

MIS 5121: Business Processes, ERP Systems and Controls

Exam 1 - Case

Zebras, Inc.

Zebras, Inc. is a small public start up company. They are a \$250MM manufacturer who sells powder coatings to the North American market. Powder coatings are small flakes of a solid paint like substance that will stick to all surfaces of an electrically charged object. The object is then heated so that the powder melts and forms a continuous and durable coating over the metal object. Powder coatings are easier to apply, more durable, and less expensive than paint. It is used for all types of objects from washing machines, to computers, to picture frames.

Zebras, Inc.'s origins were as a small spin-off company several years ago from a larger firm in a portfolio shaping divestiture. Zebras, Inc. continued to aggressively grow by acquisition of similar companies and market positions. As a result, Zebras, Inc. sells many materials, many of which are very similar.

Zebras, Inc. has a close relationship with its sub-contract manufacturing partner Powder Milling LLC. Powder Milling LLC produces many of the specialty coating products that Zebras, Inc. sells. Zebras, Inc. and Powder Milling LLC have a technology sharing agreement as well as highly integrated purchasing and planning processes.

Company Leadership

- *Tom 'Bud' Collins, Chief Executive Officer:* Tom (better known by his nickname 'Bud') is the spark plug that makes Zebra, Inc. go. He took the small spin-off company a larger firm discarded and grew Zebra, Inc. to what it is today. Through his energy and drive, sales have continued to increase every year despite poor market conditions.
- *Kathy Lattimore-Collins, Chief Marketing Officer:* Kathy is responsible for marketing and sales at Zebra, Inc. including sales results, pricing, deals (including rebates), etc. Kathy has had a meteoric rise from a local sales-person of one of our large customers to this leadership position over the last 3 years. Her ability to connect with customers, influence others and conduct memorable sales events are keys to her success.
- *Joseph (Joe) Miller, Supply Chain Operations & Procurement:* Joseph until the past year was President of Powder Milling, Inc. He has a strong track record in low-cost, efficient manufacturing. Joseph is also on the board of directors of Powder Milling, Inc.
- *YOU, Vice President of Information Technology and Auditing:* YOU recently earned a Master of Science in IT Auditing and Cyber Security (ITACS) from the Fox School of Business at Temple University. We are excited having YOU join Zebra, Inc. to put the poor IT and internal controls capability back on the right track.

Company Culture

Like many start-ups and small companies, there are relatively few employees to handle all the tasks and functions of the organization. In addition to the employees and contractors in manufacturing and distribution there are in addition to the leaders noted above approximately: 6 people in Sales, 4 people in customer service 5 people in supply chain / procurement and 3 interns from a small mid-west college in accounting.

Since you have joined Zebra, Inc. 8 weeks ago (lured by a very attractive offer including company stock) you've observed or heard the following:

- Sales analysis and cost account reports have not been run in at least 6 months
- "The sales review meetings between Mr. and Mrs. Collins surely must be steamy."
- "How can we spend like we have when we haven't reported a profit yet."
- Personnel responsibilities are flexible and fluid (change to meet each day's crisis).
- The SAP system including the HR module (which came with the original spin-off and is not run on a cloud server) seems to perform the needed company tasks but expertise is limited.