

INTRODUCTION



INVESTIGATORS NAME: ALOM UDDIN

COMPANY INVESTIGATED: GAME

The organisation I have chosen to investigate is Europe's leading specialist retailer of computer software and video games, GAME. They operate from over 500 stores, concessions, and franchises in four territories in Europe. As a specialist, they have certain unique attribute that gives them the edge over their competitors. They are mainly due to:

- Their customer friendly policies in the GAME store, all members of staff are required to be friendly and polite to customers; even to customers that are rude and unpleasant.
- Unrivalled product knowledge the GAME Company has knowledge of all the latest products before their rivals. Especially because the company is the top seller of games and consoles. The manufacturing companies want to sell their products to companies that solely do retail in the visual entertainment department and the games/consoles department. They want companies with these requirements because they don't want other products that do not relate to the product that they are selling. They do not want the customers to be distracted by other items. GAME has met these requirements with ease.

Pre-owned programme — this allows customers to bring in old games or consoles or
accessories that they no longer use, but are fully functional, for an exchange for something
else. They would be given a value for their product and then the customer will be allowed to
deduct that amount away when they are making their purchase of the in-store items.

- Pre-orders customers are allowed to pre-order their product, so they are guaranteed a
 copy of their product. They are allowed to receive their products on the day it was released.
 This ensures the manufacturers of how many copies of their product they have to send to the
 GAME store for the customers that pre-ordered and also extra for the customers that go to the
 store to purchase their products.
- Local price promise this offer allows the customers to be assured that they are paying
 a reasonable price for their product and are not being made to pay more than the value of the
 product. Sometimes the GAME Company makes the price of their products lower than other
 companies to make sure more customers come to their shops.
- 10-day returns policy GAME has this unique offer, which allows customers ten days to
 try out the game or hardware they have bought. If the customers are not satisfied then they
 can return they're product for something else or a refund, providing they have their receipt.
- Widest range of software and accessories the GAME Company has access to all the current software and accessories that are currently out.
- Console value and choice deals the price value of the consoles GAME sells, never exceeds its value and with every purchase of a console the customers are guaranteed a range of choices that lets the customer decide what they want with their particular console.
- Constant offers and promotions GAME is constantly offering customers new deals and
 offers to allure the customers into buying their products. These offers could be anything to
 double reward points on their Reward card up to a free game when the customers buy a
 certain product.

The GAME store also boasts about its reliability and loyalty to the customers. This is mainly due to the sophisticated and strategic board of directors. The board of directors consists of three chief executives. These directors are; John Steinbrecher who is group chief executive for the company; Martin Long who is chief executive designate and chief financial officer and Lisa Morgan who is the deputy executive designate for the company.

OVERVIEW

As a specialist it is their continual aim to develop their business, providing their customers with the best shopping experience possible.

They aim to constantly review and improve the unique offerings and services that customers see as their unique selling proposition, and therefore maintain their position as the leading specialist retailer in this growing market.

In the coming years this will include:

- People They are expanding the range of training opportunities for all their staff, and developing their management teams in the UK and Europe.
- Stores The controlled expansion of their store base in Europe, including the refurbishment of
 their French stores, and the store-opening programme in the UK, Spain and Sweden, will ensure
 customers have easy access to their stores, in all territories.

- Logistics They are building a state of the art Distribution Centre to service the UK & Eire stores, to be opened in 2004, which will give them the most effective and responsive logistics operation in the industry.
- Communication Installing broadband in all their stores and upgrading their IT systems in the UK & Eire will allow them to communicate more effectively, and understand even better what their customers require.

The four main basic functions of an organisation are sales, purchasing, finance and operations. These main functions are maintained effectively and efficiently in the GAME organisation, this ensures the companies survival.

SALES

The sales department of an organisation processes transactions involving the sale of goods or services provided by the organisation. Also the sales department deals with customers ordering over the Internet. The money the organisation produces from the sales is the main income the company needs to pay its expenses. The business makes a profit if the income is greater than the expenditure.

The company has to market it goods so as to impress upon the public they are open for business. This also lets the company research on what the general public want. The company would also find out what the publics' mood is like and they would use this information to reflect upon their mood. For example in the Christmas period their advertising would surround that theme. If in the media there were a certain icon being emphasised, they would use that in their marketing to attract customers. For example David Beckham would be used in their marketing if he was recently under the media limelight.

The company GAME uses the EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) system like most other companies to deal with the sales. This system reads the barcode on the item being purchased and then identifies how many of the item is still in stock. The system decreases the purchased item from the stock and then also notifies the company whether they need to restock on the item. It also lets the company know how

many of the item they need to restock on. It does this by analysing how fast the previous stock of goods sold and then uses the information from here to judge how much of the goods should be restocked on. Their main target is to put enough of the goods on the shelves so that there is still are a few left at the end of the day.



Activities in the Sales Department

Communication — the sales department offers day-to-day communication to their customers. This service is mostly used by customers to find out information about the various services and products in GAME.

Customer Orders — customers can take orders through the sales department through various methods. For example, through the phone, through the internet or actually taking orders from customers when they come to the GAME shop, which is consequently the most common way of ordering and purchasing products.

Liaising — the sales department keeps in contact with the other departments to check various things such as price changes, product availability, new releases and certification of certain products.

Database — keeping a database of customers is regarded very highly in the sales department. The sales department can keep information of all the past purchases of a certain customer and capitalise on the information by promoting products to that customer by sending letters and leaflets about offers and products that relate to their past dealings with the company. For example if a customer bought a horror related game then, the sales department would use horror related promotion to lure the customer into spending more money.

Customer Product Completion — customers are informed about the progress of their product through the customers preferred choice; for example through the phone or email. The information that a sales worker could say would be that the customer would receive their product in 4 working days (working days are Monday to Friday, not Saturday or Sunday).

In the sales Service — the sales department would offer further assistance or help once the customer has received their product; such as setting up an Xbox console in the correct way.

Reward Card

This is how the Sales department in GAME use ICT

Database on Customers — the sales department as mentioned above uses ICT to construct a database and gather vital marketing information about their customers from it. ICT allows the sales department to quickly identify each customer's preferences by issuing every customer with a unique ID. That code is used as the primary key field in the database that connects all the databases together. It allows quick access on different information on different customers.

Reward card programme — GAME boasts a successful Reward card programme that has already registered millions of people and adding more every day. To join, the customer has to fill in a membership form and pay two pounds. From then on every product the customer buys; reward points will be added to their card. To use the card, the salesperson in GAME would use their EPOS system to allocate more points the customer's reward card. When the customer has a sufficient amount, the customer will be rewarded with either gift vouchers or half-price offers on their products. The value of their offer depends on the amount of points collected. The reward card programme has over 4 million members, and is unrivalled in their industry - over 70% of all purchases are made with a Reward card in the GAME store.

PURCHASING

The purchasing department carries out the necessary needs in bringing in the goods that they are going to sell and the service they had to provide. An example of this is a sandwich company needing bread, tomatoes, cheese, meat products, etc. The employees are the service that the company purchases. They pay the employees or contractors wages. A contractor is an employee that has been hired for a limited period of time. In GAME they have to purchase the items of software, games, computers and consoles from the companies producing the goods. GAME also purchases materials to make its own brand of software and hardware.

Activities in the Purchasing Department

Stock Control

Stock is money and in today's economic climate GAME ensures that they keep sufficient stock to satisfy the demands of their shop floor and sales department without incurring unnecessary financial expense.

The stock module is the hub of their purchasing and distribution activation. It can be linked with purchase order processing, bill of materials, order entry, invoicing, sales analysis and job costing modules.

The chief financer ensures that stock is updated automatically from the sales order processing, invoicing and purchase order processing systems that may be tailored to suit each customers invoicing, production or sales order processing system.

Key features of stock control include -

- Alternative/superceded products
- Automatic link from purchase ordering
- Free stock calculated incorporating outstanding sales and purchase orders
- Stock shortage analysis
- Stock takes carried out without interrupting S.O.P
- Stock take analysis and input
- General reporting facilities
- Stock valuation
- Stock turnover
- Production group sales analysis
- Price lists
- Stock inactivity
- 80/20 plan

GAME doesn't actually keep stock of the products that they sell. Like most other businesses they sell only what is on the shelves. This is because they receive what they sell from the suppliers when they need them. The suppliers would arrive with the required amount of supplies at the exact moment when it is needed. This is crucial for big businesses like GAME because they need to compete with other

businesses who also sell products that are in demand. This system of stock control is called just-in-time stock control. It saves money buy getting rid of the need of a storage space and the problem of keeping stock that is out of date because it hadn't been selling for a long while.

This is how the purchasing department in GAME use ICT.

This is how GAME use ICT in the Purchasing Department

Computerized Stock Control — this is related with the Customer Product Completion in the sales department because the purchasing department forward their information on to the sales department by observing the progression of various products through the uses of ICT. The purchasing department gives a unique code to every order, much like a barcode, but this allows customers to check up on the progression of their product without having to constantly phoning up the company to find out. For example, a customer might fill in a short, quick online form to find out their product progression.

E — **Procurement** — this in other words is either buying stuff from another business, or selling stuff to another business. **GAME** use ICT through the means of Internet to buy products to sustain their company's local needs, such as glue and paper.

FINANCE

One of the most important things for an organization is finance. It has to have enough profits or expenditure. If the finance is very low for a business, the business might become bankrupt and go into loss. The lowest point that an organization can reach without making a loss is Break-Even point. This is a no loss-no profit position.

Fortunately GAME are not in that position, they are quite the opposite. They have profits that go past the £100m mark.

Activities in the Finance Department

Income and Spending — the finance department need to account for all the income they are receiving; in contrast the finance department needs to account for all the money going out of the company. This could include possible loans taken out by the company from the bank. GAME don't take out loans any more as they are already financially backed and profiting greatly from sales. GAME computerizes all the records of the items being bought and all the items being sold.



Accurate Financial Records — the finance department needs to keep accurate records of everything that the company spends and earns. It allows the correct tax reduction and the chances of inappropriate use of money is weeded out. The owners of the company of GAME are cautious

of their money and like to know that their money is being spent wisely and not recklessly. Below is an example of a financial record of a cash flow statement for GAME for the year ending January 2004.

	2004	2003
Note	£'000	£'000
28	36 121	37,366
	30,121	01,000
	169	796
	(9,918)	(10,648)
29	(30,364)	(22,263)
29	(563)	(569)
	(3,855)	(3,175)
	(8,410)	1,507
29	(1,060)	(7)
	28 ————————————————————————————————————	Note £'000 28 36,121 29 169 (9,918) 29 (30,364) 29 (563) (3,855)

(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year (9.470) 1,500			
	(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year	- (9,470)	1,500

Budget — the finance department issues a budget to every department and aspect of the company. Each would get a budget that they would need to use efficiently and profitably. For example the operations department would use their budget to buy raw materials for the products they are developing. If they go over the budget, then they are in financial decline.

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This is how the finance department in GAME use ICT

Spreadsheets — spreadsheets are used by the finance department to produce cash flows and forecasts. These forecasts will allow GAME to predict how much money they are most likely to make in the near future. They can see how much money will go in and out of the company in the future as well. Below is one of GAME's ways of using spreadsheets; by producing graphs.



Payroll — To pay their staff GAME calculates how much money the worker earns per hour and then multiplies it by the number of hours that person worked. This is done entirely by the ICT system used in GAME. Conveniently for the workers this system also figures out how much tax and national insurance is owed to the bank, so it is deducted form the pay as the money is transferred to the bank.

Internet — customers not wanting to travel to their nearest GAME retail outlet, would usually prefer ordering from the Internet. The website of GAME is www.GAME.net, this site is used by the customers to rifle through the wide selection of products at their pace and leisure and to purchase at their pace and leisure.

OPERATIONS

The operations department handles the processing of the goods the company sells. An example of this is the assembling of a car by a car manufacturing company, using raw materials such as steel and iron. The company also has to take into account the law and the hygiene factor and copyright laws, etc. The department is also responsible for obtaining the resources needed, the buildings and land where they carry out their tasks, the equipment needed to carry out their tasks and also hiring the people that do the specific jobs in the department.

Activities in the Operations Department

Identification and Acquisition of Resources — the operations department in GAME need to identify what they precisely need for the manufacturing of their products. Successfully identifying the appropriate materials will allow the operations department to advance to the next phase and actually try to purchase the materials for the littlest amount of money.

Production of Products — the manufacturing of products has to be scrutinised greatly so as to choose the best possible method of manufacturing the product. The product must be produced cheaply and have the best possible quality.

Schedule Production — the operations department must meet the customer demands and must produce their products on time. Producing a schedule to meet extreme demands are created by GAME; the schedule allows organised manufacturing of products and 'just-in-time' deliverance.

Quality Check — the quality of products is monitored greatly as well because of the competition from other major organisations. GAME maintains a high quality rating so they can win over new customers and also to keep the longer serving customers still hooked.

This is how the operations department in GAME use ICT

Quality Control - to ensure that the products that are manufactured by GAME are perfect the company would test the product very soon after it was produced. They product might go through some weighing scales and different sensors that check to see if things like the controllers joystick can revolve easily and if the weight of the product is right. If for example the product weighs too much or doesn't respond properly then it would be labelled as defected or re-entered into the production line to be corrected.

Statistical process control — this activity is very similar to Quality Control, but the difference being that through the manufacturing of a product that product is constantly monitored throughout its production. This allows the operations department to see where the defects occur and that allows them to rectify the problem. For example, when a joypad is being produced by GAME and they find that the movement of the analogue stick is too free-moving, they would go to that certain part of production and rectify the problem by allowing the insertion of more rubber lining.

GENERAL - HARDWARE - SOFTWARE

These are the hardware devices that are generally used by all the departments.

HARDWARE - INPUT

The input devices are hardware that allows you to enter information in to the computer. These are input devices generally used by the whole company.

Keyboard — This device allows you to enter data into the computer through your keyboard. The keyboard being obviously a board of keys that have different purposes. Pressing the key that has the letter 'P' on it would show a result on the monitor depending on what application or software you are running.

 Mouse — The mouse onscreen cursor is used to open applications you need to compile databases about the customer details. It is a simple tool that just lets you control what you want to do on the computer. For example moving the mouse around on the mouse mat would make the onscreen mouse move with proportion to your hand movements.

HARDWARE - OUTPUT

Output devices are devices that enable you to obtain the information through hardware. These are output devices generally used by all the company.

• Monitor — This device displays the information you have entered on the screen. An example of this is the GAME cashier typing or scanning information in to the EPOS terminal and the monitor displays what she has just entered.

• Speakers — this device emits sound from the program you are running. Sound is only heard if the sound is incorporated with the program.

 Printer — this device allows you to copy the information on to a piece of paper. Programs such as Microsoft Word allow you the option to print out your information.

HARDWARE - STORAGE DEVICES

Storage devices are pieces of hardware that store the data that has been produced by the computer.

These are storage devices generally used by the whole company.

Floppy Drive — this device allows you save all their work on a floppy disk. A floppy disk is not used to holding a great amount of work as it only has a storage capacity of 1.44 megabytes. The way it works is that you insert the floppy disk in the disk drive then specify on the computer that you want to save whatever you want to save on a floppy disk. It is commonly addressed on a computer as the A drive.

• CD-RW Drive — this drive allows you to copy large amounts of information onto a CD, which can hold copious amounts of information. The storage capacity of a standard CD is 700 megabytes. Programs such as Nero Burning Rom allow you to copy specified information. For example if you wanted to back-up some of their customer files they could use CD-R disks to store their information.

 Hard Disk Drive — this is the computers main storage device. It is situated in the computer itself and boasts a profuse amount of space. The standard amount of space being an overwhelming 40 gigabytes.

HARDWARE - PORTS AND CABLES

Ports and cables are the things in your computer that connect everything together. These are the ports and cables that are generally use by the whole company.

Parallel Port — this device is a connection point through which a computer sends
and receives data concurrently by means of a number of separate wires, generally used for linking
a printer or external storage device.

• USB Port — this device supports peripheral devices. Every computer has one or more USB connectors. The USB connectors let you attach everything. The operating system supports the USB as well. USB are the most simplest or easy to use cables.

• Serial Port — this device is a general purpose interface that transmits data in one direction. Serial ports provide a standard connector to let you attach devices such as modems.

HARDWARE - PROCESSOR

The processor is the brain of the computer. It controls everything from starting up the computer to running various applications. For example if you clicked on the Microsoft Excel icon because you wanted to open the application, the processor would process that information and then do what you asked of it. Another example is that if you were typing something on Microsoft Word, the keys that you press on the keyboard has to go through the processor which then processes the information to make the computer understand what you have done. It is like a translator. It is like a TV turning analogue signals to digital signals so it is able to interpret what it has to show on the TV.

The processor that the whole company of GAME use is Windows NT.4. All their processors have an abundance of speed with 2.6 gigahertz. They also have a temporary memory of 512DDR RAM.



SOFTWARE

GAME is a very sophisticated company that uses software to its full potential. They should, seeing as they are a company that sells software. Software on the whole is programs that you cannot touch. They

can do a number of things from instructing hardware to do things and to carrying out a multitude of tasks. The software GAME uses are:

SYSTEMS SOFTWARE

This is the system software generally used by the whole company.



• Windows NT.4 - this operating system is used by all of the GAME branches in the UK.

APPLICATION SOFTWARE

These are the application software generally used by the whole company.

• MS Word — this is a word-processing application software that allows the user to produce documents. It is incredibly suited for writing reports and notices to staff in GAME.

UTILITY SOFTWARE

These are the utility software generally used by the whole company.

Norton Anti-Virus — this program scans the computers for viruses and removes them. This is very useful if you are connected to the internet a lot where a lot of viruses try to attack you.

 Disk Cleanup — this program allows you to get rid of unnecessary information from the computer. The information the files are taken out of most is the temporary files folder and the recycle bin. Disk Defragmentor — When a program is installed on your computer, the program's files may be broken up over multiple locations on your hard disk. This is called fragmentation. If fragmentation occurs on your hard disk, the performance of programs on your computer is slower. The Disk Defragmenter tool optimizes the performance of your computer by reorganizing the files on your hard disk into contiguous blocks. When the Disk Defragmenter tool completes the defragmentation of files on your hard disk, the performance of your programs is faster because the files are arranged closer together.

WinZip — this program allows you to compress large files or folders of information and also allows you to unzip files and folders in their compressed state.

GAME don't use the basic software that most of the world uses. They have constructed their own program that does practically everything they want it to. This software does everything from creating databases about customers to keeping track of all the software being bought and returned. This is very useful as it tells the staff in GAME quickly and efficiently about the availability of software in the shop. It allows them to inform questioning customers.

GENERAL SECURITY

• CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) — this device is used to monitor everything that is happening. They are based everywhere in the company, in every department. This device can pick out things like thieves who are stealing merchandise to finding out what caused a certain accidental incident in another part of the company.

• Login Systems — a login system is a security lock that allows only authorised people to access computers. A username would be asked for followed by a password confirmation. This is a simple method to keep out people from accessing files on computers that are important. These are on all the computers in the company.

Keypad— this device is used in GAME to restrict areas that are only allowed for people that are authorised personnel. The person would have to key in a password to gain access to the restricted area. All the departments have areas that are restricted.

• Norton Anti-Virus — this program scans the computers for viruses and removes them. This is very useful if you are connected to the internet a lot where a lot of viruses try to attack you.

• Norton Internet Security — this program gives you extra protection from internet abusers. This allows you to enforce parental control, intrusion detection, privacy control, ad blocking, AntiSpam and a personal firewall to keep out intruders.

DEPARTMENT SPECIFICS

This section is on the specific hardware, software and security used in each department.

SALES DEPARTMENT

This is the Hardware and Software used specifically in the Sales Department.

Hardware - Input

These are the input devices used only in the sales department.

• Barcode Reader — The barcode reader in the EPOS system scans the barcode on the items and keeps track of what items are being taken out and being returned. This also lets the company know whether they are running out of any specific items. They can also in the future use the information they obtained from the EPOS system and evaluate whether they should stock up on more items or less.

• Magnetic Strip Reader — This device is like a barcode reader but it has some advantages. It can hold more information and it also has more security. In a barcode you could find out the code on the barcode because of the numerals under it, but in a magnetic stripe

you have to pass it through its reader to obtain its code. In the GAME industry they accept credit cards that have a magnetic strip. They also let people register for a GAME card, which also has a magnetic strip.

Hardware - Output

These are the output devices used only in the Sales department.

Receipt Printers — These printers print out the item that was purchased and include other details such as the date it was purchased, etc. These receipts are extremely useful, as they will allow the customers to return goods that do not satisfy them or is faulty. A unique system of GAME allows the customer to return goods that do not agree with them as long as they still have their receipt.

Software - Application

These are the application software only used in the Sales department.

- MS Publisher this program allows the Sales department to create sophisticated marketing products. Products like posters, leaflets and other paper-based marketing goods.
- MS Excel this program allows the sales department to produce a database on their customers. The reward card scheme allows GAME to keep a record of their customers and their history with GAME. GAME can use their database to find out what each customer has bought and returned. They can find out what each customer likes and dislikes. They can use this information to improve on what they need to do to make GAME a better service to the customers.

Security

These are ways security is handled only in the sales department.

- Security Guards security guards are used in the sales department to guard retail shops from vandals, thieves and troublemakers. They are trained professionals that can handle all different situations.
- Sensor Barrier this device is used in the sales department in the retail outlets. People have to go through it whenever they want to enter or leave the shop. If it rings then that means the culprit that caused it has an item that has not been bought but in fact is being stolen. It is very useful in cutting down shop robbery.
- Finance Supervisor these are people who have been hired to watch over the people who are involved in the transactions of the money belonging to GAME. So if a

worker is seen to be trying to steal some of the company's money, then the supervisor would report the culprit for arrest.

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

This is the Hardware and Software used in the Purchasing Department.

Hardware - Input

These are the input devices used only in the Purchasing department.

• Barcode Reader — The barcode reader in the purchasing department is used to key in all the items that are being bought in and out of the retailer. It helps it to determine how much of each product is in stock.

Hardware - Output

Ordering

These are the output devices used only in the Purchasing department.

• Ordering Software — this software is used to buy products from different manufacturers. Whenever the company is low on a product the ordering software would purchase more of that same product to restock.

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SecurityThe purchasing department uses only the security stated in the general security section.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

This is the Hardware and Software used in the Finance Department.

Software - Application

These are the application software only used in the Sales department.

• BACS (Bankers Automated Clearing System) — this program allows the finance department to takes money from the company and gives the money to the employers. The chief financer keeps in check how much money is going out to employees.

Finax — this program allows the finance department to create cash flows and determine a forecast of the income and outcome of the future months. Sometimes this is used to determine how much money will be made in the distance future, for example a couple of years in the future.

Security

These are the ways that security is handled in the finance department

• Finance Supervisor — these are people who have been hired to watch over the people who are involved in the transactions of the money belonging to GAME. So if a worker is seen to be trying to steal some of the company's money, then the supervisor would report the culprit for arrest.

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

This is the Hardware and Software used in the Operations Department.

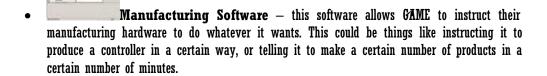
Hardware

This is a special type of hardware that does input, output and the process all-in-one.

• Manufacturing Hardware — this piece of hardware is actually a series of hardware that can input information, process it and then give an output. This device (or these devices) allow the GAME company to manufacture they're own goods with their own brand name. They are most popular in manufacturing third party peripherals for consoles such as Gamecube, Xbox and Playstation 2. These include devices like controllers, memory cards and link cables.

Software - Application

These are software only used in the operations department



• CAD (Computer Aided Design) — this software allows GAME to test out designs of new products without having to actually manufacture it. This saves a lot of time and predicts problems that may occur with the tested product.

• CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) — this software allows GAME to input their designs and allow them to figure out the best way to manufacture their product. Information about the dimensions and materials are inputted into the software and it makes changes where it sees it needs to be put. The information can be inputted into the manufacturing hardware and it would manufacture the product exactly the way it was designed.

Security

The operations department use only security stated in the general security section.