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Information System  
for Flora Flowers

Flora Flower LTD

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*Flora Flowers*

1. Introduction

Flora’s Flowers is a flower producing company owned by Flora Forest and Symonds Forest. The core activities of the company is wholesale of fresh flower and small plants and sell them to florist in the main centres of North Island and in Christchurch in the south island. Flora Forest and Symonds Forest started growing flowers as their hobby and sold them on the roadside and to the local shops in West Auckland. Their dedication and potential made their business flourish. Then Flora’s Flowers came into existence in 2002 using venture capital. They made good profit every year and last year it turned out to $10 million. Number of customers list is also long as 200 customers in the north island and 50 customers in the Christchurch.

2. Overview

The company is mainly operated by the Flora Forest and her husband Symonds Forest. Flora Forest is the General Manager and HR manager for permanent staff of the company .On the other hand her husband manages all the finances, positioned as Financial Manager. And their youngest son Paul Murphy is shed manager and HR Manager for casual Auckland staff.

The Marketing Manager, Lucy Corban has been there for three years. Auckland university graduate, Joe Simich has been North Island Distribution manager for past four years. Coming from farming background, Luke Gardner holds well deserved position of the Garden Manager. In the south side, Christchurch office is managed by Michelle Street. Graduating from Unitec, Maria Vodafone majored in computer Science and Information systems and responsible for I.S. Support and Office Manager.

2.1 Company Structure

* General Manager – Flora Forest (owner)
* HR Manager for permanent staff – Flora Forest (owner)
* Manager of Finances – Symonds Forest (owner)
* Marketing Manager –Lucy Corban
* North Island Distribution Manager – Joe Simich
* Cool store and Packing shed manager – Paul Murphy.
* HR Manager for casual Auckland staff– Paul Murphy.
* Garden Manager – Luke Gardener
* Christchurch Manager – Michelle Street
* IS Support / Office Manager – Maria Vodafone

2.2. Structure Tree

3. Information System Currently in use

They currently uses a Customized inventory system which is the upgradation of their previous ACCPAC inventory system. Customized inventory system is linked to the distribution system. The present order entry system is an in-house developed system that is 4 years old. This order entry system, which is used for the raw materials that make up the bouquets, has been made to work with ACCPAC, but still has many problems that the staff have to work around until someone has time to deal with them. The HR application which was designed by Flora.

3.1 The General Manager and HR Manager

Systems used:

* Order Entry system
* The Distribution system
* The HR application
* MS Office 2003

3.2 The Financial Manager

Systems used:

* ACCPAC (a customized off-the-shelf (COTS) accounting, CRM and business management software primarily serving the community of small and mid-sized company market).
* MS Office 2003

3.3 The Marketing Manager

Systems used:

* ACCPAC Sales Module
* Goldmine CRM
* MS Office 2003

3.4 Cool store and Packing shed Manager

Systems used:

* Order Entry system
* The Distribution system
* The HR system
* MS Office 2003

3.5 Christchurch Manager

Systems used:

* the HR system
* the Order system
* ACCPAC Sales Module
* Goldmine CRM

3.6 Office Manager

Systems used:

* NT Network Node Manager and other Administration Tools
* ACCPAC Asset Module
* MS Office 2003

3.7 North Island Distribution Manager

Systems used:

* A simple Distribution System built by Joe using a Paradox database.
* A simple Inventory system written by Joe which integrates with the Distribution system above, but which has limited functionality and uses an inefficient import/export program to work with the system below.
* ACCPAC Inventory System, which has good functionality.
* MS Office 2003

3.8 The Garden Manager

Systems used:

* Luke receives all his instructions on paper.
* He does not use the computer at all, but is being persuaded to learn how to enter basic data into simple applications.

4. Main Units of the System and Task performed

The customized inventory system which is the upgradation of ACCPAC System was and off the shelf package that was customized for FFIS. FFIS was essential for the company as it contains a Sales module, an Inventory module, an Accounts module and an Asset Management module.

The Distribution system was written by Joe Simich which is very useful but time consuming. The HR application was developed by Flora but it some problems as it do not integrate with other system. Then comes the order entry system which four years old replaces and earlier COTS package. This order entry system, which is used for the raw materials that make up the bouquets, has been made to work with ACCPAC.

Main unites of the system are as follows:

1. Pentium V CPU’s with 512 RAM
2. Modems, fiber optics lines with basic star topology
3. Customized Inventory System
4. MS Office 2003.
5. ACCPAC (a customized off-the-shelf (COTS) accounting, CRM and business management software primarily serving the community of small and mid-sized company market).
6. A simple HR system based on an MS Office Access 2003 database.
7. Goldmine CRM
8. Order Entry system
9. The Distribution system
10. The HR system

**4.1** System Architecture

5. Computing Supports the Business Strategy

Problems with the system are listed on a board and accorded a priority rating, but time constraints mean that often a simple non-urgent job is fixed before a complex urgent job. There are procedures for introducing fixes before they are put into production, but they are often bypassed, with only occasional disasters. Backups for each of the component systems are done nightly and backup tapes are stored off-site. Since the last disaster, a copy of the previous night’s backup has been kept on site. There are procedure manuals that are nearly up-to-date, but most people just ask other people how to do things.

5.1 Transactions and Number of Users

The company’s revenue has grown rapidly since the starting and last year it turned over $10 million. With over 200 customers in the North Island and 50 customers in the Christchurch. Orders have increased to where each customer usually places at least one order per week containing between 20 and 80 products.

6. Development of the system

The system has gone through various upgradations throughout the time, most of them were carried out by Joe. Originally, the FFIS was done on paper but it became impossible to manage. So they started using Excel Spreadsheet which helped with the charting the distribution. But the struggles were still there and as they could not find best tool for job.

This led to the development of a distribution application which used a Paradox database, which greatly improves their efficiency. Then Joe wanted to improve the system further so he went on to develop and inventory system which was link to the distribution system. However, many of the other component systems were still primarily paper based systems.

In 2003, ACCPAC system was introduced, which was an off-the-shelf package that was customized for FFIS. FFIS contains Sales module, an Inventory module, an Accounts module and an Asset Management module.

The distribution system, written 3 years ago was useful but time consuming as it cannot easily interact with the ACCPAC system. Business was increasing and the system was reaching the limit of handling complexity.

Joe then upgraded ACCPAC inventory system to customized inventory system which integrated well with the distribution system but it has some problems with the order entry system.

6.1 How it was implemented?

6.2 Administration and Maintenance

Flora Flowers information system is administered by IS support /office manager Maria Vodafone. She majored in computer science and information systems from Unitec New Zealand. She supports the clerks who are responsible for data entry and inventory records. She is 24x7 on the call proving support and assistance. Most of the problems are solved by call, so there are rarely and call outs. The minor problems are sorted out by the staff themselves. When Maria isn’t around, her cousin is there for replacement.

Bigger problems like request for changes are treated as major problem. They systematically solved by the procedures. Other problems occur such as system fault, they are listed on the board. Such problems accorded a priority rating. These problems often has time constraints mean that often a non-urgent simple job is fixed before a complex urgent job. Although it happens rarely but it creates bit of fuss when it does happen.

There are certain procedures for new fixes before they implemented. These new fixes require texting before introducing into the production. But these procedures for implementation are often ignored until something crashes. When it does happen, then the cure is applied.

6.3 Disciplined and Systematic Approach

1. Call support is 24x7 online, managed by Maria .when Maria is not there, she always refers to her cousin.
2. Minor problems are sorted out by the staff, so there are rarely any call outs.
3. Some customers request for change, which is treated as prior problem. Then the problem are listed on a board and accorded a priority rating.
4. There are procedures for introducing fixes before they put in production.
5. Backups for each of the component systems are done nightly and backup tapes are stored off-site. Since the last disaster, a copy of the previous night’s backup has been kept on site.
6. There are procedure manuals that are nearly up-to-date, but most people just ask other people how to do things.
7. Everything has been going along pretty well and smooth following procedures.
8. Orders have increased to where each customer usually places at least one order per week containing between 20 and 80 products.
9. Communication is working only because of the close bonds between the staff. Most of them see each other at least once a week for family gatherings.

6.4 Problems Currently Facing

1. The original FFIS was paper based, which very quickly became impossible to manage.

1. An Excel spreadsheet was developed to help with charting the distribution, but was not the best tool for the job.
2. The distribution system was time consuming as it cannot easily interact with ACCPAC system. With the increase in business, the system is reaching the limit of handling complexity.
3. The HR application, developed by Flora, does not integrate with any other system.
4. The customized inventory system, although integrating with the distribution system, does not have the functionality of the ACCPAC inventory system.
5. The present order entry system is an in-house developed system that is 4 years old, and replaces an earlier COTS package that never worked particularly well. This order entry system, which is used for the raw materials that make up the bouquets, has been made to work with ACCPAC, but still has many problems that the staff have to work around until someone has time to deal with them.
6. Many customers are placing multiple orders with different delivery addresses.
7. The staff are finding it difficult to cope with the disparate systems and the problems that need to be worked around.
8. There are procedures for introducing fixes before they are put into production, but they are often bypassed, with only occasional disasters.

7. Conclusion

I have analysed that the currently running information system is poorly implemented so I have found out that an updated information system which needs to improve the administration and efficiency of the system is required. Company needs an appropriate channel of communication between different locations i.e. North Island and Christchurch. Staff members need an upgraded system to work with efficiency. The paper system has to be completely dissolved by the company.

8. Recommendation

There are various requirements to meet the demand. In order to address the requirements to meet the demands I would recommend ERP system.

8.1 Proposed System

Enterprise resource planning is the integrated management of business processes. ERP provides an integrated and continuously updated view of core business processes using common databases maintained by a database management system.

8.1.1 Manufacturing Resource Planning

Manufacturing resource planning is defined as a method for the effective planning of all resources of a manufacturing company. Ideally, Both Auckland and Christchurch needs a storage area for the stock to store in cool place. Then the flowers should be manufactured into bouquets for the required need after receiving emails or phone calls from the customers. Management of suppliers should be controlled on electronic check list system that is connected to internet and concurrently updates the database as the stock flows.

Bulk material cost, goods and service tax and profit should be calculated. Inventory management and maintenance (capacity planning) and forecast, adequate inventory, EOQ's, costing, reorder points and updates a centralized database. Also, ensuring that the stock in the cool store is there for providing the best product at least cost and on time. The acquisition of new customers, ensuring that the bouquets meet her high standards.

8.1.2 Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management is the management of human resources. It is designed by the HR Department to maximize employee performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives. HR should use a HR application which is connected to distribution and inventory system so that it checks on everything is up to date.

There should be at least one HR in one centre. HR should discipline on work ethic but maintains friendly and stress free atmosphere in the office. HR should also maintains the schedule throughout the week. Recruitment new talents is also prior responsibility of HR. Also responsible for keeping online record of week roster and mail to staff. The record of employment history and leaves should also be saved in HR application database.

8.1.3 Customer Relationship Management

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an approach to managing a company's interaction with current and potential customers. It is a record of the relationship between company and customers. Mostly, the data is kept in CRM software.

It uses data analysis about customers' history with a company and to improve business relationships with customers, specifically focusing on customer retention and ultimately driving sales growth. Loyal and old customers should be acknowledged with bonus.

CRM software should be put online (password protected) on the intranet so that manager at each office should be able to access the details.

8.1.4 Supply Chain Management

Supply chain management is the management of the flow of goods and services, involves the movement and storage of raw materials, of work-in-process inventory, and of finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. The record of delivery of the bulk flowers to the Christchurch office from Auckland should be stored in software linked to centralized database. Maintaining, scheduling and coordinating of vehicles in the best way to disperse a fresh product through advance software.

Shipments to customers with least time. Best path algorithms should be applied by software to save the fuel and decrease the cost and time of delivery. Variety of duties should be appointed to the staff for the packing activities.

8.1.5 I.T. Support

Technical support may be delivered over by e-mail, live support software on a website, or a tool where users can log a call or incident The Internet can also be a good source for freely available I.T. support, where experienced users help users find solutions to their problems.

Staff having problems with their software should be able to report to tech support help desk. The problems should be prioritize and solved immediately. There should be a technical team to run the IT support section. This team should be responsible for all the technical stuff to run smoothly and available for help in troubleshooting.

IT team is also responsible to update all the System architecture in the company so the whole system runs smoothly.

8.1.6 Financial Management

Financial management refers to the efficient and effective management of money (funds) in such a manner as to accomplish the objectives of the organization. The person on this position should be specialized function directly associated with the top management. The significance of this function is not seen in the 'Line' but also in the capacity of 'Staff' in overall of a company.

The Financial manager should be concerned with how to keep the company in the black. Should be expert with excel and budgeting report. Should manage funds like general ledger, A/P, A/R, payroll, cash flow. Should manage the goods and service tax on products. Billing and invoicing should be done on customised software.

# **9. References**

* www.Wikipedia.com