

BCS Business Analysis Practice

NOTE:

These are sample questions, with marking guidelines, for each of the BCS Diploma certificate modules. Each sample question has been written to help candidates prepare for the module examination by providing an example of the general approach adopted by these questions. Therefore, the total marks assigned to the sample questions will vary depending upon the certificate module.

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Scenario 1

Sun Worshippers UK Ltd are an independent, family run Travel Agency. The company has been in operation for 10 years and specialises in short haul package holidays and tours around the UK & Mediterranean countries. The Agency is based in an affluent location with many customers who are over 50 years old and often book 3 or 4 holidays each year. An increasing number of their customers make group bookings so that they can share their travel experiences with extended family and friends.

In a recent customer survey, the company received positive feedback on their selection of holidays and most customers stated a preference for the personal attention they receive from Sun Worshippers. A few customers however, commented that they would spend over an hour talking about potential destinations with the Agent before selecting a holiday and also commented that they would like the Agency to provide online virtual tours so that they could get an idea of the travel locations at home before they came into the Agency to book. The survey also revealed the increasing number of travellers who were concerned about the impact their holiday would create on their Carbon Footprint.

The company is a member of ABTA and takes its voluntary subjection to this travel regulator very seriously. The company also appears to understand their obligations under EU Travel Regulations and the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations Act 1992.

In recent years Sun Worshippers has successfully promoted Lunar tours of Tunisia and the Anthony & Cleopatra Tour of Egypt. However, due to the civil unrest in Northern African countries recently, the British embassy has advised caution when travelling to these areas, though travel has not been prohibited due to the potential impact on future relations with these countries. To keep up to date on whether it is safe to travel, a new centrally maintained web service has been created specifically for Travel Agents and Tour Operators. This development has led the Sun Worshippers Team to consider whether they should look for new holiday destinations in the Canary Islands and Central Africa.

Question

Using a technique you are familiar with analyse the external business environment of Sun Worshippers UK Ltd.

(6 marks)

Specimen answer and marking scheme

Chosen technique: PESTLE

<i>Political</i>	Civil unrest in Northern African countries is impacting promoted holiday destinations, but mixed messages are being received from the Government on whether they should allow travel to these destinations or not	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Economic</i>	Affluent customer base, able to book 3 or 4 holidays per year and make group bookings.	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Social Cultural</i>	Customers have a preference for personal service and prefer to book their holidays in person; customers wish to use online information services prior to booking	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Technological</i>	Availability of internet technology to provide online tour information; availability of technology to provide details of carbon footprint created by each holiday	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Legal</i>	ABTA regulations; EU travel regulations; UK transport law	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Environmental</i>	Increasing concern about the impact of travel on Carbon Footprint.	(up to 1 mark)

(Total 6 marks)

Stakeholder perspectives and business activity model question

Scenario 2

Cardenbridge Farm is a family-run farm in Devon which is certified by the Soil Association as meeting their organic standards. The farm grows their own vegetables and has a mixed dairy and beef herd of cattle. Most of their produce is sold through their own farm shop. The farm is owned by Nathan Clement, who is soon to retire. Nathan's eldest son, David, is being groomed to take over the farm.

Nathan and David are both aware that the farm shop is under-performing, but they cannot agree on how to improve the turnover and profitability of the farm and the shop.

Nathan is very proud of the hard-won Soil Association certification status and wishes to stay organic. As the farm cannot itself provide any more produce, Nathan wishes to buy in other organic produce from external Soil Association certified suppliers, including pork and lamb products and a wider range of vegetables.

David, on the other hand, is prepared to let the Soil Association certification lapse to increase the yield of the farm to match what the shop can sell. He feels there is a good case for concentrating on meat, beef, pork and lamb, whilst running down the dairy and vegetable side of the business. It is his view that the public would prefer 'home-produced' meat products to organic vegetables.

Question

- a) Develop a stakeholder perspective (also known as a root definition) from Nathan's point of view. If you use the CATWOE mnemonic it is sufficient to list the items under the relevant headings. *(8 marks)*
- b) Develop another stakeholder perspective from David's point of view. Similarly, it is sufficient to list the items under the relevant headings if you use the CATWOE mnemonic. *(4 marks)*
- c) Develop a conceptual model (a business activity model) for the business system represented by the stakeholder perspective that represents Nathan's point of view. *(16 marks)*

Specimen answers and marking scheme

a) Stakeholder perspective from Nathan's point of view:

<i>Customers:</i>	People who wish to purchase organic foodstuffs	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Actors:</i>	The Clement family, organic produce buyer, shop staff, farm workers, suppliers	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Transformation:</i>	Buy and sell organic meat and vegetables, both own produce and produce from external suppliers, in order to satisfy the needs for a broad range of organic produce.	(up to 2 marks)
<i>Weltanschauung:</i>	Expanding the range of organic produce will meet the needs of the local population and visitors for good-quality organic produce and, therefore, will increase custom, turnover and profit.	(up to 2 marks)
<i>Owner:</i>	The Clement family	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Environment:</i>	Customer desire for a broad range of organic products, availability of suppliers, Soil Association certification criteria, size of available shop premises.	(up to 1 mark)

(Total for part (a) is 8 marks)

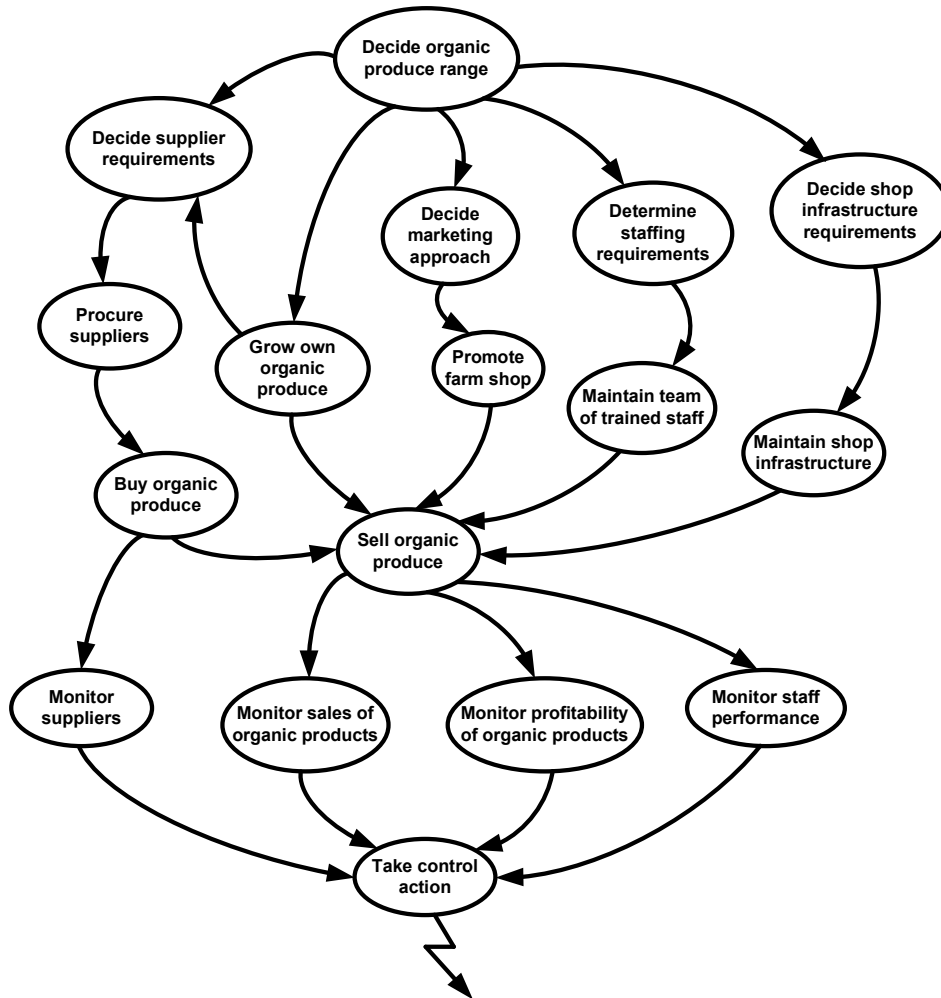
b) Stakeholder perspective from David's point of view:

<i>Customers:</i>	People who wish to purchase home-produced meat	(½ mark)
<i>Actors:</i>	The Clement family, meat buyer, shop staff, farm workers	(½ mark)
<i>Transformation:</i>	Buy and sell 'home-produced' meat in order to satisfy the needs for a good quality meat products	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Weltanschauung:</i>	Expanding the range of 'home-produced' meat products will meet the needs of the local population and visitors for good-quality meat produce and, therefore, will increase custom, turnover and profit.	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Owner:</i>	The Clement family	(½ mark)

Environment: Customer desire to buy meat, ability of Cardenbridge Farm to meet demand, size of available shop premises (½ mark)

(Total for part (b) is 4 marks)

c) Business activity model for the business system represented by the stakeholder perspective that represents Nathan's point of view:



Up to 1 mark for each Planning, Enabling and Doing activity appropriately named and with appropriate dependencies – maximum 12 marks. 12 marks

Up to 4 marks for including appropriate Monitor and Control activities. 4 marks

Note: This specimen answer assumes that the 'decide' activities encompass everything that is required to understand or know about the environment. If a candidate includes specific 'know about' or 'understand' activities for the environment they should not be penalised, but marks should not be awarded for both 'know about' (or 'understand') and 'decide' activities.

(Total for part (c) is 16 marks)

Business case question

Scenario 3

Littlewood Travel, a local bus and coach company in the South of England, have been established for fifty years and provide transport services to and from school for children aged eleven to eighteen. The company has five buses and seven coaches, some of which are nearly 20 years old. The company is also used by many of the local schools to provide day trips and occasional field trips which require a coach for a week at a time.

In addition to providing the services to schools, in order to deal with the reduction in demand during the school day, the company has started to provide day trips for pensioners. These trips generally start after the children have been delivered to their respective schools and finish an hour before the children need to be collected. Demand for the daytime trips is sporadic but does tend to peak in the summer when the schools are shut and just before Christmas. Demand has been negatively affected in the last six months as the older vehicles have become more unreliable and suffered a number of breakdowns. Customers have commented that they have noticed that there have been a lot of new drivers in the past year, with many not staying with the company more than a few weeks.

In order to meet local authority emission targets and to deal with the reliability issues, the company has begun a replacement programme for its fleet of vehicles. Failure to comply with the new targets, which can only be met by vehicles produced in the last five years, would result in a fine of up to £5,000 per vehicle. The average cost of a new vehicle is £75,000 and so the company has investigated the option of leasing rather than buying. A typical lease arrangement lasts for three years and costs £3,000 per month. New vehicles also meet stringent new safety and accessibility targets including the provision of seatbelts and wheelchair access.

Question

Identify four costs and four benefits (**two** tangible and **two** intangible for each) together with **three** risks associated with the replacement programme.

(11 marks)

Specimen answer and marking scheme

<i>Tangible costs:</i>	(1) Vehicle replacement cost (buy or lease)	(up to 1 mark)
	(2) Higher vehicle depreciation	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Intangible costs:</i>	(1) Inability to leverage all of the vehicle benefits due to customer base served	(up to 1 mark)
	(2) Reduced productivity whilst drivers learn how to operate new vehicles	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Tangible benefits:</i>	(1) Reduced repair costs	(up to 1 mark)
	(2) Increased accessibility	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Intangible benefits:</i>	(1) Modern fleet – better reputation	(up to 1 mark)
	(2) Increase in staff morale and retention due to newer reliable vehicles	(up to 1 mark)
<i>Risks:</i>	(1) Higher costs of new vehicles forces prices higher and makes company uncompetitive	(up to 1 mark)
	(2) School children damage new vehicle interiors	(up to 1 mark)
	(3) Replacement programme does not arrest the high staff turnover	(up to 1 mark)

(Total 11 marks)