



**Solution Evaluation**  
**For**  
**Company Website**

MGMT_X481.63 - Summer 2017	Mark Warrick
Professor Amit Kaul	Week 7 Submission
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# 1 Project Synopsis

## 1.1 Overview

XEN MTB is an adventure tour operator who provides customized mountain biking experiences. The service provided is the tour itself and all logistics required to perform that service. The purpose of this project is to create a website capable of achieving the business needs.

## 1.2 Problem

A way of enabling people to book a trip online does not exist for the company. Additionally, the owner overwhelmed with tracking inquiries via email and phone calls are often expensive because many customers have international phone numbers.

## 1.3 Opportunity

A website with the functionality described here serves multiple purposes. At its core, it is a tool for accepting orders. But beyond that, it is a marketing channel and a communication channel.

As a marketing channel, the website will attract visitors via web searches on popular search engines: Google, MSN and Yahoo. Additionally, utilizing the same content in the website it will be possible to publish the same information on referral website as well, such as Viator.

As a communication channel, the website is more effective and less expensive than traditional channels: phone and email. By centralizing all communications a customer can be tracked from an initial inquiry through logistics planning of each trip and follow up feedback.

## 1.4 Business Needs

### 1.4.1 Essential Tool

The website is an essential tool for doing business, just as a cash register would be essential for collecting money in a retail store.

### 1.4.2 Marketing Channel

The website is a marketing channel in itself and provides content for other marketing channels, such as 3<sup>rd</sup> party tour service aggregators. In order to measure the effectiveness of various marketing efforts, tracking mechanisms and reporting must be installed. Additionally, the tracking of user interactions will reveal issues with website flow and marketing content.

### 1.4.3 Communications Channel

Communications before a sale are a key factor to winning the sale since all tours are customized to the buyer's expectations. Communications are also important following up to the service and in gathering referrals after the service is performed. Therefore, having communication tools in place is essential to a functioning business.

### 1.4.4 Financial Transactions

External financial transactions are quite literally the bank and related service providers. They must be setup to facilitate business operations.

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## 1.5 Business Objectives

- 1.5.1 Provide information about services provided.
- 1.5.2 Enable online purchasing of services.
- 1.5.3 Enable online communications between the provider and clients.
- 1.5.4 Track marketing sources and user interactions.
- 1.5.5 Connect the website with external financial companies.

## 1.6 Success Criteria

- 1.6.1 The website displays content related to services.
- 1.6.2 The website captures orders.
- 1.6.3 Customers can communicate with the service provider via the website.
- 1.6.4 A reporting dashboard reveals marketing sources and user interactions.
- 1.6.5 The financial institution is accepting money from sales.

## 1.7 The Solution

The solution, which does not exist at this time, is a website capable of all of the following functions:

### 1.7.1 In Scope

#### 1.7.1.1 Content Management

##### 1.7.1.1.1 Page / Post Management

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#### 1.7.1.2 Product Management

##### 1.7.1.2.1 Service descriptions and pricing

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#### 1.7.1.3 User Experience

##### 1.7.1.3.1 Ability to navigate via a menu

##### 1.7.1.3.2 Ability to read content regarding services and related information.

##### 1.7.1.3.3 Ability to search for content and products with keywords.

#### 1.7.1.4 eCommerce

##### 1.7.1.4.1 Ability to place an order for a tour.

##### 1.7.1.4.2 Ability to pay for tour with a credit card online.

##### 1.7.1.4.3 Automatic payment processing and bank deposits.

##### 1.7.1.4.4 Admin ability to refund transactions partially or in whole.

#### 1.7.1.5 Order Management

##### 1.7.1.5.1 Admin ability to review and manage orders.

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#### **1.7.1.6 Customer Communications**

**1.7.1.6.1** Ability for website visitors to send message to service provider.

**1.7.1.6.2** Ability to service provider to respond to messages.

**1.7.1.6.3** Ability for service provider to communicate with customers regarding orders.

#### **1.7.1.7 Visitor Tracking**

**1.7.1.7.1** Ability to track marketing source of users.

**1.7.1.7.2** Ability to track user interactions and movement through the website.

#### **1.7.2 Out of Scope**

Anything not listed in the In-Scope items above is out-of-scope.

#### **1.7.3 Current State**

An operating solution exists at <https://xenmtb.com>

## **2 Measure Solution Performance**

### **2.1 Inputs**

#### **2.1.1 Business Objectives**

The business objectives described in [section 1.5](#) of this document were used as inputs to define performance measures.

#### **2.1.2 Implemented Solution**

An operating solution as described in [section 1.7](#) of this document is available at <https://xenmtb.com>. Admin access shall be made available to relevant stakeholders.

### **2.2 Elements**

The performance measurements for this project are strictly quantitative answers to whether or not the solution provides the success criteria described in [section 1.6](#) of this document.

### **2.3 Techniques**

#### **2.3.1 Brainstorming**

Using the company's business plan (a separate, confidential document available to interested parties) as a base guideline of forecasted business activities, the owner of the company then collaborated small business mentors and conducted competitor and industry research in order to compile the necessary requirements for business operations. The result of the inputs from mentors and research conclusions is the solution described in [section 1.7](#) of this document.

#### **2.3.2 Business Capability Analysis**

In order to weigh options of build in-house vs. use external services, the owner had to take stock of his own capabilities and available resources. It was decided that the owner did in fact have the technological experience, time and money needed to create the planned solution.

#### **2.3.3 Estimation**

Based upon 20 years of experience developing websites, the owner estimated the time required to build out the solution. Delphi (expert judgment) estimates were calculated as an offset to

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other revenue opportunities for the owner vs. the cost outsourcing business operations to one of several 3<sup>rd</sup> party service providers.

## 2.4 Outputs

The [success criteria](#) which are based upon the [business objectives](#) and clearly defined in the [project solution](#) shall be used as performance measurements. A simple yes, the solution provides the requirement or no it does not are the only valid answers. It will be up to the stakeholders to decide whether or not all of the requirements must be met before implementation or not.

## 3 Analyze Performance Measures

### 3.1 Inputs

#### 3.1.1 Potential Value

Implementing the solution described in [section 1.7](#) of this document addresses the business needs described in [section 1.4](#) of this document.

#### 3.1.2 Solution Performance Measures

Prior to implementation it would be impossible to predict whether or not the system will achieve the desired results. It is assumed that if the solution is performing the tasks for which it was intended, then the results will be clear and a return on investment can later be measured.

There is some financial risk involved in implementing the solution prior to having any actual sales, but the risk of not having the solution is assumed to have a greater negative financial impact on achieving the desired objectives described in [section 1.5](#) of this document.

### 3.2 Elements

#### 3.2.1 Solution Performance versus Desired Value

##### 3.2.1.2 Transaction Processing

Transaction processing involves two essential functions: (1) to collect details on the tour to be done and (2) to process a payment for the tour. So long as the system is able to collect tour details, then it shall be an effective way of generating new business. The ability to process payments online doesn't affect business operations as a whole; rather, it just simplifies that act of accepting money.

##### 3.2.1.2 Marketing Content

Whether or not the marketing content is effective partially depends upon the content itself. It is assumed that the more detailed and relevant the content, the more likely a person will purchase a tour. However, it is also understood that even with the best possible content there are many other factors outside the content writer's control affecting a purchasing decision.

##### 3.2.1.3 Communications via Website

It is understood that although having communications centralized via the website is desired, it is not essential for the business to function. Other commonly accepted methods such as phone and email will also be sufficient. We make no assumptions as to whether or not these centralized communications will have any effect upon improving sales or increasing customer satisfaction.

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### 3.2.3 Risks

No.	Risk Name	Risk Impacts Most Business Project Solution	Threat Or Opportunity (Only one per risk)	Probability of Occurrence Rating 1 - Low 2 - Medium 3 - High	Impact Type 1 = Little 2 = Moderate 3 = Catastrophic	Risk Score (RS)	Priority Rating High if RS > 4 Low if RS =< 4	Negative Risk Response Avoid Transfer Mitigate Accept	Positive Risk Response Exploit Enhance Share Accept
R01	Sponsor unable to make final go/no go decision to put solution in to use.	Project	Threat	3	3	9	High	Mitigate through contingency by having lead SME who reports to Sponsor responsible to decide in case Sponsor is unable to	
R02	Developer unable to finish website.	Solution	Threat	1	3	9	High	Mitigate by hiring another developer.	
R03	Bank account not setup (or not working).	Business	Threat	1	1	1	Low	Accept: Launch website without ordering functionality.	
R04	Project cost assessment is not affordable.	Solution	Threat	2	2	5	High	Mitigate: Hire a more affordable developer.	
R05	Content not ready.	Project	Threat	1	3	9	High	Avoid: Delay production.	



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No.	Risk Name	Risk Impacts Most Business Project Solution	Threat Or Opportunity (Only one per risk)	Probability of Occurrence Rating 1 - Low 2 - Medium 3 - High	Impact Type 1 = Little 2 = Moderate 3 = Catastrophic	Risk Score (RS)	Priority Rating High if RS > 4 Low if RS =< 4	Negative Risk Response Avoid Transfer Mitigate Accept	Positive Risk Response Exploit Enhance Share Accept
R06	External visitor tracking account not setup.	Business	Threat	1	2	4	Low	Avoid: No visitor metrics won't impact business, but it would be more difficult to understand how visitors are finding the site and what they do on the site.	
R07	Online ordering with credit card processing	Solution	Opportunity	3	2	5	High		Exploit: Online ordering makes transactions easier for all parties.
R08	Online photo galleries (Content)	Solution	Opportunity	2	2	3	Low		Share: Photos of the tours people are purchasing increase the chances of the sale happening.

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No.	Risk Name	Risk Impacts Most Business Project Solution	Threat Or Opportunity (Only one per risk)	Probability of Occurrence Rating 1 - Low 2 - Medium 3 - High	Impact Type 1 = Little 2 = Moderate 3 = Catastrophic	Risk Score (RS)	Priority Rating High if RS > 4 Low if RS =< 4	Negative Risk Response Avoid Transfer Mitigate Accept	Positive Risk Response Exploit Enhance Share Accept
R09	Maps of routes (Content)	Solution	Opportunity	2	2	3	Low		Share: Maps of the tours people are purchasing increase the chances of the sale happening.
R10	FAQs (Content)	Solution	Opportunity	2	2	6	High		Accept: FAQs provide information online that would otherwise have to be conveyed to visitors each time a question came up. Having the information there decreases communication lag and increases the chances of tours being booked.

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### 3.2.4 Trends

This is a new business; therefore there are no trends to track.

### 3.2.5 Accuracy

All test scenarios are pass/fail.

### 3.2.6 Variances

As described in [techniques below](#) that are based upon the identified [business needs](#), if all requirements of [the solution](#) are not met prior to launch, that could affect the likelihood of the [success criteria](#) being met. Whether or not all the success criteria actually impacts sales remains to be seen. For example, in a live environment it may not matter that the customers cannot pay for their tours online with a credit card since cash in person is also an acceptable payment method. The project sponsor must therefore make an educated guess upon which items need to be available upon launch.

## 3.3 Techniques

### 3.3.1 Acceptance / Evaluation Criteria

All items described in the solution were identified as things needed to achieve the desired results; however, some were more important than others. In some cases, specific requirements must be met before the solution can be launched at all. Each requirement is presented within a table according to the following example. The project sponsor then decides upon each item's importance prior to launch. As a result of more detailed analysis, the project sponsor can make more informed decisions and technology resources can be scheduled accordingly.

Requirement	Business Need	Must / Nice to / Can Wait
Content Management > Post / Page Management	<a href="#">1.4.1</a> , <a href="#">1.4.2</a>	Must Have
eCommerce > Ability to place an order for a tour.	<a href="#">1.4.1</a>	Must Have
eCommerce > Ability to pay for a tour with a credit card online.	<a href="#">1.4.1</a>	Nice to Have
Visitor Tracking > Ability to track marketing source of users.	<a href="#">1.4.2</a>	Can Wait

## 3.4 Outputs

The project sponsor will be the sole arbiter of [solution features](#) and beneficiary of [implemented solution](#). With the [risk register](#) in hand, the sponsor will be able to determine [acceptable criteria](#) for launch and will be solely responsible for the results of those decisions.

## 4 Assess Solution Limitations

### 4.1 Inputs

#### 4.1.1 Implemented Solution

The components making up the functionality of the solution are things which already exist and just need to be put together to form the complete website. The content of the website is unique, and available only from the stakeholders.

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#### 4.1.2 Solution Performance Analysis

The proposed solution, which is based upon the [business needs](#) and [business objectives](#), will achieve the desired [success criteria](#). However, **without content from the stakeholder, the proposed solution would be useless.**

### 4.2 Elements

#### 4.2.1 Identify Internal Solution Component Deficiencies

There are no known deficiencies with the [proposed solution](#).

#### 4.2.2 Investigate Solution Problems

There are no problems.

#### 4.2.3 Impact Assessment

The only impact on the [success criteria](#) would be if the solution was not implemented, in which case, the business would have to seek other methods to address the [business needs](#).

### 4.3 Techniques

#### 4.3.1 Decision Analysis

The idea of using third party services such as Viator.com who might be able to address the [business needs](#) was considered. Pricing and functionality was researched on viable solutions.

#### 4.3.2 Financial Analysis

It was determined that the up-front costs of using third party services were prohibitive because the business doesn't have the capital required. Further, none of the third party services could accomplish **all** of the desired objectives. Therefore, the only viable solution was to build it utilizing existing open-source technologies

### 4.4 Outputs

#### 4.4.1 Solution Limitations

There are no known limitations for the [proposed solution](#). In fact, the solution is better than any third party solution because it addresses **all** of the [business needs](#).

## 5 Assess Enterprise Limitations

### 5.1 Inputs

#### 5.1.1 Current State Description

Prior to implementation, the tools necessary to solicit and transact business do not exist.

#### 5.1.2 Implemented Solution

The implemented solution addresses the [business needs](#) and [business objectives](#).

#### 5.1.3 Solution Performance Analysis

Although it is possible to utilize other marketing methods and other methods to book tours, communicate with customers and accept payments, the cost of those methods would exceed expected revenues. Therefore, the [proposed solution](#) makes it possible to achieve the [business needs](#) and to be profitable.

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## 5.2 Elements

### 5.2.1 Enterprise Culture Assessment

The stakeholders of this business fully understand that their prospective customers are computer and Internet literate and prefer to conduct business over the Internet. Further, the stakeholders are experts in Internet marketing, and understand how good content and a properly constructed website will attract customers from all around the world. The [proposed solution](#) matches the underlying culture of the enterprise.

### 5.2.2 Stakeholder Impact Analysis

The [proposed solution](#) impacts the entire business in a positive way.

### 5.2.3 Organizational Structure Changes

No changes need to be made to the organizational structure.

### 5.2.4 Operational Assessment

The stakeholders who will be using the solution are fully knowledgeable in how to use the proposed solution. Further, they understand that without good content, they may not attract prospective customers nor close deals on new tour bookings. A great degree of responsibility, therefore, is placed upon the stakeholders to supply content. Fortunately, the stakeholders are expert content writers and have many years of in-the-field experience related to the business.

## 5.3 Techniques

### 5.3.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the stakeholders to consider all available options for addressing the [business needs](#). Other options, such as utilizing 3<sup>rd</sup> party services and traditional methods of marketing, were categorically denied because their associated costs exceeded financial projections forecast in the company's business plan.

## 5.4 Outputs

### 5.4.1 Enterprise Limitation

Currently, the company does not have a solution to address the [business needs](#). The [proposed solution](#) combined with quality content, is expected to meet those needs.

## 6 Recommend Actions to Increase Solution Value

### 6.1 Inputs

#### 6.1.1 Enterprise Limitation

See [section 5.4.1](#)

#### 6.1.2 Solution Limitation

See [section 4.4.1](#)

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## 6.2 Elements

### 6.2.1 Adjust Solution Performance Measures

The [proposed solution](#) has been deemed acceptable to fulfill the [business needs](#) and [business objectives](#). No adjustments are needed to meet this project's [success criteria](#).

### 6.2.2 Recommendations

[See section 6.4.1](#)

## 6.3 Techniques

### 6.3.1 Brainstorming

It is understood that the [proposed solution](#) only satisfies the basic [business needs](#) of the organization. The organization must not settle upon the proposed solution as the final alternative if it seeks to dominate the mountain bike tour business in its geographic market.

### 6.3.2 Focus Groups

Paid focus groups can be used to test the functionality and usability of the website for future enhancement considerations.

### 6.3.3 Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires are a less expensive alternative to focus groups.

## 6.4 Outputs

### 6.4.1 Recommended Actions

#### 6.4.1.1 Identify Additional Capabilities

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The tour selection and booking process could be improved. It could be more mobile-friendly. Also, unavailable dates could be displayed to prevent bookings on those days.

#### 6.4.1.2 Improve Website Content

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Stakeholders will need to continuously create better content in the form of ride descriptions, maps, GPS data, photos, videos and all other relevant information.

#### 6.4.1.3 Monitor Competition

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Continuous monitoring of local, national and international competitors encroaching upon the territory of the business will be vital to long-term success. The website should not be a mirror of what competitors are doing but they can use that information for possible website enhancement considerations. Stakeholders need to pay close attention to existing local competitors and monitor the market space for any new entries into their market.

#### 6.4.1.4 Develop Surveys and Questionnaires

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To gather feedback from website users, surveys and questionnaires should be developed and implemented within the website for new users, and as follow ups for completed services.