TC 2 (individual) -- Memo about synthesizer toys

Worth: 20 points
Assigned: 13 September 2010
Due: 27 September 2010

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Gizmoflash Products
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To:	All newly assigned Synthesizer Division engineers
From:	Alan Turing, Vice President for Musical Synthesizer Development
Subject:	Music synthesizer project research report
Date:	13 September 2010

Background
Congratulations! You have been assigned to the Synthesizer Division and will be working with our teams that are developing musical and electronic toys to tie in with forthcoming animated movies from Pixilated Studios. Gizmoflash Products is proposing that Pixilated Studios incorporate synthesizers into their new movies, because we believe our company will be able to develop an inexpensive microprocessor with an appropriate functionality. If Pixilated Studios movies feature synthesizer-based devices, this will create a large consumer demand for movie-related toys, and this in turn will generate additional sales and profits for our company.

The project
We are aware that there are many electronic toys with various capabilities already on the market, but we need more information about just what is out there, who is the target audience, and what features are being offered. This research will help us target our new product to the best possible market segments. We also need input into what other features not yet commercially available we might offer Pixilated Studios.

Your task
Your assignment is twofold: first, we want you to visit a toy store and find out what kind of electronic and musical synthesizer products are being sold, either as stand-alone products or incorporated into other toys. We also want to know their capabilities and other relevant features: price points, packaging (i.e., do they look like pianos or computers or action hero figures or toy frogs or...?), and age-appropriateness. You should make note if any of these toys are already linked to movie, cartoon, or television stories.

The second part of your assignment, after you have completed your research, is to come up with suggestions for how Gizmoflash Products might differentiate our product or products from those already being sold. Are there other features you can imagine adding that will enhance the toy's appeal? Do you have any suggestions about product size, appearance, cost, and features?

This is an excellent opportunity for you to have a real impact on popular culture. As you know, movies today are written by committees whose main concern is how many toys the movies will sell. DVD sales make up part of their profit picture, but the real money is in product tie-in. Therefore, if we can come up with some innovative ideas, Pixilated Studios will create or rewrite movies to highlight our product, and you will see your invention on the shelves of every toy store in the world!

Describe your findings and suggestions in a memo to me. This memo will be read by me and by our marketing team, so feel free to be as imaginative as possible. Once we settle on a final design we'll have to limit features, but at this stage of the design process anything goes.

How to submit your work
As before, submit your PDF file for this assignment to your drop box on CTools by 11:45 pm on 27 September 2010. Late assignments are accepted with a 10% per day penalty.

Grading scheme
There are 20 points possible for this assignment, and they are given for content and development. The numbers below indicate the percentage breakdown of the score.

Reporting on toys and synthesizers: 25 percent

Background: where you went, what you did. Clear description of what you found

13   16   19   22   25

Ideas for new product: 20 percent

Ideas for new products clearly described

11   14   17   20

Total organization: 25 percent

Developed foreword and summary. Clear separation of topics into sections

13   16   19   22   25

Total expression (format and mechanics): 30 percent

Memo format: single-spaced, block paragraphs, bold section headings, page numbers. Memo header in correct format. Legibly printed in readable typeface

18   21   24   27   30

Total out of 100%: _____