

1. report- Information Systems Improvements: **(LCLM5004_LON)**

Student Name: Slawomir Gora

Student number:2336470

Lecture name: Amer Kareem

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★ Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Business Scenario

Funeralcare Services Ltd. is a medium-sized funeral provider operating multiple branches, offering services including funeral arrangements, transportation, embalming, chapel use and after-care support for families. The organization relies heavily on the efficient coordination of inventory and logistics to deliver timely and accurate services. Key operational elements include the availability of coffins, urns, floral arrangements, ceremonial accessories, vehicles, and staff scheduling. As demand has increased and service expectations have evolved, the limitations of the current information systems have become more apparent. Funeralcare Services Ltd. now faces operational disruptions that reduce efficiency and complicate service delivery.

★ 1.2 Key Operational Challenges

The organization is experiencing several challenges related to its outdated and largely manual information management processes. Inventory essential items, such as coffins and ceremonial supplies, are tracked through paper records or basic spreadsheets, leading to frequent stock discrepancies and delays in restocking. Logistics processes including coordination of vehicles, scheduling of funeral directors, and allocation of chapel rooms are not integrated into a unified system, resulting in miscommunication and double bookings. Additionally, the lack of real-time visibility across branches makes it difficult to forecast demand, manage stock levels, or coordinate resources efficiently. These limitations contribute to service delays, increased operational costs, and reduced ability to handle higher volumes of requests. Collectively, these issues highlight the need for a more modern and integrated information system.

2. Evaluation of Existing Systems

★ 2.1 Current Information Systems in Use

FuneralCare Services Ltd. currently relies on a combination of manual and basic digital tools to manage its operations. Inventory is primarily tracked using spreadsheets maintained independently at each branch. These spreadsheets record stock levels of coffins, urns, floral items, and other essential materials. However, the lack of a centralized database means each branch operates with limited awareness of stock availability elsewhere within the organization.

Logistics processes are also fragmented. Vehicle scheduling, staff allocation, and chapel availability are managed through calendars, email exchanges, and paper-based notes. Each department operates its own scheduling method, which prevents unified oversight. Communication channels are informal and inconsistent, often requiring staff to manually verify information with colleagues across different branches.

Financial and administrative documents, including service agreements and invoices, are stored both digitally and in physical files. This creates duplication, inconsistencies, and delays in retrieving relevant documents. Overall, the current systems lack integration, automation, and real-time information-sharing capabilities, making operational coordination difficult and prone to human error.

★ 2.2 Identified Inefficiencies and System Gaps

Several inefficiencies arise from the organization's reliance on outdated systems. First, the decentralized inventory approach leads to inaccurate stock levels, delayed restocking, and inconsistent availability of essential items. Branches frequently encounter shortages or overstocking due to the absence of real-time inventory visibility. This undermines service readiness, particularly during periods of high demand.

Second, logistical coordination is hindered by the absence of an integrated scheduling system. Vehicle allocation, staff assignment and chapel bookings are not synchronized, leading to double bookings, unused capacity or last-minute adjustments. These issues create operational bottlenecks and reduce the reliability of service delivery.

Third, the reliance on manual documentation increases administrative workload and introduces significant risk of lost or inconsistent records. Staff spend considerable time maintaining files, updating spreadsheets, and verifying information manually, which reduces productivity and increases operational costs.

Finally, managers have limited access to actionable data. Without consolidated information, the organisation cannot accurately analyse service demand, utilization of resources or cost

patterns. Decision-making is reactive, making it difficult to plan effectively or identify areas for improvement.

Collectively, these system gaps highlight the need for an integrated information system that provides unified visibility, streamlined coordination and data-driven operational control.

3. Recommended Solution

★ 3.1 Proposed Information System

The recommended solution for FuneralCare Services Ltd. is the implementation of an integrated Funeral Management Information System (FMIS). This system would centralise all operational processes, including inventory control, logistics scheduling, documentation management and resource allocation. The FMIS would operate through a cloud-based platform to ensure accessibility across all branches and provide real-time updates.

Key system features include automated inventory tracking, allowing staff to record and monitor stock levels of coffins, urns, floral arrangements and other essential supplies. The system would also include a unified scheduling module to coordinate vehicle availability, staff assignments and chapel bookings within a single interface. Integration with document management tools would facilitate secure storage of service agreements, invoices and legal documents, ensure compliance and reduce administrative burden.

The FMIS would incorporate reporting and analytics functions to support managerial decision-making. Dashboards would provide insights into service demand, operational capacity, stock utilisation and cost patterns, enabling more effective planning and resource distribution across branches.

★ 3.2 Rationale for the Recommendation

The proposed FMIS directly addresses the operational limitations identified in the current system. A centralised inventory module eliminates discrepancies caused by disconnected spreadsheets by ensuring that all branches share a unified, real-time database. This supports more accurate forecasting and prevents both shortages and overstocking of essential items.

The integrated scheduling component resolves challenges associated with fragmented logistics processes. By consolidating vehicle, staff and facility scheduling, the FMIS reduces the likelihood of double bookings and improves overall resource coordination. Automated notifications and real-time updates ensure that all departments remain aligned throughout the service delivery process.

Furthermore, digitised documentation enhances information security and accessibility. Centralised storage reduces the risk of misplaced files and accelerates the retrieval of critical documents, improving administrative efficiency. Compliance with data protection protocols is strengthened through controlled access, encryption and audit trails.

Finally, analytics capabilities provide managers with detailed operational insights, enabling proactive decision-making. The ability to identify trends, inefficiencies and cost drivers supports

long-term planning and organisational growth. The FMIS thus offers a scalable and efficient solution that aligns with the organisation's operational needs and future expansion plans.

★ 3.3 Expected Improvements in Operations and Decision-Making

The implementation of the FMIS is expected to deliver significant operational enhancements. Real-time inventory visibility across branches will ensure consistent availability of essential items, streamline restocking processes and reduce financial losses associated with over-ordering. Unified scheduling will enable precise coordination of logistics, improve punctuality and reduce service disruptions.

Administrative efficiency will also improve as manual processes are replaced by automated workflows. Staff will spend less time maintaining spreadsheets, verifying information or managing paper records, allowing them to focus on customer-facing responsibilities and operational support.

The FMIS will also enhance strategic decision-making through comprehensive data analytics. Managers will gain access to real-time performance indicators, enabling more accurate forecasting, resource planning and financial oversight. This shift from reactive to data-driven management strengthens organisational resilience and service quality.

4. Implementation Plan

★ 4.1 Implementation Steps

The implementation of the Funeral Management Information System (FMIS) should follow a structured, phased approach to minimise disruption across branches. The first step is a system readiness assessment, during which existing workflows, inventory procedures and scheduling practices are reviewed. This ensures that the FMIS configuration aligns with organisational requirements.

The second step involves system configuration and customisation. The FMIS must be adapted to the organisation's service categories, inventory types, logistics processes and documentation workflows. Integration with financial software and existing digital tools should occur at this stage to allow seamless data exchange.

The third step is data migration, including the transfer of existing inventory records, scheduling templates and administrative documents into the FMIS. This requires thorough data cleaning to ensure accuracy and maintain compliance with information management standards.

The fourth step is pilot testing, where a small group of staff from selected branches use the system in a controlled environment. This phase is essential for identifying technical issues, interface problems or workflow inconsistencies.

The final step is the full rollout across all branches. During the initial deployment period, continuous monitoring should be conducted to address early-stage issues and ensure stable system performance.

★ 4.2 Training and Integration Requirements

Successful adoption of the FMIS requires comprehensive training for all operational and administrative staff. Training should include system navigation, inventory updates, scheduling procedures, document management and reporting functions. Both in-person sessions and digital training materials should be provided to support consistent use across branches.

Integration requirements focus on ensuring compatibility between the FMIS and existing software used by FuneralCare Services Ltd., such as financial management tools, email platforms and secure document storage systems. Role-based access controls must be implemented to ensure that sensitive information is accessible only to authorised personnel. Security protocols, including password policies and audit trails, must be established to maintain compliance with data protection regulations.

Regular communication between technical teams, branch managers and organisational leadership is required throughout the integration process. This ensures alignment across departments and supports a smooth transition to the new system.

★ 4.3 Potential Implementation Challenges

Several challenges may arise during FMIS implementation. Resistance to change is a potential issue, particularly among staff accustomed to traditional manual processes. Limited digital literacy in some roles may further delay adoption. These challenges can be mitigated through targeted training, ongoing support and clear communication about the operational benefits of the new system.

Technical issues may also occur during data migration or integration with existing platforms. Inaccurate or incomplete data may temporarily disrupt inventory tracking or scheduling. Extensive testing and validation are necessary to reduce these risks.

System downtime during rollout may temporarily affect service coordination. Contingency plans, such as temporary manual scheduling, should be established to ensure operational continuity.

Funeral Management Information System (FMIS)

Synchronous-Same time Examples: on-site coordination meetings, logistics planning for funeral services, daily staff briefings. Description: Teams collaborate in person to assign vehicles, schedule ceremonies and confirm service requirements with immediate feedback.	Asynchronous-Different Time Examples: service logs, physical checklists, documentation left for incoming staff. Description: Information about ongoing arrangements, stock levels or pending tasks is recorded in the same workspace but reviewed by different shifts.
Examples: phone coordination with drivers, real-time updates between branches, live communication with external partners (e.g., florists). Description: Staff in different locations collaborate instantly to manage time-sensitive tasks such as vehicle allocation or last-minute service changes.	Examples: FMIS updates, digital document management, email-based coordination. Description: Staff record inventory data, upload legal documents and schedule services online, enabling others to access updates later from any branch.

★ Conclusion

The evaluation of existing operations within FuneralCare Services Ltd. demonstrates that the organisation's reliance on fragmented, manual and largely unintegrated systems significantly restrict its ability to coordinate services effectively. Inaccurate inventory records, inconsistent scheduling processes and the absence of real-time visibility across branches contribute to operational delays, increased administrative workload and reduced service reliability. These issues become more pronounced as demand fluctuates and expectations for timely, accurate funeral services increase.

The proposed Funeral Management Information System (FMIS) offers a comprehensive and scalable solution that directly addresses these operational challenges. By centralising inventory control, logistics scheduling and documentation management, the system improves accuracy, enhances coordination and reduces the risks associated with manual processes. The introduction of automated workflows and real-time data sharing enables more efficient use of resources, supports proactive decision-making and strengthens the organisation's capacity to deliver consistent and professional services.

A structured implementation approach, supported by staff training and robust integration processes, increases the likelihood of successful adoption. Although challenges such as resistance to change and technical disruptions may arise, these can be mitigated through effective planning and ongoing support. Overall, the FMIS provides FuneralCare Services Ltd. with a stronger operational foundation and supports long-term organisational development.

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