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Hands-On Assignment 1

1) The information given about NDAS includes five major divisions within the company: Accounts payable, accounts receivable, fleet maintenance, marketing and sales, and the various remote offices around the country. The accounts payable division owns a server that contains a database with information about the vendors, service carrier billings, and payroll. They own an older minicomputer server and are in the process of downsizing to a desktop computer. Their employees all have personal computers. Their current automation includes automated billings at Florida office locations. The accounts receivable division owns a server that contains a database for customer billing and bad debts. This microcomputer server is new. Employees in this division own personal computers. Similar to accounts payable, this division has automated billing at Florida locations. The fleet maintenance division has no current information technology, no hardware, and no automation. The marketing and sales division has personal computers for its employees that are connected via LAN. There is no automation currently within this division. The remote offices around the country communicate in various ways, have no standardized hardware, and have differing levels of automation.

Because the Fleet Maintenance Division currently has no technology, I would vote that department as needing a network the most. Adding a network to the fleet maintenance division would allow the company to organize records and track incoming/outgoing packages with much increased efficiency when compared to the current state of paper records.

2) NDAS would benefit from an integrated network that is connected throughout the company’s various divisions and offices. The type of network that they need would have many applications on it to cater to each division’s specific needs. Perhaps most importantly this network needs to be expandable in the future should NDAS choose to invest in their network and improve it in the future.

3) NDAS branches currently communicate with each other via voicemail, telephone, fax, mail, and inter-office mail. There are various types of hardware within each branch office. This lack of technological standardization may lead to many problems as NDAS grows. Standardizing the hardware used by NDAS would allow for uniform tech support as well as future creation of a company API to aid in management and day-to-day functionality. The growth of the company across multiple states also provides an adequate reason to shift to an integrated data communications network.

4) NDAS has operations spanning the continental United States ranging from Miami to Washington D.C. in the northeast and Los Angeles in the west. There are branch offices across the southeastern United States. Due to the large area covered by NDAS, I would recommend investing in a wide area network (WAN). By leasing circuits through an IXC such as AT&T or Sprint, NDAS could connect all of their branch offices together, including the main corporate office. This would allow real-time updates for billing, package tracking, payroll, and other corporate information between office locations. NDAS would also benefit from having LANs set up in each department to aid in communication and efficiency.

5) As a potential case of nepotism this could pose a problem because Les Coone has no relevant qualifications within the field of Information Services/ Data Processing. As the systems analyst, I can recommend to President Coone that he should find a replacement who is more qualified. Since he is in a position that I would be working very closely with during my systems analysis, his lack of knowledge may make my job harder than it needs to be. It would be difficult going to the President, however, and I may simply have to deal with it and hope that I can make it work.