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Management Accountants

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General information about ABC Solutions and Kayland

You are a Financial Manager in ABC Solutions (ABC). ABC is an IT service provider founded in 1996 by Andrew Gourlay, Bippin Lalli and Colette Sanderson. The company name is taken from the initial letters of their given names.

ABC is based in Kayland, an industrialised country in northern Europe, where the currency is the K\$. Kayland has an advanced economy and a sophisticated infrastructure.

Andrew and Bippin worked together in IT in a large organisation and Andrew knew Colette because she was his primary contact with the recruitment consultancy that supplied IT staff. They were surprised at the amounts of money that were being spent on external IT consultancy. At that time there was a concern that many computer systems would break down because of the so-called 'millennium bug'. Many companies realised that they did not have sufficient in-house expertise to deal with the threat and so there was a need to hire consultants.

Andrew, Bippin and Colette established ABC and recruited a number of consultants to assist them. A few of these consultants were employed on a full-time basis, but most were independent consultants who would be paid a daily rate for work undertaken for ABC's clients. The three founders have always worked on the basis that they will hire only high quality professionals and reward them generously.

ABC developed a good reputation for reliability and meeting deadlines. A large number of IT consultancies had been created in response to the millennium bug crisis and, when the threat drew to a close, many of those consultancies struggled to survive because the demand for their core services had dried up. ABC continued to grow thanks to its reputation, the strong relationships that had been developed with many of their major clients and their diverse range of services.

ABCs' success has been due in part to the fact that it has extensive contacts with experts in specific fields. For example, a client who wishes to update a software package that was written in a specialised programming language knows that ABC will almost certainly be able to suggest a programmer with experience of working on similar applications in that language.

The founders have always been very careful not to focus exclusively on immediate trends in their industry to the exclusion of thinking ahead and predicting future needs. Thinking ahead often makes it possible to obtain the services of suitable consultants who possess scarce skills and to put them on a retainer until they are actually needed. ABC can also gently introduce the possibility of new projects to clients, in the hope that ABC can be viewed as the preferred contractor when the client realises that change is needed.

ABC aims to develop long-term relationships with its clients, many of whom are large organisations. Companies regard IT as a core element of their business and they are often reluctant to sacrifice control by contracting out. Developing a long-term relationship with a versatile IT consultancy offers both continuity of support and reasonable flexibility.

ABC's founders

Andrew Gourlay

Andrew is a systems analyst by training. In ABC's early days, his expertise lay in explaining what a system currently did and identifying the changes that had to be made in order to satisfy the client's instructions. This laid the groundwork for the programmers, who would then actually write the code to update and enhance the software. Andrew's initial contribution to ABC's development was to offer clients a clear understanding of what they actually needed, which could sometimes differ from what they had asked for. For example, Andrew was not afraid to tell a client that a smaller and less expensive change would be sufficient (even though that meant a proportionately smaller consulting fee). Conversely, Andrew would also pitch for a more ambitious upgrade than the client had first envisaged, but only if he truly felt that doing so made commercial sense.



Andrew is nominally ABC's Chief Executive, although he still spends as much time as possible on client meetings and overseeing key projects.

He prides himself on being a self-confessed 'nerd' and often attends major technology conferences and conventions. He spends a great deal of time in ABC's IT Transformation department, where he has instituted monthly staff meetings, which are well attended due to their inspirational content. These meetings are specifically to discuss emerging technologies and he frequently leads the discussions and the possibility of them leading to sales pitches to ABC's clients.

Andrew contributed 50% of the equity when ABC was first established.

Bippin Lalli

Bippin is an electronics engineer by training. When ABC first started, his area of expertise was mainly in the design and installation of networks. He was always happiest when he was modifying components to make hardware faster or more resilient.

Whereas Andrew Gourlay prides himself in being at the cutting edge of advances in technology, Bippin could be said to operate even further ahead, at the 'bleeding edge'. Several major corporations give him access to prototypes of new equipment and evaluation copies of new software that is still being tested. They value Bippin's opinion and he loves having the opportunity to play with the latest technology.

Bippin expects to be consulted on all questions relating to the interpretation of emerging standards in hardware or software design and their compatibility, especially on the likely impact of new technologies and the problems that will need to be solved.

Bippin is ABC's Director of Technology and is effectively Andrew's deputy. He contributed 25% of the equity when ABC was first established.

Heavily involved in the technology and infrastructure areas, including Storage, Data Centre & Cloud and Workspace, Bippin attends all update and development meetings and usually knows more than the designated briefer about any matter under discussion. He is always keen to use the very latest technology and often encourages clients to be early adopters of new developments in hardware and software. This has had mixed results, with occasional instances of unproven technology failing to live up to expectations.

Bippin is currently at the forefront of a push to adopt and prepare for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) technologies, which describes the policy of allowing employees to use their own personal devices such as smartphones and tablets to access IT systems in the workplace. Many companies are nervous of this trend, but Bippin is of the opinion that it will create a host of opportunities if it is managed properly.



Colette Sanderson

Colette worked as a recruitment consultant for many years. She specialised in IT, in which she had a range of contacts. As a recruitment consultant she had to speak to everybody from clients' senior management to the IT specialists who might be recruited to fill a role. Andrew and Bippin viewed her as an ideal partner in their new venture because success or failure hinged on recruiting the right staff.

Colette has created a database of more than 2,000 IT professionals who are available for consultancy contracts. Many of these people have worked extensively on at least one project for ABC in the past.

Colette takes every opportunity to network and meet with potential contacts. She attends IT industry conferences to meet potential recruits during breaks, many of which contacted Colette after retiring from full-time employment or while taking career breaks to raise children. Such individuals often enjoy the opportunity to earn money for part-time or short-term assignments.

Colette also networks with other IT service providers in order to be aware of anyone who might be willing to work alongside ABC in order to pitch for contracts that would be too big for one firm alone. These service providers will also pay ABC for consultants to fill gaps in their own teams on a daily rate basis. This is less lucrative than winning the contract, but selling billable time is the goal of any consulting firm.

Knowing the skills possessed by ABC's staff also makes her an ideal person to promote ABC to clients. Her networking activities frequently bring her into contact with senior IT managers who may be able to use ABC's services.

Colette's job title is Director of Consulting, although she has become heavily involved in HR issues because there is no specific HR function.

Colette contributed 25% of ABC's equity when ABC was first established.



Extracts from the founders' blogs

The founders each maintain a blog page to keep ABC's staff informed of their activities. Examples of recent posts are provided below.

Andrew Gourlay

I was out of the office yesterday, pitching a proposal for a new system to a previous client. This would have been repeat business because we designed and installed their existing system. This system is starting to look a little bit old now, but it functions perfectly well and it serves all of their needs. We had done good job last time round, with what was then the very latest technology.

I did persuade them to pay us to install some upgrades to their hardware and to check that their software has been updated to the very latest version. We won't be able to charge much for such a small contract, but we have built up some goodwill and they are likely to use us in the future when their system finally becomes obsolete.

Bippin Lalli

I have been a 'road warrior' for as long as I can remember. I have lost count of all the portable computers that I have owned. My very first could probably be described as 'luggable' rather than portable. It was the size of a briefcase, had a built-in carrying handle and opened up to reveal a tiny screen that was barely big enough to read. Still, it meant that I could type reports on the move. I could also work all day and type up reports in my hotel room at night.

Over the years, computers have become smaller and more powerful. It was a big step forward when they could fit into a case or laptop bag, with room for paperwork. Eventually, they became so powerful that there was no reason to carry paperwork because everything was on disk and accessible online.

I can remember my first tablet computer. They were a further step forward in terms of portability. When I brought it into the office, almost everyone asked if they could have one too.

I am typing this blog entry on my latest toy, a PC-on-a-stick device. It looks like a large memory stick, but it contains a PC. It plugs into the HDMI socket in a monitor or a television (I am using the television set in my hotel room to type this) and it does everything that any other PC can do, including running the latest software. It can connect to a folding Bluetooth keyboard that takes up very little space in my briefcase. I used it this afternoon to give a presentation; all I had to do was plug it into the socket on the projector. Best of all, I can carry it in my jacket pocket without making my suit bulge.

If any of you think that you can use such a device then please get in touch. I am keen to analyse the business case for buying them in bulk.

Colette Sanderson

I recently took a company table for ten at the annual Software Security News Annual Awards Dinner. I was accompanied by Frank and Simone from my department, and also invited:

- 1) The Chief Executives of two other IT service providers, one of whom has put lots of business our way last year and another who looks set to land a big contract with Chapter Finance, so they might have work to offer us.
- 2) The Head of IT from Champ Bank and his counterpart from Santos Distribution.
- 3) The Head of Programming at Sale Software.
- 4) A senior civil servant from Kayland's health service.
- 5) The retiring Head of Carson Enterprises' data centre, who would be perfect to run the project we are hoping to sign with Skill Engineering.

I have spoken to the relevant people about the possibility of us doing some work for Champ Bank. Santos Distribution says that nothing much is happening at the moment, but it is always worth staying in touch.

I picked up some interesting rumours about Kayland's health service's IT security. A diner from another table was chatting to my guest.

I arrived early, as usual, and spoke to several prospective consultants. Two have since emailed me their CVs, which I have passed on to the relevant people. One of them would be great for the Multi Supermarket project and I have asked Simone to phone him just to show that we are interested.

I had three people from Logie Industries ask whether we were hiring. I suspect that they will be outsourcing their IT soon and have kept everything quiet.

Let me know if you need any more on any of this. I am leaving for San Francisco tomorrow and I'll be flying on to Seattle after that.

Other board members

Executive Directors



Ken Burragh – Director of Finance

Ken is a qualified accountant, with many years' experience in the management of a range of different businesses. He has worked in manufacturing and in financial services.

Ken has held his current position since 2010.



Heather Lamp – Director of Marketing

Heather joined ABC in 1997 as sales manager. Previously, she had worked in the marketing department of a major software developer in Kayland.

Heather has a degree in Marketing and Economics.



Bruno Guerin - Director of Operations

Bruno has been with ABC for over 15 years and worked his way through as Consultant, Project Manager, Programme Director, before heading up the Project Management Office.

He has a vast experience of every aspect of ABC, with particular responsibility for the operation of the Storage Centre.

Non-Executive Directors



Dennis Lim – Chairman

Dennis was Chief Executive of Andrew and Bippin's former employer. He has a master's degree in Computer Science and is a Master of Business Administration.

Dennis has served as Chairman since 2012.

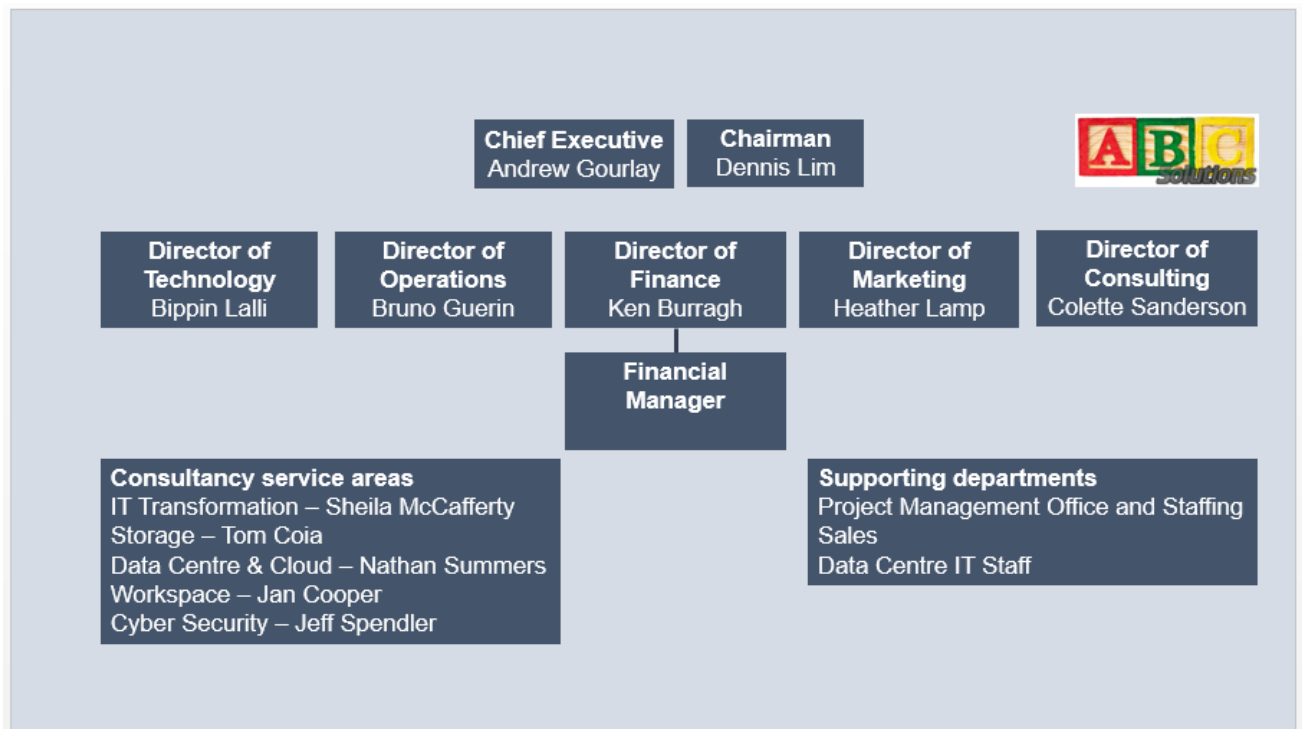


Chloe Rodriguez

Chloe was a senior banking executive with a major commercial bank. She left banking in 2008 and took up a Readership in the Banking Department of the University of Kayland. She is presently Professor of Banking.

Chloe has served as a non-executive director of ABC since 2014.

Organisation chart



Business model and structure

When ABC was initially founded, its primary service was the maintenance and upgrading of clients' systems. In 2007 the company issued new equity to a number of external shareholders, raising sufficient finance to expand and to broaden the scope of services on offer.

The company now has five major service areas. Each is organised as a separate department within ABC. Each head of department is essentially a senior consultant with expertise in that area.

ABC has a relatively small number of consultants on its full-time staff, but the company's extensive contacts with external consultants mean that it has the ability to call on the skills and the experience to handle major tasks.

The five service areas are as follows.

IT Transformation

This involves the re-organisation of the business processes associated with gathering and managing data. Designing systems can be complicated and can involve advising on moving the client's data centre to a low-cost overseas location, with data being accessed online. ABC has successfully completed several very high-profile data centre projects.

This service represents ABC's largest revenue stream, but only a relatively small number of permanent staff are required because most assignments require the flexibility associated with hiring consultants with very specific skill sets.

Assignments tend to involve quite significant investments of time and energy in negotiating contracts. Clients are naturally wary of large-scale assignments and so they require very detailed proposals.

The department is managed by Sheila McCafferty, who has worked very closely with Andrew Gourlay since the early days of ABC.

Storage

Storage is headed up by Tom Coia. It includes services such as the backup and restoration of data, data archiving, business continuity and Information Lifecycle Management (ILM). All of these are very important areas in their own right and taken together can comprise the major component of any entity's data management.

The need to store data is expanding significantly because of current developments such as 'big data', the 'internet of things' (where devices other than computers can communicate data to one another, such as a machine sending data about its performance on an ongoing basis).

ABC can store client data using its own data centre. The company has a major server farm at its head office, with a remote site maintaining a mirror of all files on a continuous basis.

Storage is ABC's most capital-intensive service, but it offers the potential for generating steady revenues from clients who must keep paying ABC to host their data for as long as their contracts run.

Cloud computing is essentially a term for the notion of using a third party to provide data storage and compute power. Many companies feel that using Cloud services frees up management time and ensures that the latest and best safeguards are in place.

Data Centre & Cloud

Headed up by Nathan Summers, this area offers consultancy to ensure that entities considering moving their data onto the Cloud are ready to do so.

IT systems may not always be 100% compatible with one another and clients will have to ensure that all software applications will run correctly on a Cloud-based server before making the move.

This is a lucrative area for consulting because large numbers of companies are exploring this facility. ABC's consultants may also be able to recommend ABC's Storage department as a potential provider.

Workspace

This department is led by Jan Cooper.

Many entities have large numbers of staff who are equipped with a computer, whether that is a desktop PC, a laptop, a tablet or a smartphone. Companies often configure these devices to present a standard set of functions. Staff will be more productive if they can be trained to work with a standard desktop screen on their office PCs, for example, and they will be more flexible if they can operate any computer in the workplace.

The consulting staff in this area are experts in setting up operating systems. An operating system is a piece of software that provides the electronic environment in which the user works, for example, it is the operating system that registers the fact that a key has been pressed on the keyboard and makes the necessary changes to the file that is being worked on and the pixels on the screen so that the change can be observed.

This department is likely to see strong growth because PetaWare, the company that is responsible for the most frequently-used operating system, is planning to launch a new version of its operating system late in 2015.

This department was formerly called Desktop but has now been rebadged as Workspace. This change was made to reflect the increasing use of mobile devices: laptops, tablets, phones and any other emerging technology capable of supporting applications and communications. Jan has a very wide remit on services. This is a very busy area, as PetaWare 2015, Perpetual Office and universal local storage are all hitting the market now and causing major changes.

Cyber Security

The recently-formed Cyber Security department is under the leadership of Jeff Spendler. Previously, security was regarded as such an integral part of all aspects of IT management that a separate department was regarded as unnecessary.

Changes in the law relating to data privacy and data security, together with a steady increase in cybercrime and both corporate and state espionage, have contributed to a belief that greater emphasis should be placed on security management.

In addition to these revenue-generating areas, there are important supporting departments.

Supporting departments

Project Management Office and Staffing

ABC has approximately 60 full time consultants spread across the five service areas.

ABC also has strong business links with a further 200 or so associate consultants who can be engaged on a short-term basis. Most of these are independent consultants in their own right, but are willing to work for ABC when required. Indeed, some of these consultants work extensively for ABC on a continuing basis. ABC also has arrangements in place with other consultancies for so-called 'staff augmentation'. This involves the other consultancies seconding their consultants to ABC. This arrangement enhances flexibility, but it can be expensive because consultancies tend to charge a higher daily rate than independent consultants.

Colette Sanderson also maintains contact with former colleagues and other industry contacts. Their details are on a database that enables Colette's staff to search for consultants with a specific skill.

ABC also do short-term subcontracting for projects, looking to populate individual projects with available staff. This service is particularly popular where there is a local requirement for lower-skilled staff, and where travel and living expenses might otherwise prove prohibitive. Here induction training is given, particularly with regards to any particular skills and Customer Satisfaction Awareness.

ABC also has a subcontract for some of the routine work performed in the Storage and Data Centre & Cloud service areas, where junior staff are employed through an agency. ABC sometimes offers such agency workers permanent contracts.

The Project Management Office (PMO) is responsible for the scheduling of workflow. This is largely a matter of negotiating start times with clients that take account of client needs and also the availability of suitable staff

Sales

Heather Lamp, ABC's Director of Marketing, promotes the overall marketing direction but is not solely responsible for winning business. All service areas are expected to generate and

pursue sales leads. The corporate philosophy is that 'everyone is a salesperson'. The expectation is that a consultant should always be listening to clients to find out whether they might have other work that could be done by ABC. This would subsequently be followed up by the area responsible for the client, and forwarded to the Sales department so that a more co-ordinated approach can be taken to bigger contracts.

Business can also come in through an indirect route. For example, a hardware vendor might offer a client an installation service, but would actually pay ABC to set up the hardware and configure any software that goes with it.

Data Centre IT Staff

ABC has a small team of IT engineers and computer systems administration staff who look after the company's production, test, training and demonstration facilities within a small data centre in ABC's head office.

ABC's requirements for IT server and storage to host their own business applications are very modest. However they have built up a number of test suites which can be used both as training areas for their consultants and as demonstration facilities to provide 'proof of concepts' to prospective clients.

There are four subject matter experts in this group. They not only look after all the equipment but also provide assistance to the consultants from the service areas whenever a test, training or demonstration facility has to be set up. Lead consultants often provide training for more junior staff and the equipment can be booked for individual use, service development and familiarisation purposes.

Consultants are encouraged to develop their skills and the provision of training to their peers is an exacting test of their knowledge, presentation and communication skills. As such there are often a number of other consultants working with the subject matter experts in the data centre and the knowledge and experience gained by this interchange is considerable for all concerned.

Extract from ABC's risk management report

| Risk | Mitigation |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Low rates of consultant utilisation. | <p>Core consultancy team under full permanent employment kept to a minimum.</p> <p>Bench tasks are additional training, with research and sales development being encouraged whenever there are dips in workload.</p> |
| Seasonal workload. The financial cycle of various clients causes high and low activity in terms of consultancy workload. There are periods where all changes are frozen whilst financial year-end is processed and periods of frantic activity where, for example, a long holiday weekend permits the systems to be down for 3-4 days allowing major change implementations. | <p>Extensive scheduling has to be done in all the service areas to forecast the peaks and troughs in workload.</p> <p>This however happens to be an ideal training ground for project management skills and there is a Project Management Office (PMO) which undertakes this task across the practices, deploying fairly junior staff as liaisons into each of them.</p> |
| External consultants being unavailable for work at very short notice because they work for competing consultancies. ABC is heavily dependent on an extremely mobile workforce. | <p>The PMO maintains a database of over 2000 potential consultants with their skills and experience profiles.</p> <p>The PMO also runs a schedule of known and potential future workload and attempts to inform lead consultants of likely conflicts.</p> |
| External consultants may need to be paid for extended periods in order to ensure the availability of particular skills when required. | <p>Project schedules are constructed and monitored with care. However, it is often cheaper in the long run to pay for a block of a consultant's time in order to avoid risking a delay in completing a project.</p> |
| Loss of key staff. | <p>Always high risk; endeavour to have close knit community.</p> <p>Competitive package?</p> |
| Legacy contracts coming to an end: we are presently at the end of a very lucrative period of long-term contracts. | <p>This highlights the need to start doing more long-term aspects and the need for looking at stepping into the cloud provision or other services.</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Poor customer service, damaging reputation and leading to loss of business. | Extreme care must be taken here: a single bad experience can lose a client for good in the services market. |
| Dips in market activity threatening the viability of ABC in a relatively short period of time. | Scheduling and investigate developments of new areas of business. |
| Flow-down of risk to associates is not possible. | Public indemnity and professional indemnity clauses. |
| Intellectual property rights on tools developed by ABC compromised by piracy. | Agreements signed by staff on employment, all code heavily watermarked for identity. |
| Rights to use licence pass through from clients. | Case by case situation. Each project and client needs to be individually managed. |
| Breach of security of confidential data on clients and staff. | Access controlled to authorised staff, strict non-disclosure agreements in place with those staff. |

Extracts from ABC's financial statements

Statement of profit or loss for the year ended 31 December 2014

| | 2014 K\$ million | 2013 K\$ million |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenues | 169 | 164 |
| Cost of sales | (83) | (84) |
| Selling and administration | (16) | (15) |
| Profit from operations | 70 | 65 |
| Finance costs | (12) | (13) |
| Profit before tax | 58 | 52 |
| Tax | (17) | (16) |
| Profit for year | 41 | 36 |

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 31 December 2014

| | Share capital and premium K\$ million | Retained earnings K\$ million | Total K\$ million |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Opening balance | 140 | 142 | 282 |
| Profit for year | | 41 | 41 |
| Dividend | | (18) | (18) |
| Closing balance | 140 | 165 | 305 |



Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2014

| | 2014 K\$ million | 2013 K\$ million |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Assets | | |
| Non-current assets | | |
| Property and equipment | 317 | 312 |
| Software | 139 | 122 |
| | <u>456</u> | <u>434</u> |
| Current assets | | |
| Trade receivables | 13 | 12 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 6 | 3 |
| | <u>19</u> | <u>15</u> |
| Total assets | <u><u>475</u></u> | <u><u>449</u></u> |
| Equity | | |
| Share capital and premium | 140 | 140 |
| Retained earnings | 165 | 142 |
| | <u>305</u> | <u>282</u> |
| Liabilities | | |
| Non-current liabilities | | |
| Loans | 125 | 125 |
| Deferred tax | 23 | 22 |
| | <u>148</u> | <u>147</u> |
| Current liabilities | | |
| Trade payables | 6 | 5 |
| Tax | 16 | 15 |
| | <u>22</u> | <u>20</u> |
| Total equity and liabilities | <u><u>475</u></u> | <u><u>449</u></u> |



Article from IT News magazine

IT NEWS – SEPTEMBER 2015

PetaWare to offer free upgrades for first six months

PetaWare is on the brink of launching Operating System 2015 (OS2015), a replacement for Operating System 2007.

PetaWare has offered every user of Operating System 2007 the opportunity to download and install a fully licenced copy of OS2015 free of charge, provided they do so within six months of the product's launch.

After that time, it will cost K\$500 to buy a copy of Operating System 2015 for commercial purposes.

Some corporate users have as many as 4,000 PCs, so beating the charge of K\$500 per unit is a major saving.

PetaWare will stop maintaining and updating Operating System 2007 after the end of 2017, so it will be necessary to update in order to ensure continuing technical support.

IT NEWS – SEPTEMBER 2015

Articles from Daily IT Briefing website

| www.dailyitbriefing.co.uk | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cheat-your-tax website hacked | 14 September 2015 |
| <p>Users of the controversial Cheat-Your-Tax website were concerned yesterday by an announcement that their names and details had been stolen by hackers.</p> <p>Users paid a subscription to the site, which generated fraudulent documentation that made it possible for wealthy taxpayers to understate their taxable earnings. The use of the site is illegal and users who are caught face fines, penalties and even imprisonment.</p> <p>It is not yet clear why the hackers broke into the site.</p> | |

| www.dailyitbriefing.co.uk | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Military to create cyber warfare division | 10 September 2015 |
| <p>Kayland's government has announced that the level of incursion into data networks, both government and corporate, has reached such disturbing levels that it is to train a number of intelligence officers to combat this menace.</p> <p>The Defence Minister announced that the country is already 'at war', with reports of attacks on the country's networks that were aimed to disrupt trade and communications.</p> <p>This new military unit will comprise serving officers, who will explore ways of both defending the country's electronic borders and of creating the ability to retaliate against any state that is found to be initiating such attacks.</p> | |

PetaWare press release

Operating System 2015 – the best choice for commercial applications.

Operating System 2015 (OS 2015) will offer users unprecedented levels of integration.

Corporate users will benefit from:

- Enterprise-grade **security, identity and information protection** features, reducing complexity and providing a better experience for the modern needs of business.
- **Simplified management and deployment** to help lower costs, including in-place upgrades from Operating System 2007. Unlike previous releases, changing to the new OS 2015 will leave application software and data files unaffected and fully accessible. The days when software would have to be reloaded and data backed up and reloaded are gone forever.
- **Greater control** over the downloading and installation of updates and enhancements. It will become possible to set enterprise-wide policies so that all machines in a network are updated simultaneously, with individual patches and updates being authorised or not by the network administrator.

OS 2015 also delivers one universal application platform, one security model, one deployment and one management approach. All compatible devices can communicate using a consistent interface. For example, OS 2015 security keypads will be able to log the movement of staff in real time without any additional hardware or software. A laptop will be able to display a presentation on any OS 2015-enabled display wirelessly and without complicated configuration.

Data can be captured seamlessly, with retailers benefitting from the prospect of OS 2015 Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) terminals gathering transaction and payment data in real time. Other benefits of the consistent user interface include the ability to configure security to reflect vulnerability. For example, access to a specific file or secure website could be linked to a biometric device such as a palm print reader or a card reader.

Registered users of OS 2007 will soon receive instructions on the free upgrade to OS 2015. Activating the link that will be distributed will automatically check the existing installation of OS 2007 for authenticity, before updating to OS 2015 seamlessly and free of charge. OS 2007 software will be left in place and will be fully functional. Data files will be unaffected.