

INFO 627 Group Assignment 1: Business Context Analysis

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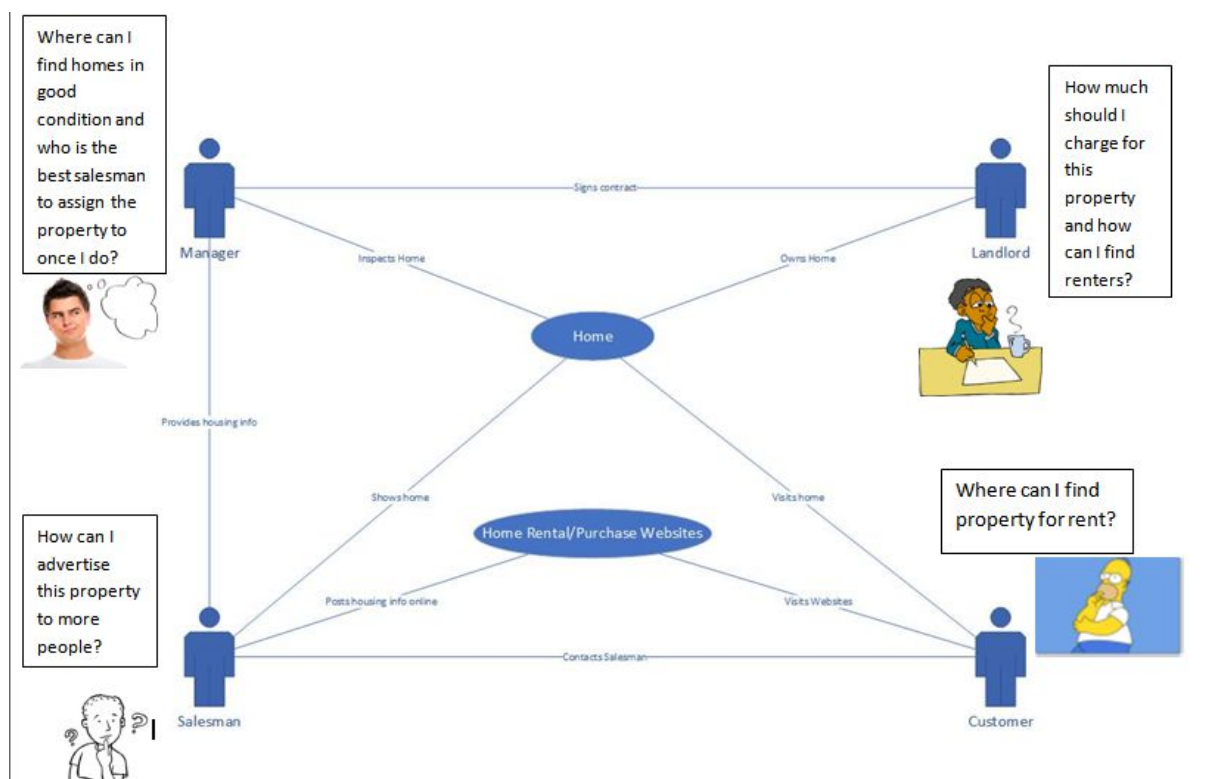
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1. Introduction

In this assignment, my group will be focusing on the business operations and processes associated with a small housing agency named Golden Springs Realty LLC. Golden Springs is a small housing company located in West Philadelphia. The company is fairly small and therefore must rely on using the internet and its many housing/rental websites in order to generate interest and build its customer base. The company relies on its employees to post accurate and eye-catching information regarding the properties it is trying to rent online for potential tenants or buyers to see. As this is the housing market, there, of course, are a large number of competitors ranging from persons who are attempting to rent their property themselves all the way up to large real estate companies. For this reason, Golden Springs attempts to distinguish itself by not only posting on multiple websites but also by offering one to one customer service when a customer is interested in viewing a property.

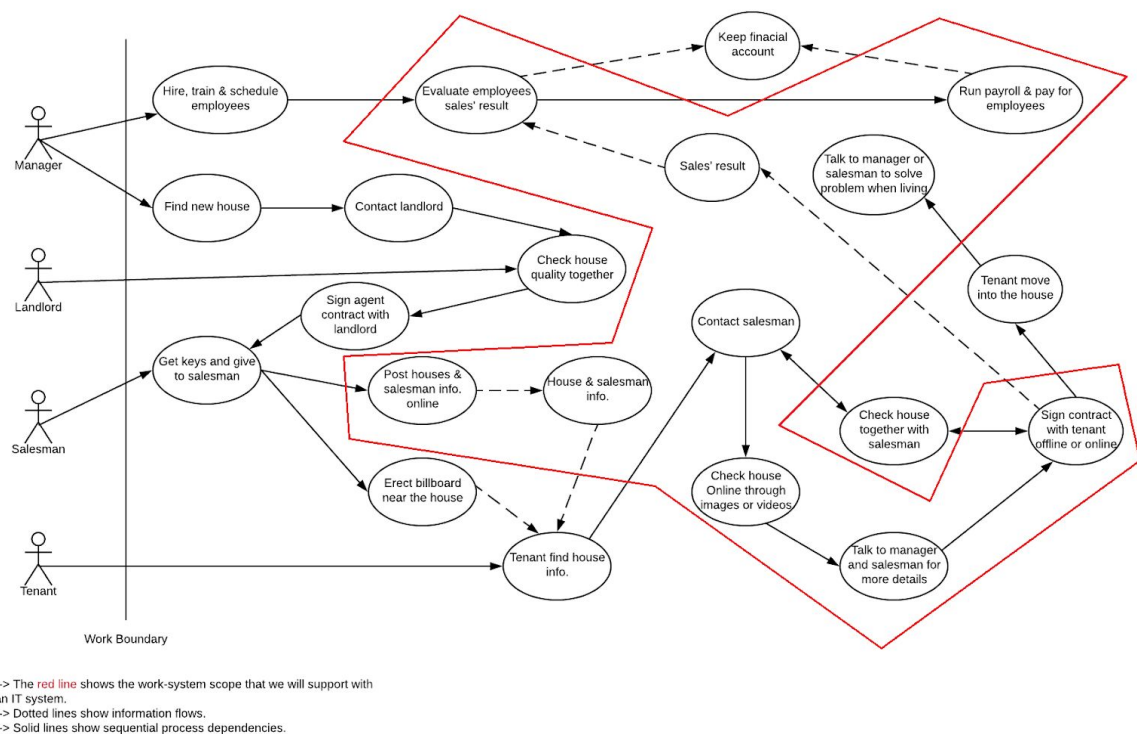
2. Analysis of Business Context and Operations



Golden Springs conducts their business primarily through websites that can be found throughout the web. The main web pages that Golden Springs utilizes in order to reach customers are Zillow.com, and Apartmentfinder.com due to their ease of use. The company is responsible mainly for either renting or selling these houses, not purchasing them. The manager of the company is solely responsible for finding houses that he believes will be

easiest to find tenants or buyers for and then signing a contract with the landlord of that property in order to receive the keys. The manager then hands the keys off to one of several sales employees who will visit the property in order to take photos and gather information that they will then post on a number of websites in order to generate interest. Once a potential tenant or buyer contacts a salesman, they can ask to set up an appointment at which time a salesman will personally show them the house and answer any questions the customer might have. Once a tenant or buyer is satisfied, the salesman will draft up a contract which he and the tenant or buyer will sign in order to finalize the sale. Because a salesman's salary is dependent on their performance, they work very hard to ensure that each and every property they are given is sold in a timely manner by advertising the property on as many sites as they can.

3. Analysis of Business Processes



The manager:

The manager's role in the business is through hiring, training employees and finding new houses. Depending on every monthly sales result, the manager will evaluate every salesman in order to compensate them or replace them with a new salesman. The cash flow between the company, manager and salesman depends on a common account to guarantee company operations. The manager is required to find new houses. He then contacts the landlord of the house to inspect the house's quality and make sure his employees will be able to secure tenants with not much difficulty. If the house is in good condition, the manager and landlord will sign a contract and the manager will get the keys to the house.

The salesman:

The salesman's role in the business is through getting a new house key and information from the manager. The salesman then is responsible for posting the house's information online or erecting a billboard near the house in order to attract tenants. After a potential customer contacts the salesman, the salesman will assist the tenant in inspecting the target house. If the customer can not personally inspect the house due to scheduling conflicts, the salesman should provide images or videos of the property as well as give more details online. If the customer is satisfied, they will sign a contract offline or online in order to finalize a sale. The sale result will then be sent to the manager and the salesman will then await evaluation.

The landlord:

The landlord's role in the business is through assisting the manager to inspect the house's quality and condition. If the house passes inspection, they will sign a contract and the landlord will hand over the keys to the manager.

The tenant:

The tenant's role in the business is done through finding housing information. After the tenant gets the property and salesman information, he will contact the salesman. If the customer is able to go and see the house, the salesman will accompany them to the house and assist the tenant with inspecting the home. If they can not personally inspect the home, they will be given images or videos from the salesman and get more details online. If the house passes inspection, the tenant will sign a contract with the salesman and move into the house. If there are any issues while the tenant is staying in the home, the tenant can talk to the manager or a salesman in order to resolve them.

Partial descriptions:

Purpose	Work-activities	Business processes
Pay efficient employees higher salary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Receive the sales results● Evaluate every sale result from every employee● Pay employee salary depending on the sales result	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sales results● Evaluate employees sales result● Run payroll & compensate employees
Solve tenant living problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Receive issues from current tenants● Attempt to solve the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tenant moves into the house● Talks to manager or salesman in order to solve issues during living contract

Find good house resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discover house in good condition ● Contact landlord of the house ● Inspect the house with landlord ● Sign contract with landlord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find new house ● Contact landlord ● Check house quality together ● Sign agent contract with landlord
Rent empty house to earn more money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Display landlord information outside the house ● Talk to the agent and inspect the house together ● Sign agent contract with landlord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check house quality together ● Sign agent contract with landlord
Let more people know house information online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive property information ● Post information online ● Erect billboard to display the house's status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get keys and give them to salesman ● Post houses & salesman info. online ● Erect billboard near the house
Take a good sale result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist tenant with inspecting the house ● Recommend the house to tenant ● Sign contract with tenant ● Deliver sales result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inspect the house together with a salesman ● Sign contract with tenant offline or online ● Produce sales result
Find a good house to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Search property information online ● Contact salesman ● Inspect the house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Property & salesman info. ● Tenant finds property info. ● Contact salesman ● Inspect house together with salesman
Sign contract online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● View property via photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● View property

	and videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions • Sign contract with salesman 	online through images or videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to manager and salesman for more details • Sign contract with tenant offline or online
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4. Analysis of Stakeholder Change Goals

Stakeholder / Group	What Stakeholder Wants	Impact Analysis	Potential strategies
Company Manager Zhan jin	Have enough housing resources	Important because more houses means more profit and more tenants	Salesman may also provide house resource information to manager
	Need to maximize profit	Important because manger need to keep company well	Can develop the part of evaluating sales result on website and give salesman salary depends on it
	Provide solid after-sales services	If company provide good service to tenant, tenant may continue rent the house	Can create a mail part on website to receive any problem from tenant
	Possess employees with high performance	When a salesman doesn't do well depends on evaluating system, manager could fire him and change a new one	Through evaluating, different sale result may cause different aftermath such as fire or add salary

Salesman Yang & Alvin	Let more people know house information online	Important because the more people know the house, the more possible the house will be rent	Create a house display part and scrolling information bar on website to show more house information
	Sign contract with tenant	Important because it means that the house are rent and the salesman get a good sale result	Can design a part for signing contract online in case of someone is outside philadelphia or America and he can't sign contract offline
	Receive high salary	Important because it is the goal the salesman recommend the house	Can develop a part to show the sale result of salesman and show how much he may receive every month
Tenant	Sign contract online	Some of tenants may have personal business that they can't sign a contract offline	Can cteate a part used to sign contract with tenants online and rent more house
	Find a good house to live	Important because this is the main goal for a tenant that find a satisfied house to live	Show the house status through photos and videos online and attract tenant see and check more house
Landlord	Rent empty house to earn more money	This is why a landlord what to find a house agency to rent his house	Can develop a part that give landlord a way to send house information to manager or salesman online

The stakeholders for Golden Springs Realty LLC can be divided into four categories. Which are company manager, salesman, tenant and landlord. Each of these categories has their own desires and goals.

The biggest desires for the company manager are that he wants to find more housing resources and maximizing profit for the company. These two goals are the core work of the company manager. One of them can support the company's profitability. Another one provides resources for the entire company. Also, the company manager wants to provide solid continuing services to each tenant and push employees towards better performances. It is important to provide solid continuing services to each tenant because this will affect whether tenants want to continue renting the house or not. Currently, the only way to provide continuing services is when a tenant sends an email to the company manager then the company manager forwards the email to after-sales staff in order to fix the problem. Sometimes it may cost lots of time to do the process. In order to motivate employees to get better performance, the current situation is that the company manager calculates sales performances based on every salesman's sales record. After that the company manager will get the ratings of every salesman, then he will evaluate and pay the salary based on the calculation. The major problem in evaluating employees is that all calculation comes from the company manager.

For salesman in the company, their biggest goal is to receive a high salary. However, this goal will be based on two other goals for each salesman. The first is to allow more people to access the property information, the second is to sign more contracts with tenants. In order to earn a higher salary, each salesman will need to sign more rental contracts. Currently, the salesman can only post property information on third party websites and then wait for tenants to call them, they also can only sign a paper contract with each tenant which is much less efficient.

Tenant also have their own goals and desires as well. For example, most tenants only want two major things. The first is to sign contracts online, and the second is to find a good affordable house to live in. Currently, the company does not provide online contract signing services, and a third party website is really hard to maintain steady and secure.

The final part of the business process that would like improvements is the landlord. Most only have one concern, which is to rent their empty house in order to earn revenue. However, currently, there is no system in place that can connect landlords to the company manager.

5. Analysis of IT System Support

Currently, the Golden Springs Realty LLC does not have an IT system to support the company. The only IT system they have used are third-party websites that enable them to post property and contact information. When a tenant is interested in the property, the tenant can find the information on the third party website.

After interviewing the company's employees, the Golden Springs Realty LLC has a couple of areas that may need to have an IT system in order to support the company's operation. The major thing is they need their own system that can control their business and manage their employees. The system needs to contain several parts. Such as the ability to evaluate employees sales' result, a payroll and wages system, a website where the salesman can post property information, and an online contract system and continuing service system.

Based on the situation that the company needs to have evaluations for employees that work in sales, we have designed an evaluating system for them. The evaluating system needs to contain a database that records every salesperson's performance and is able to count the commission for every sale. In order to record the performance of a salesperson, the salesperson needs to sign a contract with a tenant online through the system. When the system records all sales performances and counts their commission, the system will then calculate wages for each employee based on their sales performance. Also, the system will automatically calculate the tax and medical insurance for the employees then automatically transfer the salary to each employee.

Another major IT system they will need is their own website. The website will enable sales personnel to post information about homes and contact information for the sales representative/agency online instead of third-party housing websites. Also, the website will allow a landlord to contact the company about housing contracts. Once a landlord contacts the company manager, the company manager will inspect the house and sign a contract with the landlord. The company manager will then assign the house to a sales representative and feed the property information into the database. After a tenant contacts a sales representative and when they are interested in the listing, the system needs to provide the online contract system in order to allow the tenant and sales representative to sign the contract online. After the contract has been signed, the sales representative will be given a better sales performance rating in the system.

The system also needs to have a continuing service system that will allow tenants to post any requests through a resident portal. The request will then be directly sent to maintenance staff. For the entire system, the company manager will have the authority to supervise every part of the system in case something goes wrong, the company manager will then be able to make changes in the system.

6. Conclusions

As a result of our interviews and research, we have determined that some form of IT system would definitely benefit not only Golden Springs as a company but also any potential tenants or customers. We feel that by implementing an IT system we can assist the company to not only revamp their current workflow but also generate more consumer interest as a result of these improvements. It has become clear to us all that one of the first projects we should focus on is creating a safe and secure website which salesman can use to not only handle certain customer functions but also advertise the company as well as any properties that need renting. Another function of this website could potentially include online payment in regards to monthly rent or any other fees that are owed to the company. By creating this website we hope to bring the company closer in line with the competition and ensure that each salesman and tenant can look forward to a much brighter future.

Appendices

Interviewer: Luis Ortiz

Interview 1 with Yang

Interview Content:

1. What does the company do?

It is a housing agency company.

2. What is different about this, specific business? How do they do things differently than other businesses or organizations?

They are mainly responsible for the rental or sale of the house, not the purchase of the house.

3. What are the main deliverables of the business?

They provide suitable houses for people who need to buy or rent a house.

4. Who-does what, to produce these deliverables?

“The manager of the company is responsible for finding the property, and I (Yang) am responsible for finding customers to show the houses.”

5. What does the individual being interviewed do? How do they do these things (map out their sequence of activities)? Why do they do these things? What are they (personally) trying to achieve?

“I am a salesman, responsible for publishing rental information on different network platforms every day, and looking for customers on different platforms. When customers contact me, I need to lead customers to see the houses.”

6. What are the main problems that they encounter in how they work?
Because of the current economy and housing market, customers are more difficult to find.

Interview Summary:

This is a housing agency, the manager of the company is responsible for finding a landlord and signing contracts for house rentals or sales. The salesman is responsible for posting rental and purchase information online and shows the house to potential tenants or house buyers.

Interviewer: Luis Ortiz

Interview 2 with Yang

Interview Content:

What is your main workflow?

Every month I collect my salary from Zhan jin, and proceed to get the key of a new house from him, I then publish the information of the house on the house leasing website. When someone wants to rent a house, they will get my contact information from the website and contact me. I will lead them to inspect the house. If they are willing to rent, I will provide the contract to them and both parties will sign making the deal official.

Workflow Analysis:

Treasury workflow could be improved with simple implementation of either mailboxes where salesman are able to pick up their paychecks could save Zhan Jin costly time that he could be utilizing elsewhere. The same could be said if the company could implement a direct deposit system which would easily prove to be the most efficient way of distributing paychecks and pay statements to employees. This process could also prove useful in the collection of tenant rent on a monthly basis by offering tenants an alternative way of paying their rent.

The salesman's workflow is already mostly optimized being that the salesman are utilizing the internet and multiple housings websites to broadcast and display information regarding the houses and their contact information.

Finding houses is also just as simple a process as it mainly entitles searching the very same websites for homes and property to purchase.

Mailboxes could also prove useful for delivery and the return of keys in order to save Zhan Jin even more time.

Electronic contracts could also prove useful however most interactions such as these are normally done in person due to security and legality concerns.

Interviewer: Xinkai Zhang

Interview 1 with Alvin Zhou

Interview Content:

1. What does the company do?

We are a housing agency company

2. What is different about this, specific business? How do they do things differently than other businesses or organizations?

We obtain the rent or the sale of the house by introducing the house to our customers.

3. What are the main deliverables of the business?

We provide our customers with the house they like.

4. Who-does what, to produce these deliverables?

After the manager signs the contract with the landlord, we are responsible for renting or selling these houses.

5. What does the individual being interviewed do? How do they do these things (map out their sequence of activities)? Why do they do these things? What are they (personally) trying to achieve?

I am a salesman and I mainly send house rental information to other websites on a daily basis. Then I wait for the client to contact us to see the house. We are mainly to rent out the landlord's house and let the customer live in the house that they are satisfied with.

6. What are the main problems that they encounter in how they work?

Very few customers recently, it takes a lot of time to find.

Interview Summary:

This is a housing agency, the manager in the company is responsible for find landlord and sign contract for house rental or sales. The salesman is responsible for posts house information online and shows the house to tenant or house buyer.

Interviewer: Xinkai Zhang

Interview 2 with Alvin Zhou

Interview Content:

What is your main workflow?

At the end of the month, Zhan Jin will evaluate my performance and provide me with the month's salary. If there is a new house available for lease or purchase, he will give me the key to the new house. I put the house's information on the rental website, and wait for a potential tenant to contact me. After the tenant contacts me, I will bring the tenant to inspect the home. If satisfied, I will provide and sign the contract with them.

Workflow Analysis

The company manager has responsibility to hire, train and schedule employees, evaluate salesman based on their sales performance. Also he has to provide continuing service for tenants and forward request to after-sales staff. The money flow will be between company, manager and salesman. The company manager needs to find houses and check them to make sure the house is fine and easy to rent or sale.

The salesman of the company just need to post house information online when they got house key from manager and their contact information as well. When a potential tenant contact them, they will show the house to the potential tenant and persuade the potential tenant to rent or buy the house. Or they have to find another good house to the potential tenant. When they sign a contact they will earn a better sales performance.

Interviewer: Xujian Zhang

Interview 1 with Zhan Jin

Interview Content:

1. What does the company do?

Our company is a housing agency company.

2. What is different about this, specific business? How do they do things differently than other businesses or organizations?

This business is very different from other businesses. As a housing agency company, we need to provide services such as assessment, trading, agency, and consulting for the housing and coordinate the relationship between the tenant and the landlord.

3. What are the main deliverables of the business?

We mainly provide rented houses for tenants to help tenants find suitable houses. We also provide house trading services for those who need to buy a house.

4. Who-does what, to produce these deliverables?

The company manager is mainly responsible for the communication with the landlord and the evaluation of the house, and the property is handed over to the salesman for rental or sales.

5. What does the individual being interviewed do? How do they do these things (map out their sequence of activities)? Why do they do these things? What are they (personally) trying to achieve?

As the manager of the company, first of all I need to assess the security status and market conditions of a certain area to decide whether or not to represent the house in the area.

Secondly, I will contact the landlord to evaluate the value of the transaction or rental price of the target property. Determine whether it is suitable for renting or selling a house. Next I will sign a contract with the landlord, represent the target house, obtain the house key, and then hand it to the salesman for rental or sales. This is to provide better services for our tenants or buyers. Renting or buying a house. We want to let the landlord not worry about the vacancy

of the house, and let the person who needs to rent or buy a house find the right house.

6. What are the main problems that they encounter in how they work?

The main problem is that it is impossible to find enough tenants or buyers to rent or sell a house.

Observations Summary

Zhan Jin makes a lot of calls during interview. Some of them are landlords, others are tenants. The calls from landlords are about making new contract. The calls from tenants are about problem in houses and paying rent. In his office, there is a big map of Philadelphia with some marks on it. These are his agent's house.

Interview Summary

This is a housing agency, responsible for the rental and sale of the house. The manager is responsible for finding the property and signing the contract with the landlord. The salesman is then responsible for finding the tenant or the buyer to sell the house.

Interviewer: Xujian Zhang

Interview 2 with Zhan Jin

Interview Content:

What is your main workflow?

First of all I need to contact the landlord to check the quality of the house and the conditions. Then contact the landlord to discuss the housing agent or purchase problem. Then sign the contract and decide to buy the house or be the agent. Then get the house key and give it to the salesman. After houses have been rented, I will continue to provide services for the tenants. Such as when the tenant asks me, for example, to repair the air conditioner, I need to contact the after-sales staff to repair the air conditioner. Every month I will collect monthly rent from the salesman, and assess the performance of each salesperson. According to the assessment results, I will give each salesman different salary, or dismiss the salesman in order to hire a new one.

Workflow Analysis

The manager workflow begins with hiring, training employees to make more sales. Depends on every monthly sale's result, the manager will evaluate every salesman to pay for them or change a new salesman. The cash flow between the company, manager and salesman depends on a common account to guarantee company operations. For manager, he need to find new house and check the house's quality to make sure the house could easily find tenants.

The salesman will get new house key and information from manager to release the house information online because the salesman takes charge of finding tenants. After someone contact the salesman, the salesman will help he/she check the target house to recommend it. If the man is satisfied, they will sign contract to make a good sale result.

