CSE 306 Research

Portfolio Part 2

Project Terms of Reference

Investigating the viability of ecommerce in an organization

Case Study: RainbowFashion

Abstract

The revolutionary upturn of the internet has brought about dramatic changes both in the way people live and how businesses operate. Consequently, businesses have capitalized on the availability of the fast paced web interface with its readily available market presence, thereby taking their businesses online.

There is therefore the need for organizations to identify the need to harness the opportunities available through such business means. This research wherefore is determined to divulge the viability of ecommerce in RainbowFashion.

1.0 Overview

The revolutionary upturn of the internet has brought about dramatic changes both in the way people live and how businesses operate. This is evident in the daily use of the internet world wide. Research statistics provided by (Internet Stats Today, 2010) and (Internet Worls Stats, 2010) announces China as the country with the largest users of the internet, composing "384 million internet users" which constitutes about 42% of internet usage worldwide. Consequently, businesses have capitalized on the availability of the fast paced web interface with its readily available market presence, thereby taking their businesses online. A summary report based on the "UK Online Annual Report" revealed that as of 2002, about 1million SMEs in the UK had changed their mode of operation to online transactions. This describes the unimaginable number of e-commerce websites sitting patiently over the internet and waiting for clicks of purchase from users(Furnell, 2004).

This project will cover a research to discover the emerging technological features of e-commerce and its viability and ability to enhance the efficiency of an organization. This research will try to analyze the need to implement e-commerce rather than the traditional 'brick and mortar' within organizational operations. The research will also examine the advantages and disadvantages of e-commerce over the traditional business operations. Part of the research will be focused on the feasibility of improving organizational operations through e-commerce. Embarking upon this research will help greatly in deciding upon the best operational means for organizations in the current technology related business world.

2.0 Background & Problem

Presenting the case of a local company RainbowFashion Ltd., this project will try to research and develop means to transform the company's traditional means of operations into an online commerce. RainbowFashion Ltd. Is a large textile industry involved in the production of non-seasonal textiles such as linen, coverings, underwear, socks, etc. The company has business clients to which goods produced are sold to on wholesale basis. Other groups of clients consist of single unit purchasers and retailers who place orders with the company for products they are interested in. Since its establishment in the early 70's, the company has managed to maintain remarkable customer relations thereby gaining renowned reputation throughout the textile industry. However, RainbowFashion is limited by its traditional business mode of operation in the following ways;

1. Inability to market its self worldwide and

2. High cost for advertisements.

3. Failure to colonize geographical locations throughout its base in Egypt.

4. Failure to capture business opportunities and market shares presented over the internet.

The company however has knowledge of the ability of ecommerce to solve its organizational problem but aren't sure of its feasibility within organizational operations.

The research will however investigate the need for ecommerce within the organizations operational means. The product of the project will be based on the findings and result of the research and the intended way forward will be decided using results from the research.

3.0 Sponsor

SPONSOR DETAILS

Company Name: RainbowFashion Ltd

Address: Rivernew Close, Trenchtown

Contact Name: Mrs Kelly Rainbow

Sponsor's Signature:

4.0 Research Design and Methodology

Empirical evidence for the viability of ecommerce in RainbowFashion will be gathered following qualitative research methods to determine the following;

- Trends in ecommerce

- Target market of the company

- Validity of ecommerce within the company's operational means

The chosen method of qualitative approach works best to satisfy the exploratory needs of this research as indicated by (Lefebvre et al., 2005). The following discusses the focus of the investigation, how it relates to the project and why it is appropriate.

- Study of Ecommerce trends

Deductions made from a presentation conducted by (Krishnamurthy, 2007), revealed several trends within ecommerce. According to (Anumba and Ruikar, 2002), these trends have the capability to determine how businesses are likely to operate in the future. It is therefore a prerequisite for the research team to embark on a field study to determine the current trends and future possibilities of ecommerce within the textile industry. The qualitative results from this study are very essential to help the team conclude on better a judgment for ecommerce implementation within RainbowFashion Ltd.

- Determining RainbowFashions' Market Niche

The success of a business apparently depends on finding a profitable niche market (Shum, 2009). Finding ways and means to reach your niche market is another important aspect of the success story. The question of success however can be tailored down to whether the business can effectively reach out to the customers. The answer to this question is what this phase of the research is devoted discover. The deductioins gathered from the research would help validate the

extent to which the implementation of ecommerce within RainbowFashion can help the company reach out to its target market.

- Viability of ecommerce in RainbowFashion

A constructive deduction made from the results gathered is the key to determining the extent to which the implementation of ecommerce within Rainbowashion will yield desired results. Implementing ecommerce within organizations operations requires rigorous investigation into the business processes of the specified organization. Business processes form the fundamental aspects of business to customer domains and dominate business to business domains of the roles within ecommerce web applications (Schmid and Rossi, 2002). However, in order to quantify the interoperability of the business processes at RainbowFashion with future ecommerce operations, an investigative research which involves analytical studies of the business operations within RainbowFashion as well as conducting interviews with the personnel's involved with the traditional business operations.

The research team will implement qualitative data techniques such as interviews and literature review. This means of data collection as indicated by (Kocaoðlu, 2006) is credible and trustworthy in establishing the level of achievement of organizational goals and objectives with the implementation of ecommerce within RainbowFashion.

5.0 Aims & Objectives

This research aims at providing substantial proof of the viability of ecommerce within RainbowFashion and its capability enhance business processes and assist the company achieve the following;

➢ Market itself world wide

➢ Save advertisement cost

➢ Colonize other geographical locations without having to open new outlets

➢ Capture business opportunities presented through the internet.

The following objectives define the major processes that underline the achievement of the aims stated above.

- Investigate the concept of ecommerce and give an overview of upcoming trends

- Evaluate why this technology is suitable for the company

- Analyze the applicability of ecommerce for operations within the company

- Investigate the ability for the technology to replace traditional business processes

- Determine if ecommerce will create value proposition at RainbowFashion

- Examine impact and benefits of ecommerce in RainbowFashion

- Evaluate the feasibility of the technology within company business processes

6.0 Project Outcomes

❖ To the sponsor

Data collected from the research and the analysis drawn from those data is submitted in a form of a report to the sponsor. The reports will vary in terms of statistical data, graphs, and analytical data. The report will also include suggestion where necessary.

❖ To the dissertation's supervisor and research leader

A summary of the report submitted to the sponsor as well as detailed performance of members within the research team. The level of depth of the research is also analyzed. Recommendations for itinerary required for successful research outcomes are also presented in the form of reports.

7.0 Evaluation of Proposed Methodology

The evaluation of the proposed methodology will take on a *summative evaluation* which according to (Patton, 2002) sums up judgment about a program to deduce its value, determine whether or not it should remain existent or carried on, and whether it is applicable in the area of context and other areas as well.

The chosen evaluation method is considered valid as it deduces its results based on group analysis. The research is conducted by means of literature review, interviews and observation of both participants and non-participants all of which relate to the research question. The results are then summed up within individual groups of findings and cross examined to arrive at its value. This type of research falls explicitly within the category of *summative evaluation* as defined by (Patton, 2002) and further elaborated on by (Trochim, 2006) hence the chosen evaluated method.

The first part the research will involve careful selection of research articles related to the topic defined. Selection of articles will be based on issues defined by the research team so as to remain within scope. These articles will be outsourced from reports and publications of central and State Governmental Departments and International Bodies such as UNO, IMF etc (PayelDis, 2009). Other unpublished articles sources such as reports and records maintained by Government offices and research institutions are considered. Evaluation of data collected will be based on criteria that define "good quality semantic reviews" as explained by (Armitage and Keeble-Allen, 2008). Data collected from this review is considered secondary data since they were borrowed (PayelDis, 2009).

The second part of the research involves conducting an unstructured interview with organizations that fall within and without the textile industry but have implemented ecommerce in their business operations. The primary data collected according to (PayelDis, 2009) which involves

data collected from the field study is analyzed using two main techniques explained by (Özkan et al., 2006); *analytic induction and hermeneutical analysis.*

The concluding results of the research is attained based on cross analysis of data drawn from both research aspects

8.0 Constraints

Any project is invariably subject to some form of constraints. Time and budget can be considered as part of the vital basic needed resources to fuel a project. However, these also have the tendencies to stifle a project.

8.1 Time Constraints

The amount of time allotted to a task, particularly an interview session in this case is likely to affect the efficiency and amount of data that can be collected. (Gomaa, 2005) in his paper quotes (Fisher et al., 2003) definition of time constraint as "a specific allotted time for making decision". Lack of ample time in this case is likely to restrict the rigorous examination of data from interview sessions.

8.2 Budget Constraints

The research will require the acquisition of access to resourceful databases to successfully complete data collection my literature review. However, should the budget available be exceeded by that which is requested by the database owners, the research team may be compelled to abandon some of the data sources there by standing the chance to lose necessary data sources which stifles the research.

8.3 Complexity of Data Evaluation

Another constraint which is of severe consideration is the complexity of data evaluation. In order to achieve good and reliable results, the research employs different means of data collection methods which according to (Denzin, 1978) as quoted by (Patton, 2002) is a good practice. Furthermore, the study implores data triangulation is ideal to strengthening the study (Patton, 2002). However, the complexities of such evaluations means is likely to affect the resultant data should time and budget constraints surface.

The tendency for officers from relevant organizations to turn down interview request is also considered a constraint to the research.

9.0 Resources

Software

- Internet connection to access literature databases

- Microsoft Word for report processing

- Microsoft Project

Literature Database

The initial literature search and review requires access to relevant reports and publications via the internet to relevant database sources such as

- Central and State Government Department

- International bodies such as UNO, IMF

- Research Institutions

- Administrative offices

- Municipal Offices

- Research Scholars

Finance

- Financial resources is required to acquire access to the above listed databases records

Hardware

- Personal computer running windows operating system with capabilities to access the internet

Officers from relevant organizations

- Booked interview sessions with relevant organizations

10.0 References