

ThoughtWorks® BA Questions (Confidential)

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- Please read the instructions and submit your response within 3 days.
- Please submit your work in pdf/jpg/doc/ppt formats.
- The material given for this Business case might not be sufficient for you to answer the questions. You can make **reasonable assumptions** based on your experiences but please clearly list the questions and the assumptions you made in your answers.

Your Tasks

Part 1: Please read the Business Case - “Debt Chasers” and answer the following questions:

ThoughtWorks has been engaged by **DebtChasers** to help them build an IT system so they can improve their business profits. The company has given ThoughtWorks some background information about itself, which you can find in the file “BA Scenario - DebtChasers” provided.

You, as a business analyst, are asked to follow up this engagement. In order to get a sense of the scale of this project, a meeting with two DebtChasers stakeholders has been arranged one week after. You need to review the material carefully and be ready for that.

1. Please try to identify the key user roles in their business process.
2. Please try to develop a high-level business process model to demonstrate their current business process and identify their key problems or pain points.
3. Please try to develop a plan for the coming meeting, which needs to be submitted to DebtChasers beforehand:
 - Please specify 2 attendees from DebtChasers that you would like to see attend.
 - Please specify your goals for the meeting.
 - Please list the key questions you wish to address.
 - Please outline the structure of the whole meeting.

Part 2. Business Case Analysis - **please choose either Question A or Question B to answer.**

Question A : DebtChasers Business Analysis

Do you think it can be/be not a profitable business in China market? How do you come to this conclusion? Please describe your analyzing process.

Question B : Airbnb Business Model Analysis

- Please take some time to research the Airbnb business model. [Business Model Canvas](#) is recommended for your analysis but feel free to choose any other tools.
- And analyze whether this model will be successful in local travel cities such as Beijing/Chengdu/Xian in China; if not, please advise how to cater to such markets.

BUSINESS CASE - Debt Chasers

Debt Chasers: Client Report

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The Company

DebtChasers is a small company based in Manchester, in the North of England. They occupy a small amount of office space in a central Manchester location.

DebtChasers service is to chase unpaid invoices on behalf of their customers by typing threatening letters and sending them in the mail. The service is simple but very effective and their clients are generally very happy with the results. There are, though a few issues:

1. The company is not making a profit. The administration team is fully occupied typing nasty letters but this still doesn't seem to be enough.
2. DebtChasers cannot service all the customers who want to use their service. The sales manager assures everyone there is a lot more business out there, but complains she cannot take advantage of it because the admin staff can't cope with more work. The Sales Manager says that there are definitely 100 more clients out there and that all clients want to increase the number of debts that are serviced to an average of 40 per year.
3. Sometimes letters are sent to debtors who have already paid their debts. Very often DebtChasers customers do not inform them if the debt has been paid. This has led to some embarrassment recently and the threatened loss of some clients.
4. The office is rapidly running out of space, already DebtChasers store a lot of archived invoices in a storage facility. It is not a legal requirement to store original copies of the invoices, however it has been useful to be able to refer back to debts and letters that have been sent to clients. All invoices are thrown away after 5 years
5. There is no easy way to establish which clients are using the service and which clients are not using the service any more so it is difficult to dynamically manage customer relationships, other than by using the sales manager's relationship skills.
6. Customers/Debtors often phone in about invoices. The Admin assistants are generally charged with answering the phone. It is difficult to handle these calls, debtors are generally quite cross and become even crosser when it takes some time to find their details in the Invoice Ledger. This detracts from the time the assistants can devote to writing letters.

The office building in which DebtChasers is located is occupied by a variety of other small service providers, perhaps of most interest to this scenario is the solicitors down the hall; Goldsmith, Gallagher & Co. While they are a traditional high street solicitor's firm and thus handle many types of cases they find that one of their main areas of business is chasing unpaid debts through the courts on behalf of a variety of clients. As they occupy the same floor of the building as DebtChasers they have formed somewhat of an informal relationship and DebtChasers, when asked often recommend this firm if their clients ask for help if the DebtChasers service fails.

Characters

Debt Chasers employs the following 4 people:

- Administrative Assistant - Marilynn Parr
- Administrative Assistant – Matthew Parker
- Sales Manager – Lorene Lambert
- Managing Director – Jenny Polson

Goldsmith Gallagher Employ the following 3 people:

- Solicitor (partner) - Louis Goldsmith

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- Solicitor (partner) – Peter Gallagher
- Secretary – Mindy Goldsmith

Marilynn Parr

Marilynn is 45 years old and has worked at DebtChasers for 20 years and subsequently knows many of DebtChaser's customers personally (and indeed many of the debtors). She lives in Crumpsall and has 2 grown up children; Lucy and David. Marilynn is currently going through a divorce after 25 years of marriage.

Marilynn is seen as a tremendous asset in the office as she is dedicated, often working 45 hours a week and tremendously efficient with a typing speed of around 90 words per minute. Marilynn is the sister of the Managing Director Jenny.

Matthew Parker

Matthew is 25 years old, he is single and does not have any children. Matthew lives in a shared house in Fallowfield with 3 friends he has known since his school days at Beaver Road Primary School. Matthew recently joined the DebtChasers staff, replacing Eva Aspinall – who retired after 30 years of service with the firm. Matthew has 4 years of administrative experience, his experience of DebtChaser's so far has been a bit frustrating for him, although he is tremendously efficient and enthusiastic (he has a typing speed almost matching that of Marilynn) he is used to working in more technology enabled environments. It has been the introduction of Matthew to the office mix that has alerted Jenny to some possible drawbacks in the business process employed by DebtChasers.

Lorene Lambert

Lorene has worked her magic for DebtChasers for 5 years. Lorene lives with Joel in Didsbury and has 3 children under 10: Katy, Gemima & Luc. As sales manager Lorene travels the country managing existing clients and looking for new opportunities. She has developed some tremendously positive relationships with many of the clients and is frustrated that she has found many more clients that want to use the DebtChasers service but can't due to under capacity.

Jenny Polson

Jenny has been the managing director of DebtChasers after inheriting the DebtChasers business from her father in 1980. She has maintained the business (and her income) adequately over the last few years but now wants to re-invigorate the business and thus fund her pension provision to make it slightly less likely that she will have to work until she is 90.

Jenny is seen as a fantastic boss; calm and in control, but a bit lost with new technology and how to make it work for her company.

Jenny is married and lives in Wilmslow with her husband Julian, daughter Ella and son Robert.

Business Process

Textual Description

The DebtChasers business process can be written thus:

1. The Sales Manager sells £10 stickers to a client, the Sales Manager visits clients to sell them the stickers directly
2. The client attaches the sticker to an unpaid invoice and forwards it to DebtChasers
3. The Admin assistants open the mail and takes out any invoices that are received. Those invoices that do not have a sticker are thrown in the bin
4. Those invoices that do have a sticker are entered into the Invoice Ledger. The following details are recorded against a unique Invoice Number:
 - a. Customer Name
 - b. Customer Address
 - c. Customer Telephone Number
 - d. Debtor Name
 - e. Debtor Address
 - f. Debtor telephone Number
 - g. Amount of debt to be paid
 - h. Date Invoice received
 - i. Date Letter 1 sent (completed with today's date)
5. The invoice Ledger also has the following other columns that are filled in as the information is supplied:
 - a. Date Letter 2 sent
 - b. Date Letter 3 sent
 - c. Date Letter 4 sent
 - d. Date debt paid
 - e. Date Service Ends
6. As they go they also record these details on a separate A4 sheet report (for use later when typing letters)
7. The Admin assistants then file the original invoice document in a file for the customer in a physical filing cabinet
8. The Administration assistants check the ledger and find those invoices that are due for a letter 2, 3 or 4 today. Letters are sent out weekly so the service provides 4 letters in 4 weeks per debt. Each due letter is added to the A4 sheet used for letter 1 above.
9. For each letter 4 the assistants record the Date the service ends (today) and draw a line through the record for additional clarity as to an invoice's status.
10. Once all the letters have been recorded on the A4 sheet of paper the Assistants set to with the typing. For each letter number there is a template that they copy from, inserting the appropriate details from the A4 sheet.
11. When all the letters and envelopes have been typed the assistants stick stamps on each one and deliver them to the post box, situated outside the office block.
12. Retreat to office and drink tea.

Salient Facts at Your Fingertips

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These numbers give a slightly unprofitable company (as-is):

- Admin people @ £15k pa
- Sales people @ £25k pa
- Debt stickers, 1p each to make
- Envelopes 2p, letter paper 1p (a letter fits on one page)
- Postage stamps 30p each
- Use a worst case scenario of 4 letters per invoice
- Office space £10,000 pa
- Office equipment £5,000 pa
- Storage facility £5,000 pa
- There are 300 customers who submit 20 invoices per year
- The stickers are sold for £10 each.

To-Be scenario

- The sales person could find 100 more customers and get all 400 customers to submit (on average) 40 invoices per year