
Coursework commentary

2016–17

CO3323 Electronic commerce

Coursework assignment 1

General remarks

This coursework assignment was entitled Developing an E-Commerce Mobile Application. It had an introduction and background section, a learning outcomes section, then an instructions section, followed by five questions, worth 20 marks each. The majority of students passed this coursework assignment, with some doing very well indeed.

Introduction and background

The world of mobile technology was very briefly introduced. This coursework assignment was designed to test students' understanding of the fundamental components required to establish a mobile electronic commerce presence and how such technologies can be exploited to establish effective online long-term relationships between businesses and their customers.

Learning outcomes

- developing a deeper understanding of material covered within the subject guide and recommended reading
- developing skills in preparing and presenting a coherent business proposal for establishing an internet presence, and designing an infrastructure for a mobile e-commerce application

Instructions

Students were given a brief in that they work for a senior consultancy specialising in providing e-commerce solutions for traditional companies. They were required to specify and design a mobile application for an e-commerce business of their choice. This should exploit the location based-services of GPS available via running as a mobile application

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The first question required students to describe their idea, and then write a vision statement to include the following: a mission statement, a target audience, an intended market space, strategic analysis, a development timeline and a preliminary budget. Most students appeared to enjoy this section of the coursework assignment and wrote full vision statements which included most of the required parts in sufficient detail. However, some students lost marks when they failed to submit enough detail in the preliminary budget.

Question 2

This question required students to detail a proposal for a business and revenue model. In their description they were asked to compare and contrast their chosen business models with two alternative business models. When detailing their revenue model, they were asked to detail how it might evolve into two other models if it is not initially successful. Most students did well on this part.

Question 3

Building on the work from the previous questions, students were asked to describe the chosen target audience for their mobile application in terms of demographics such as gender, income, location, behaviour patterns, consumption patterns, digital usage patterns and buyer personas. Most students appeared to thoroughly enjoy working on this.

Question 4

Question 4 required students to provide a detailed SWOT analysis of their chosen application in relation to current market alternatives, and the market place in general. Firstly, they were asked to look into the e-commerce proposal and identify its strengths and weaknesses. Following this they were asked to provide a review of the environment by identifying potential opportunities and threats.

Question 5

The final question required the student to illustrate what users would see and how they would interact with their ideas. Furthermore, students were asked to then draw a set of user interfaces to illustrate how they would look and how they are interconnected. Some students lost marks when their ideas were not expressed clearly, and where the presentation was of a low standard.

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Coursework assignment 2

General remarks

This coursework assignment was entitled Marketing and Promoting an E-Commerce Mobile Application, and followed on from coursework assignment 1. It had an introduction and background section, a learning outcomes section, an instructions section, followed by two questions, worth 50 marks each. The majority of candidates passed this coursework assignment, with some students doing very well indeed.

Introduction and background

The introduction and background section reintroduced the world of mobile technologies, and went on to focus on issues surrounding marketing and promoting mobile applications. The coursework assignment was designed to allow students to explore many of the major decisions and issues concerned with creating a marketing and promotions plan for a new e-commerce mobile application.

Learning outcomes

- developing a deeper understanding of material covered within the subject guide and recommended reading
- developing skills in preparing and presenting a coherent marketing plan, and designing a storyboard for an online advert for a mobile e-commerce application.

Instructions

In the instructions section, students were asked to work on a marketing and promotions strategy for the new mobile application they had worked on for Coursework assignment 1.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Students were required to build on the proposal they developed in their first coursework assignment, using their knowledge of e-commerce and m-commerce strategies to devise a marketing strategy for their new e-commerce mobile app. In creating their marketing strategy, they were asked to incorporate Michael Porter's 'Four Ps' model of Product, Price, Promotion and Place to detail their new m-commerce business. Most students submitted thorough answers to this question.

Question 2

The second question required students to examine different approaches used by companies to create video adverts to market their e-commerce mobile apps. When promoting a business, product or service using an advert it is useful to create a storyboard. This is a series of graphical illustrations or images displayed in sequence for the purpose of pre-visualising the advert. It was explained that a storyboard is essentially a comic strip of the advert, produced beforehand to help the makers of visualise the scenes and find potential problems before expensive work is undertaken. Students were required to create a storyboard for a video advert for their proposed e-commerce mobile application. Students were given a wide remit for the formatting of their storyboards – sketches, pictures or sometime even just a set of instructions in sequence, etc. Students who presented their ideas clearly scored the highest marks.