

## [M&L E-commerce]

### Business case

Documenting the business justification for undertaking this project

[M&L E-commerce Business case, version 1.0]

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## 1 Executive summary

The M&L E-commerce project proposes the creation of an e-commerce website that establishes the presence of M&L Stores plc in the online environment. Its main benefits are the availability of another sales channel for the company, now on the internet, as well as a new space for advertising, with high reach potential. For more details on the expected return on invested capital, see section 3 “Cost Estimate and Evaluation”.

## 2 Reasons

The main reason given by M&L Stores plc for undertaking this project is the establishment of the company’s web presence, which until then only operated at the physical level (high street retail). The expansion of operations to the online environment, however, is in line with the corporate strategy considerations of expanding internationally.

## 3 Business options

- ❖ Do nothing: remain without an online sales channel, which rules out the opportunity for sales growth by capturing the growing online sales demand.
- ❖ Do the minimum: choose to create a simple website that only offers online advertising space, but does not offer the facility to make sales online.
- ❖ Do something: execution of this project, i.e., creation of an e-commerce that allows both online sales and advertising.

## 4 Expected benefits

According to multiple web articles, especially the one produced by Hufford (2019), a marketing analyst, launching an e-commerce has the potential to produce the following benefits:

- ❖ Ease of collecting customer data insights, which allows companies to improve marketing and advertising campaigns;
- ❖ Reaching a new public that either only shop online or partially do so;
- ❖ A larger space, with easy access by customers, to display products and business information;
- ❖ Capture new sales while potential customers are still researching what they want to buy.

Further information about the potential benefits of the final product of this project can be found in section 3 “Cost Estimate and Evaluation”.

## 5 Expected dis-benefits

Possible dis-benefits of launching an e-commerce involve the absence of human touch when dealing with customers, especially the ones that are highly sensitive to the lack of human communication in the online environment, the inability for customers to try items before finalizing the purchase, and the already high competitiveness present on the internet (Vadwala and Vadwala, 2017).

## 6 Timescale

The two main deadlines provided by the customer (M&L) are:

- ❖ 2 months for a simple version of the website, which allows displaying M&L publicity;
- ❖ 6 months for the full version of the e-commerce.

A more detailed version of the project timescale was elaborated in section 4 “Outline Project Plan”.

## 7 Costs

The total projected cost for the execution of the project and delivery of its final product is £ 92,294.27. More details on cost estimation can be found in section 3 “Cost Estimate and Evaluation”

## 8 Investment appraisal

A Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) over the potential investment return of this project was undertaken within section 3.2 “Project Evaluation”. It is expected that the entire cost of this project represents only 0.10% of the potential revenue earned within a month of the operation of the e-commerce.

## 9 Major risks

Like any web based project, major project risks involved in launching this e-commerce are related to ensuring InfoSec in an online environment (Addison, 2003). Possible risks are:

- ❖ Unprotected online services;
- ❖ Lack of an adequate firewall;
- ❖ Data errors;
- ❖ Hacking.

Measures expected to be taken to prevent the aforementioned risks, are:

- ❖ Adoption of multifactor authentication to access the Git platform and cloud based services accounts;
- ❖ Allocate the database within a VPN;
- ❖ Implement an SSL certificate on the website, so that all communication between server and client is encrypted.

A more in-depth risk assessment of the risks involved in this project will be carried out after collecting more detailed information concerning project specifications and about the client itself.