other needs. The vendor shall be required to deliver design documents for authentication, reporting, and the database feeds. The online shopping website shall be developed based on the specifications agreed on. Users will test system functionality, performance, reporting accuracy and response times. The vendor will be required to deliver design documents for authentication, reporting, and the database feeds.

3.0 Schedule Management Plan

This section discusses the policies, procedures and documentation that the project team shall put in place to ensure that the development of an e-commerce or online shopping website is completed on time. The project milestones and the timeline of the proposed project shall be discussed in this section.

3.1 Project Milestone

The table below lists the milestones for this project, along with their estimated completion timeframe. The project shall commence on June 15 and it is expected to be completed in 13 weeks.

Phase	Requirement	Timeframe	Estimated time of completion
1	Information Gathering	One week	June 19
2	Planning	Two weeks	July 4
3	Designing	Two weeks	July 18
4	Content Writing and Assembly	Two Weeks	July 24
5	Coding	Three weeks	August 15
6	Testing, Review and Launch	Three weeks	September 5
7	Maintenance	It shall be done as and when necessary	It shall be done after the product has been launch to the general public

At the **Step one**, the project team shall gather relevant information about the online store. The project team at this stage shall obtain a clear understanding of the future website purposes, the main goals you wish to get, and the target audience you want to attract to your site.

The **Step two**, which is the planning stage, the project team intend to create a data for the client to judge how the entire site shall look like when completed. It shall provide a clear visual of how the inner structure of the website shall look at. This shall be done using a mind mapping software. The image below shows a framework of the proposed website.

In the **Stage three**, the page layouts, reviews and the approval cycle shall be done. All the visual content such as images, photos and videos shall be created at this stage. The layout shall be an actual graphic design and its function is to represent the information structure, visualize the content, and demonstrate the basic functionality. It shall contain colors, logos, images and can give a general understanding of the future product.

The content writing and assembly stage is where the project team shall put in writing the very essence which shall be communicated to the audience of your website and add calls-to-action. Content writing also involves the creation of catching headlines, text editing, writing new text, compiling the existing text, etc., which takes time and effort.

During the coding stage, the project team shall begin creating the website itself. The graphic elements that shall been designed in the previous stages would be used to create an actual website. The project team intend to start creating the website from the homepage and then all sub-pages are added, according to the website hierarchy that was previously created in the form of a sitemap. Frameworks and CMS should be implemented in order to make sure that the server can handle the installation and set-up smoothly.

The **step six** involves testing of the website, review and launch of the website. Every single link in the website shall be tested in order to that there are no broken ones among them. The team shall check every form, every script, run a spell-checking software to find possible typos. Code validators shall be used to check if your code follows the current web standards. Valid code is necessary to ensure cross-browser compatibility.

The **seventh step** shall focus on the maintenance of the website which basically includes opinion monitoring and regular updating. Feedback system added to the site will allow you to detect possible problems the end-users face.

3.2 Project Schedule

This e-commerce or online selling store shall be first of its kind in Ghana. As a result of it, the team is expected to spend about thirteen weeks to start and complete the project. The project schedule varies as the project moves on the next phase. At the phase one, four, six and seven of the projects, the team shall be working on the project from Mondays to Fridays and are expected to work nine hours a day with an hour and half rest. At the third phase of the project, the team shall work from Mondays to Saturdays for 9.5 hours with two hours rest. Similarly, the team shall work on the project from Mondays to Saturdays on the project during the phase three and phase five but with different working hours and same hours for launch/rest. The table below shows the project schedule.

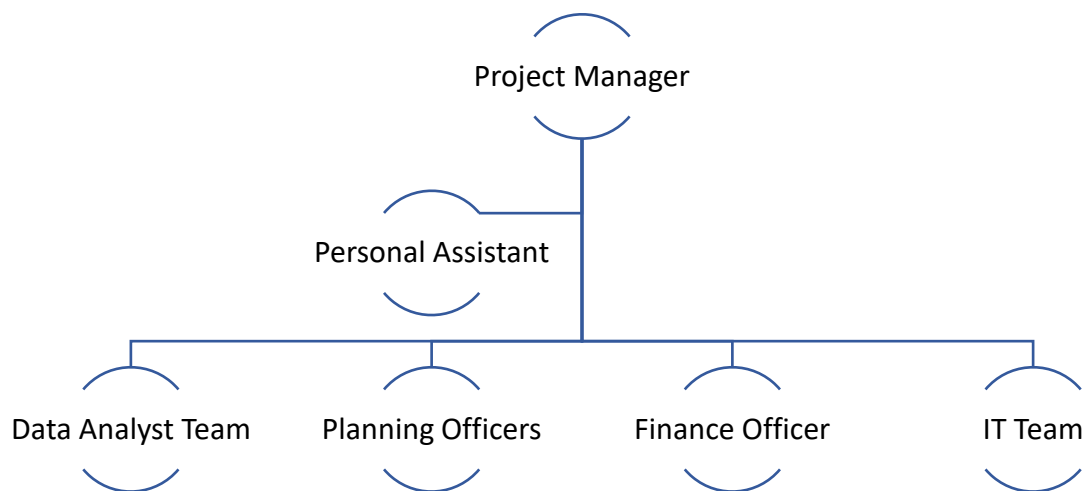
Phase of Work	Working Days	Working Hours	Launch/Rest
1	Mon-Fri	8AM – 5PM	1.5 HRS
2	Mon-Sat	8AM – 5:30PM	1.5 HRS
3	Mon-Sat	8AM – 6PM	2 HRS
4	Mon-Fri	8AM – 5PM	1.5 HRS
5	Mon-Sat	7AM – 5:30PM	2 HRS
6	Mon-Fri	8AM-5AM	1.5 HRS
7	Mon-Fri	8AM – 5PM	1.5 HRS

4.0 Team Management Plan

This section presents the team management working to develop the online shopping website. Emphasis shall be placed on the structure of the team or the work breakdown structure as well as their responsibilities.

4.1 Team Structure

The Project Manager shall be one person as he shall be assisted by his personal assistant in performing his duties. The data analyst team shall be comprised of two people. Similarly, the planning officers shall also be made of two people and the project shall have one finance officer and three IT experts.



Project team structure

4.2 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the various team members are presented in the table below.

Team Member	Name	Responsibilities
Project Manager	✓ Sammy	✓ Activity and resource planning ✓ Organizing and motivating a project team ✓ Analyzing and managing project risk ✓ Ensuring customer satisfaction
Personal Assistant	✓ Jonny	✓ Works hand-in-hand with project manager ✓ Represents the project manager in a meeting where necessary
Data Analysts	✓ Eva ✓ Philip	✓ Responsible for the information gathering ✓ Providing a comprehensive analysis of the information gathered and other relevant information ✓ Assist the project manager in analyzing and measuring the risks in the project
Planning Officers	✓ Chris ✓ Abigail	✓ Preparing planning documentation ✓ Communicating with relevant parties regarding the status of planning applications and queries ✓ Keeping up to date with planning regulations, policy and legislation. ✓ Prioritizing your workload and taking a flexible approach to changes in direction.
Finance Officer	✓ Linda	✓ Preparation of budgets ✓ Managing records and receipts ✓ Preparing invoices ✓ Resolve any financial dispute that may arise in the project.
IT Team	✓ Emmanuel ✓ Peter ✓ Nella	✓ Responsible for the content writing and assembly ✓ Responsible for the coding ✓ Responsible for the testing and maintaining the website

5.0 Procurement Management Plan

This section presents the procurement plan for the online shopping store. Emphasis shall be placed on the resources demand and procurement plan.

5.1 Resources Demands

In order to build a successful online store, the project team shall require the following resources. For the purpose of the project, the resources listed below shall be referred to as WBS001, WBS002, WBS003, WBS004 and WBS005 respectively.

- ✓ A domain name. that is an address where internet users can access the online shopping website.

- ✓ A hosting provider shall also be needed as it shall allocate space on a web server for the online shopping website to store files.
- ✓ An integrated payment processor shall also be needed which shall enable customers to pay for their products online shall be needed.
- ✓ Another resources that shall be needed for the project is an internet data.
- ✓ Other resources that shall be needed are electricity, computers and accessories, video and photo editor software and other miscellaneous expenses.

5.2 Procurement Plan

The nature of the project requires that main resources needed shall be bought online and it is also intangible. The domain name for the website, hosting provider, integrated payment processor and internet data are all intangible resources and are relevant as far as the creation of the online store is concerned. The IT team shall initiate a request for the resources needed and the technical, timing, quality of the resources and the constraints shall all be discussed. Having finish with these processes, the request shall be approved by the Project Manager signifying the purchase authority. A bid shall then be made, in the case of computers and accessories as well as the photo and video editing software. A contract shall be made after the parties reaching a conscious and then the resources shall be purchase. All the resources needed for the online shopping project shall be purchase as and when necessary.

6.0 Cost Management Plan

The cost management plan shall provide a comprehensive analysis of the cost that is expected to be incurred should the project takes place. The budget and the cost plan of the proposed project shall be discussed.

6.1 Budget

The table below presents the budget for the project. The WBS001 and WBS002 shall be renewed annually.

Identifier	Work Package	Cost (\$)
WBS001	Software	500.32
WBS002	Software	3116.57
WBS003	Software	1007.85
WBS004	Software	209.66
WBS005	Software and Hardware	4588.19
TOTAL		9422.59

6.2 Cost Plan

The project team shall put in measures to reduce the cost of the project by cutting down spending that may not be necessarily needed. However, priority shall be placed on coming up with a quality website for the online shopping platform. All staffs of the project team have the adequate competencies and so no external/professional service shall be required. The finance officer shall be managing the budget and shall provide a budget update to the project team as the project moves through the various phases and shall ensure that the team do not exceed the budget prepared.

7.0 Communication and Stakeholder Management Plan

Communication planning involves determining the information and communication needs of the stakeholders, executive sponsors, project team and others as needed. This section shall be devoted to the stakeholder's management plan and the communication plan of the project.

7.1 Stakeholders Management Plan

The table below presents the stakeholders management plan. All team members and as well as the project owner shall be engaged in the project processes.

Stakeholder	Messages	Vehicles	Frequency	Communicators	Feedback Mechanisms
Project manager and Project Owner	Report the status of the project including activities, progress, costs and issues.	Status report	Fortnightly	Project Manager/Personal Assistant	Face to Face Conference Call Email
Project Team Meetings	Review status of the project with the team.	Status report	Weekly	All project team members	Face to Face Conference Call Email

7.2 Communication Plan

The Communications Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of participants in the dissemination, review and approval of project information. The communication strategy covers all the informational needs of the project stakeholder community. Many will receive routine information about the project. Others will be able to visit the project site and obtain the specific information that they are seeking and all may receive ad hoc communication from the project team at any time depending on the need. A communications plan that is well implemented will help manage expectations of the project, assure appropriate levels of communication with internal and external project stakeholders, provide relevant, accurate, consistent information at all times and help generate and sustain enthusiasm and support for the project.

The Project Manager shall meet the owner of the project every two weeks to review project progress, deliverables/milestones, provide direction. The Project Manager is also required to report on the overall status of the project on a monthly basis, per standard DoIT procedures. Also, specific requests for expenditure authorization shall be forwarded to the project manager for approval. If funding approval is an agenda item on the team meeting, the request and associated justification for spending shall be discussed and approved in the meeting. If funding approval is required in a timeframe that does not coincide with the team meeting schedule, it is the responsibility of the Finance Officer to send a request and justification directly to the Project Manager for Approval. All team meeting shall be documented for future reference.

8.0 Quality Management Plan

This section shall focus on the quality management plan of the proposed e-commerce website. The objectives of quality management and also the plans that management shall put in place to ensure the project runs smoothly shall all be discussed.

8.1 Objectives of Quality Management

The objectives of quality management is to ensure that the proposed e-commerce website meets the required standards. Quality Management includes the processes required to ensure that the project will satisfy the needs for which it was undertaken. It includes all activities of the overall management function that determine the quality policy, objectives, quality assurance, quality control, and quality improvement, within the quality system. This shall help preserve and increase the reputation of the company and also help the company in bidding up for a future contract.

8.2 Quality Management Plan

In executing the project, the team shall put in measures to achieve a quality management practices. The table below presents the quality standard that shall be put in place.

No.	Quality Standard	Measure
1	The project schedule, assigned tasks, resources and milestones are met.	Project Management Plan comparing estimated to actuals
2	Provision of adequate technical staffing and system resources for a timely and successful implementation of project.	Project Management Plan tracking tasks to resources
3	Project does not exceed budget.	Project budget
4	Staff is adequately trained	User lessons learned

9.0 Risk Management Plan

This section presents the risk on the proposed project. By risk, the project team means any condition or an event that might affect the project negatively or positively should it occur. Specifically, a potential risk identification and a risk treatment plan for the proposed project were discussed.

9.1 Risk Identification

Risk Identification involves identifying potential risks and documenting the specific characteristics of each. Risk identification is the responsibility of all members of the project team. Any activity or issue including machine breakdown, power issue, slow in internet connect, sickness on the part of the team, lateness, defect in material, delay in the receipt of resources, bug issues, issues relating to testing of the website, work conflicts and among others shall be deemed as a risk as far as the development of an online shopping store website is concerned. The Project Manager is responsible for tracking risks and for developing mitigation strategies and contingency plans that address the risks identified by the team. Risk will be assessed routinely to ensure that identified risks are being dealt with appropriately and that new risks are identified and dealt with as early as possible.

9.2 Risk Treatment Plan

Whenever there are plans there is always a risk involved. Some risks are unpredictable and some are preventable. To help some issues from rising in the project it important to always schedule meetings with the team members. Meetings with the team members shall prepare everyone for any risk factors that may occur. Another great way to help risk management issues are monthly evaluations. After completing a project, the team should analyze anything that needs to be modified. Sometimes potential risk is not recognized until the project is in motion. The table below shows the risk log of the project and how it shall be deal with.

Risk number	Risk	How likely is it?	How serious is it?	What will we do about it?
1	We can't start on time	M	H	Make sure we have hired the employees we need to get started
2	We have issues with the computers	H	H	Make sure the internet is on and working and all computers are working
3	We can't get the indigent to participate in the market research	H	H	We have to do the foot work and get them involved to make the project a success
4	Time running out and it's not a success	L	H	Work hard and communicate to each other as employees to finish hard and strong in order to make the project a success.

Conclusion

The team is looking forward to developing a power online shopping website for the people of Ghana in order to ease some barriers that are associated with the contemporary trade and commerce issue. We as a team have the expertise and the capacity to get it done and we are looking forward to receiving the contract.

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Appendices

Below are the appendices.

Project Assumption

It is assumed that the firm undertaking the project is an already IT firm with over ten years of operations and experiences. It is a registered company in Ghana where it is situated and have employees who are paid on a monthly basis. It is further assumed that the company shall not require the services of an outsider and the company have the capacity to perform the job.

Project Acronyms

DoIT – Department of Information Technology

M – Moderate

H – High

IT – Information Technology

WBS – Work Breakdown Service

Project Management Definitions

Deliverable

Any measurable, tangible, verifiable outcome, result, or item that must be produced to complete a project or part of a project that is subject to approval by the project sponsor or customer.

Duration

The number of work periods (not including holidays or other nonworking periods) required to complete an activity or other project element.

Milestone

A scheduled event for which some individual is accountable and that is used to measure progress.

Project Management

The application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. Project Management is also responsible for the oversight of the development and delivery of the architecture and software project.

Project Manager

The role with total business responsibility for an entire project. The individual who directs, controls, administers, and regulates a project. The project manager is the individual ultimately responsible to the customer.

Quality

The degree to which a system, component, or process meets specified requirements.

The degree to which a system, component, or process meets customer or user needs or expectations. [IEEE-STD-610]

Quality Management

The process of monitoring specific project results to determine id they comply with relevant standards and identifying ways to eliminate causes of product non-compliance.

Risk

Possibility of suffering loss.

Risk Management Plan

The collection of plans that describes the Risk Management activities to be performed on a project.

Stakeholder

Individuals and organizations that are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected as a result of project execution or project completion.