Unit 10 – Section B: The Client

Row 1 - Describe the client.

This needs to introduce the client and their organisation. To get the second mark the description needs to be detailed enough. The key is to clearly identify why a spreadsheet solution is required.

We need to know:

- The name of the organisation and the name of the contact within it
- What the organisation does
- Where they are
- What job the spreadsheet is going to do – this is the "problem" that needs solving
- How they currently do the job that the spreadsheet is going to do
- In general terms, what the spreadsheet is going to do – how is it going to solve the client's problem?

Row 2 – User Skill Levels

To get both marks here you need to focus on the ways in which the user's skill levels are going to impact on your designs.

We need to know:

- Who, exactly, is going to use the spreadsheet system. I need names and positions within the organisation
- What ICT skills (and spreadsheet skills specifically) these people have
- How your system will be adapted to take into account these skill levels

It is a good idea to use a survey/interview to discover the skill levels of the users. You should certainly consider specific spreadsheet skills, but should assume that the reason you're producing the solution is that the client can't do it themselves. You also need to consider skills associated with the general computer competence of the client, for example

- do they sometimes accidentally delete stuff?
- do they overwrite files by mistake so they no longer have the original?
- do they need really clear instructions or can they figure out how to do stuff themselves?
- is finding stuff on spreadsheets difficult?/do they get confused by lots of complex stuff on the screen?

Finish with how you will adapt your solution to make sure that the user's skills have been taken into account – for example, by locking cells to avoid formulae being deleted, by hiding information to avoid confusing staff, by using an easy navigation/menu system to make producing the sheet very easy, by using colour and tooltips to make the sheet very clear etc…

A bullet list to summarise this is fine, but do try to develop the points. For example you might say something along the lines of:

- Use macros to automate routine processes such as printing or storing client details. Use clearly labelled buttons to run macros so that the client knows precisely what the system is going to do.

This quote from the June 2010 examiners report is worth considering carefully when addressing this section:

> *"Some candidates said that as their client knew very little about spreadsheets, the formulas used would have to be simple. These candidates did not gain a second mark, as it is they who are setting up the formulae. A better explanation would have been to describe simplifying the interface to reduce the possibility of data input errors."*

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