

## E1A1: The roles of the finance function in organisations

### Change: the new norm

- The age of technological advancements and innovation are transforming the way we work and live. This 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution (The Economic Forum) is having a huge impact on the finance function and on the skillset of the management accountant
- **Rapid and unpredictable evolution causing huge disruption:** seismic shifts in level of competition, customer expectations and the global political outlook, combined with rapid technological change has led to a new norm of change:
  - Change presents both risks and opportunities: firms must plan for new ways of doing business
  - Change impacts the organisation and has meant the role of the finance function has evolved

### INTRODUCTION TO THE FINANCE FUNCTION

#### Different types of organisation

- **Profit-seeking organisations:** regard their main objective as maximising the wealth of owners/ shareholders, i.e.:
  - Sole traders (sole proprietors)
  - Partnerships
  - Limited liability companies: private limited companies (Ltd) or public limited companies (plc)
- **Not-for-profit organisations (NFPOs):** do not regard profitability as their main objective; instead seek to maximise the benefit for the sector of society they are set up to assist (to beneficiaries), i.e.:
  - Public sector organisations; concerned with provision of basic services, thus controlled by government organisations; such as hospitals, schools, police, military, public transport, etc.
  - Private sector organisations:
    - Third sector organisations: aim to make a societal difference; such as charities, community groups, clubs and social enterprises
    - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs): local, national or international voluntary groups aiming to address issues or promote change for public benefit; such as charities

#### The functions of an organisation

- Businesses use three basic resources - material, labour and money - to produce goods and services which generate profit. Resultantly, the main functions of an organisation are:
  - Operations; Sales & marketing; Human resources (HR); IT; and... **Finance**
- The finance function's role in managing financial resources of an organisations and providing information to assist decision making are integral to its effectiveness.

#### The roles of the finance function in organisations

- The finance function **ENABLES** an organisation to create and preserve value through...
  - **Planning:** formulating strategies to assist the organisation in achieving objectives, i.e. budgeting
  - **Forecasting:** such as of future sales or material prices
  - **Resource allocation:** confirming which resource the organisation requires to achieve objectives
- The finance function **SHAPES HOW** an organisation creates and preserves value through...
  - **Performance management:** in order to achieve the organisation's plans and budgets. For example helping to prepare information for internal management such as quantitative or qualitative performance measures to assist in monitoring the organisation's performance
  - **Control:** actual performance compared to planned performance in order to identify variances, which may result in reassessment or amendment of the original plans, strategies or budgets
- The finance functions **NARRATES HOW** an organisation creates and preserves through...
  - **Financial reporting:** preparing comprehensive reports intended to give information regarding the organisation's activities and performance to shareholders or other interested parties

### THE ROLES OF ETHICS IN ROLE OF THE FINANCE FUNCTION

#### The ethical responsibilities of the organisation and individuals

- Ethics are a fundamental underpinning factor in an organisation's sustained value creation; the professional accountant has a special role in performing ethical behaviour throughout the firm
- **Ethics:** system of moral principles that govern a person's behaviour; concept of right and wrong
- **Business ethics:** application of ethical values in a business setting
- **Ethical dilemma:** where a decision-maker has unclear choices about what is 'right' and 'wrong'
  - Accounting issues: creatives accounting, director's pay arrangement, bribes, insider trading
  - Production issues: production of certain products, environmental damage, animal testing
  - Sales & marketing issues: price fixing and anti-competitive behaviour, junk mail or spam email
  - Personnel (HRM) issues: employee favouritism or discrimination, unsafe or unhealthy workplace

# Cima E1 Study Notes 2013

**María L. Couce, Emiliano González  
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