

The history of business environment business essay

[Business](#)



There are over 2.16 million business organizations in the UK. The majority are quite small. 89 per cent employ fewer than 10 people and 98 per cent have fewer than 50 employees. Only 0.4 per cent employs more than 250 people. To be doing well, businesses must recognize what they want to attain in the future and then decide how to accomplish this. It is known as setting aims and objectives. To achieve their aims and objectives, businesses require to be well organized. This is relatively simple with three or four staff. It is far harder with 300 or 400. For this reason, large organizations are alienated into functional areas, such as sales and finance. Employees can specialize in exact areas whereas, in a small business, employees are likely to do greater variety of tasks. Aims and objectives differ between organizations in different sectors. These businesses have unusual purposes: Private sector businesses provide commodities and/or services, and must make profit to survive. They can only break-even or make a defeat for a very short time, or they will have to close. Public sector businesses are owned by the state. Several provide essential services free of cost or below cost price, such as the NHS. Remember that the government also owns businesses that aim to be cost-effective, like the Royal Mail. Voluntary sector organizations elevate money that is used to support particular cause. They endeavor to make a surplus, after the costs of the business have been deducted, and reinvest this into business.

Examples of value statements and mission from public and private sector organizations

Organizational values survive in nearly every workplace, whether formal and written in the form of a published mission statement or business plan, or

concealed yet practiced. These values determine the culture of an organization. The structure of the organization often determines how those values are embedded. Some examples are shown:

Organisation Type & Purpose

Mission

Values/Ideals

Tate and Lyle (Food Processing) To become the world's most important manufacturer of renewable food and industrial ingredients. Grow business by providing a portfolio of distinctive value-added products and services for customers built on the foundation of responsible business practices. Applying four core values – safety, knowledge, innovation and integrity – to the way we run our business. Continuous progress in: achieving the highest standards of safety; assessing the environmental impact of every aspect.

Treating employees, business partners and local communities with dignity and respect. Royal Liverpool Hospital NHS Trust (NHS Acute Hospital Trust) To provide excellent, safe and accessible health care, supported by teaching and research, which improves the quality of life for patients and to be the hospital of choice for the people of Merseyside, Cheshire and further afield To ensure patients are at the centre of everything we do To maintain the highest standards of behaviour To implement new approaches to improving the quality of health care To develop our staff and promote equality of opportunity and diversity To work together, involving others in the design and delivery of services To act decisively to achieve important goals: doing the right thing for the right reasons To take pride in delivering quality and value

for money services KPMG LLP (One of the world's top 4 professional services
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providers)To turn knowledge into value for the benefit of our clients, our people and our capital markets. We guide by exampleWe work as a oneWe admiration the individualWe look for the facts and provide insightWe are open and frank in our communicationWe are dedicated to communities

Edge Hill University

(One of the newer UK universities with a reputation for widening participation)EHU provide innovative, high excellence and inclusive learning experience underpinned by a dedication to the advancement, dissemination and application of knowledge. As a ' learning led' university, Edge Hill is devoted to developing students as skilled autonomous learners in supportive challenging and environments. Respect and value diversityBe distinctive, influential, entrepreneurial and socially responsibleExpect and celebrate excellenceBe professional, challenging and supportiveAct with integrityDemonstrate courtesy in its dealingTesco Plc (Leading UK supermarket chain and the largest private sector employer in the UK)To create value for our customers to earn their lifetime loyalty. Understand customersBe first to meet their needsAct responsibly for our communities Work as a teamTrust and respect each otherListen and support customerShare knowledge and experience

What do you consider to be stake holders' main objectives? How well Tate and Lyle meet the objectives of at least three stakeholders (its customers, employees, suppliers etc). In order to do this properly you will need to find evidence to support your opinions. (1. 2)

Stake holders main Objectives

An organization's stakeholders are the individuals or groups that authority or have an interest in the firm's actions and decision. The main stakeholders in a company include shareholders, government, employees, creditors/bondholders and customers. They have different objectives and goals based on their miscellaneous interests in the firm. Objectives are what stakeholders look for, to achieve. Each stakeholder looks to protect his own interests by ensuring his objectives have been met. Some of the stake holder and objectives are given in the table:

Stakeholders

Who are they

Objectives

Owners They invest assets in the business and get profits from the business
Profits, growth of the business
Workers Employees of the business who give in their time and attempt to make a business successful
Job security, job satisfaction and a satisfactory level of payment for their efforts
Managers Employees of business who manage business. They lead and deal with the workers to achieve organizational goals
High salaries, Job security, and development of the business
Consumers These are the people who acquire the goods and services of the business. Safe and reliable

products, value for money, proper after sales

serviceGovernmentGovernment manage the economy. The government charges tax from the business and also monitors the working of businesses in the countrySuccessful businesses, employments to be created, additional taxes, follow laws. The communityCommunity is all the people who are straight or indirectly affected by the actions of the business.

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They expect more jobs, environmental protection, socially responsible goods and actions of the business

Tate & Lyle and its Stakeholders

Tate & Lyle is a public limited company with stakeholders all over world. As explained above the stakeholders of Tate & Lyle cover a broad range of persons and organizations. Tate and Lyle mortal a company of mammoth proportions deal with its stakeholders in a professional manner.

Customers

Customers of Tate and Lyle desire to be certain that products that are being sold to them are of good quality and do not turn out to be useless after a certain period of time. They also want good products at high-quality prices. Hence Tate and Lyle is ensuring that they stay relevant and competitive. If a business is selling its commodities at a price that is advanced than that of their competitor, it is very likely that customers will look somewhere else thereby bringing down the sales of that business. Tate and Lyle are cognizant of these aspects and is determined hard for ensuring that customers remain satisfied.

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Employees

Tate and Lyle consider employees as their strategic asset. Tate and Lyle ensure job security, job satisfaction and a satisfactory level of payment for employees' efforts. Towards this end Tate and Lyle have put in place an elaborate system of employees division which remains proactively involved in the employee's affairs.

Supplier

Tate and Lyle have a reliable, group-wide approach to these relationships, based on their code of conduct, which covers purchasing strategies at global, regional and local levels. Supply-chain ethics are very important to Tate and Lyle. The organization is dedicated to sharing best practice and improving standards surrounded by suppliers. Growers and producers of corn are the biggest suppliers of Tate and Lyle. The Organization has developed long standing and mutually beneficial relationship with them over many years. Tate and Lyle apply rigorous standards to their raw material suppliers and survey many of them on their ethical commitment. The Organization works closely with them to ensure compliance with international standards. It also ensure implementing traceability and ensuring customers' requirements are fully met.

What responsibilities does an organization have towards its stakeholders? Explain the responsibilities of the Tate and Lyle and the strategies it employs to try and meet these obligations. Consider the various stakeholder groups and their position on the power-influence matrix as well as relevant legislation and ethical and environmental issues.

Tate and Lyle sets out standards, expectations, and commitments with respect to key areas of corporate responsibility. Tate & Lyle is committed to upholding high standards of responsible and ethical behaviour in its own operations and to support a similar commitment amongst its business partners. Corporate responsibility of Tate & Lyle towards stakeholders means applying our four core values – safety, knowledge, innovation and integrity – to the way business is run. This involves continuous progress in: achieving the highest standards of safety; assessing the environmental impact of every aspect of what we do; and treating our employees, business partners and local communities with dignity and respect.

Scope of Responsibility

Scope of responsibility applies unconditionally to all operations and subsidiary companies wholly owned by Tate & Lyle. Tate & Lyle will also seek to apply the Code's principles in those operations where they have a 50% stake or more. For those business operations where they have a minority interest, suppliers and contractors (together our "business partners"), will be communicated Tate & Lyle's responsibility. Tate & Lyle recognize that because these operations encompass many different legal, political, cultural, economic, and social environments, the speed and extent of implementation of the responsibility's principles will necessarily vary. Tate & Lyle policy is to

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work collaboratively with business partners. to assist them in implementing the Code's principles, including such areas as training and development, raising awareness, and sharing best practice.

Legal Compliance / Responsibility

Tate & Lyle will comply with all applicable local, national, and supra-national laws and regulations in every country in which it operates. In countries, or specific situations, where there is no law or regulation governing a particular activity or operation, Tate & Lyle will seek to conduct operations consistent with the principles of this Code.

Responsibility towards Employee

Tate & Lyle is committed to providing a workplace built on trust, honesty, fair treatment, and respect for basic human values. A successful and sustainable business requires a workforce that is given the opportunities and incentives to develop professionally and to live full lives outside of the workplace.

Task 2

2. 1 What kind of economic system exists in the UK? Do you the government allocates and makes efficient use of resources? (2. 1)

Like most western countries, UK has a mixed system. It has state ownership of some companies (British Broadcasting Corporation for example), and has government regulation and a social welfare net (public health care for example) but it has a robust open market with many globally competitive businesses.

Mixed Economy System:

This system is a combination of all other system. The system where both capitalism and socialism economic system are built-in it is known as mixed economic system. In this globalizing world the majority of the countries are obtaining this economic system. Mixed economic system splits the obtainable economic resources available in the country to private sectors and government. Private sectors are optimistic to get involved and participate in utilizing the resources which helps to gain economic profit for complete nation. Countries like USA, UK, Russia and China to countries like Cambodia, Peru and Vietnam has adopted this economic system. When one fails to meets the public aspiration other can get it and helps to sustain the economic stability not only in the particular country but also the whole nation.

Government Involvement

Government involvement all the way through the economy is exercised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer who heads HM Treasury. In recent years, the UK economy has been managed in agreement with principles of marketplace liberalization and low taxation and regulation. Since 1997, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, headed by the Governor of Bank of England, has been accountable for setting interest rates at the level necessary to attain the overall price rises target for the economy that is set by the Chancellor each year.[133] The Scottish Government, subject to the agreement of the Scottish Parliament, has the power to vary the basic rate of income tax payable in Scotland by plus or minus 3 pence in the pound, though this authority has not yet been exercised.

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2. 2 Explain both fiscal (issues such as public finances , taxation, government borrowing etc) and monetary policy (issues such as inflation, money supply and interest rates).

Fiscal Issues

Taxation in the UK may involve payments to a minimum of two dissimilar levels of government: the central government (HM Revenue and Customs) and local government. Central government revenues come primarily from income tax, National Insurance contributions, value added tax, corporation tax and fuel duty. Local government revenues come primarily from grants from central government funds, business rates in England and Wales, Council Tax and increasingly from fees and charges such as those from on-street parking. Public finance is the study of the role of the government in the economy. The purview of public finance is considered to be threefold: governmental effects on (a) efficient allocation of resources, (b) distribution of income, and (c) macroeconomic stabilization.

Government borrowing - Governments, like any other legal entity, can take out loans, issue bonds and make financial investments. Government debt (also known as public debt or national debt) is money (or credit) owed by any level of government; either central or federal government, municipal government or local government. Some local governments issue bonds based on their taxing authority, such as tax increment bonds or revenue.

Monetary Policy

Monetary policy is the process by which the monetary authority of a country controls the supply of money, often targeting a rate of interest for the

purpose of promoting economic growth and stability. The official goals usually include relatively stable prices and low unemployment. Monetary theory provides insight into how to craft optimal monetary policy. Monetary policy differs from fiscal policy, which refers to taxation, government spending, and associated borrowing.

Inflation -: Under this policy approach the target to keep inflation, under a particular definition such as Consumer Price Index, within a desired range. The inflation target is achieved through periodic adjustments to the Central Bank interest rate target. The interest rate used is generally the interbank rate at which banks give to each other overnight for cash flow purposes. Depending on the country this particular interest rate might be called the cash rate or similar.

Interest rates -: The contraction of the monetary supply can be achieved indirectly by increasing the nominal interest rates. Monetary authorities in different nations have different levels of control of economy-wide interest rates. In the United States, the Federal Reserve can set the discount rate, as well as achieve desired Federal funds rate by open market operations. This rate has important effect on other market interest rates, but there is no perfect relationship.

Money supply -: In economics, the money supply or money stock is the total number of monetary assets available in an economy at specific time. There are lots of ways to define " money," but standard measures usually include currency in circulation and demand deposits (depositors' easily accessed assets on the books of financial institutions).

2. 3 Evaluate the impact that competition policy and other regulatory mechanisms could have / have had on Tate and Lyle. (2. 3)

Regulatory mechanisms and competition policy are two inter-related and important areas of regulatory policy and public administration. Both can play a vital role in improving the quality of regulations, thus creating healthy, <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-business-environment-business-essay/>

competitive markets and an attractive investment climate, which in turn leads to better economic growth, employment and incomes. Governments in both developed and developing countries are increasingly adopting open policies and strategies to improve regulatory quality. The aim of competition policy is to promote competition; make markets work better and contribute towards better efficiency in individual markets and improved competitiveness of UK businesses within the European Union single market. Price Fixing and LawUK competition law now prohibits almost any challenge to fix prices - for example, you cannot agree prices with competitors or agree to share markets or limit production to lift up prices. Impose minimum prices on dissimilar distributors such as shops. Agree with your competitors what price you will offer your suppliers. Cut prices below cost in order to force a weaker competitor out of market. Under the Competition Act 1998 and Article 81 of the EU Treaty, cartels are prohibited. Legal Collusion – Horizontal Cooperation between Businesses Not all instances of collusive behaviour are deemed to be illegitimate by the European Union Competition Authorities. Practices are not forbidden if the respective agreements "contribute to improving the production or distribution of goods or to promoting technical progress in a market." Development of improved industry standards of production and safety which benefit the consumer – a high-quality recent example is joint industry standards in Europe for mobile phone chargers Information sharing designed to give superior information to consumers Research joint-ventures and know-how agreements which seek to promote innovative and inventive behaviour in a market. The EU has introduced a "R&D Block Exemption Regulation" for

thisMarket LiberalizationThe main principle of EU Competition Policy is that consumer welfare is best served by introducing competition in markets where monopoly power exists. Frequently, these monopolies have been in network industries for example transport, energy and telecommunications. In these sectors, a distinction must be made between the infrastructure and the services provided directly to consumers using this infrastructure.

Task 3

3. 1 Look at the various types of markets such as perfect competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition, oligopoly and duopoly and explain how these types of markets would influence the pricing and output decisions of UK sugar market. (3. 1)

Form of Markets/Market Structures

The firm or industry faces competition in the market in many forms.

Microeconomics analysis is most important driving factor when we study competition and market structures of firm or industry. Based on several factors in economics, markets are categorized in different forms. These factors are: The number of producers and consumers present in the market.

Goods and services being offered. The quantum of freely available

information. The major market forms are: Perfect Competition Monopolistic Competition Oligopoly Duopoly Monopoly The table below shows a summary of market structures , comparing them along with their characteristics:

Characteristic Perfect Competition Monopolistic

Competition Oligopoly Monopoly Number of firms Very Many Many Few One Type

of Product Homogeneous Differentiated Homogeneous / Differentiated Only

product of its kind(no close substitute)Ease of entryVery easyRelatively
 easyNot EasyImpossiblePrice Setting powerNil(Price
 taker)SomewhatLimitedAbsolute(Price Maker)Non Price
 CompetitionNoneConsiderableConsiderable for a differentiated
 oligopolySomewhatProductive efficiencyHighly efficientLess EfficientLess
 EfficientInefficient

Perfect Competition

Perfect competition market form is a highly competitive market in which an optimal allocation of resources is achieved. Even if the strict assumptions of the theory are rarely, if ever, held in reality, the model still provides a benchmark by which other more realistic market structures can be judged.

Conditions assumed by perfect competition

The following conditions for perfect competitionLarge number of firms. Each firm produces exactly the same product. Customers have perfect information. Customers act rationally. Free entry and exit of firms. There are a large number of consumers. Factor markets, i. e. markets for land, labour and capital, are subject to perfect competition.

3. 2 Using a range of examples both within and outside the context of a UK sugar market show how market forces influence and dictate the responses of organizations. Incorporate examples that illustrate the issues of supply and demand, elasticities, customer perceptions, pricing decisions, labour markets and the business environment etc (3. 2)

Influence of Market Forces

Market forces describe the interaction between supply and demand within a market. Organizational response is the reaction given by a company or business to an economical or business circumstance. An organization's response to market forces is key in any circumstance as it will have a direct impact on the company's profits and reputation. In terms of supply and demand the most successful companies will have appropriate market research and analysis in place to ensure that they are able to supply a product or service to meet the demands of its customers. If a company has judged the market demand for their product correctly then they will keep their customers happy by ensuring they supply the product or service requested by their customers in the appropriate quantities. It will also increase profits as the company will have judged their margins correctly to be able to supply and sell as much of their product as possible, without over stocking, bringing added finances to the business.

Examples from UK Sugar Market

ABF's biggest competitor on the UK market is Tate & Lyle, the main 'traditional' refiner of ACP raw cane sugar, via its UK and Portuguese refineries. In response to EU sugar sector reforms, Tate & Lyle has sought to reposition itself on the UK and mainland European markets. In the UK, this

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has involved 2 of 9 converting all its direct-consumption sugars to fair-trade sugar, with this based on long-term supply contracts with major ACP suppliers such as Belize and Fiji, as well as the development of imports from non-ACP least developed country suppliers such as Vietnam and Laos. In terms of mainland Europe, Tate & Lyle has also sought to establish partnerships with sugar companies in EU member states where sugar production has been reduced. This saw the establishment of a joint venture between Tate and Lyle (a 35% holding) and the Italian company Eridania Sadam (a 65% holding), which was the market leader in Italy prior to giving up 50% of its production quota as part of the EU sugar reform process. The joint-venture company, Eridania Tate & Lyle, will distribute sugar to the Italian market. As part of its repositioning, however, Tate & Lyle has given up beet production quotas in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which it held through Eastern Sugar, a joint venture established with Suedzucker. Under the impact of high world market sugar prices, Tate & Lyle has found it difficult in recent years to secure sufficient raw sugar to keep its refineries operating at full capacity. Industry sources report approximately 30% underutilisation of refining capacity in Tate & Lyle's UK and Portuguese refineries during 2009. This was in part a result of production difficulties in traditional supply countries such as Fiji, where production in 2009 fell to only 163, 000 tonnes, but was also in part a result of the tight global sugar market situation, which made it difficult for Tate & Lyle to secure ACP raw sugar at the price it was willing to pay.

3. 3 Referring to your knowledge and Tate and Lyle business, identify how much the business and cultural environment have influenced and shaped the behaviour of Tate and Lyle (3. 3)

Influence of business and cultural environment on Tate and Lyle behaviour

Tate and Lyle overall success as a global business depends, in part, upon its ability to succeed in different economic, social and political environments and to manage and to mitigate these risks. Failure to act safely could have a detrimental impact on Tate & Lyle's operations. Governmental Rules - Around the world, the Group is subject to laws, regulations, rules and ordinances relating to health, safety and the environment, including pollution. The Group recognizes the negative impacts that could arise from a major safety or environmental incident, which include: fines or penalties for breach of safety laws; interruptions in operations or loss of license to operate; liability payments and costs to employees or third parties arising from injury or damage; and damage to reputation. Central to the success of Tate & Lyle's growth strategy is the performance, knowledge and skill-sets of our employees around the world. Non-compliance with legislation can lead to financial and reputational damage. The Group is aware of the importance of complying with all applicable legislation affecting its business activities and of the potential damage to reputation and financial impact that can result from any breach. Fluctuations in prices and availability of raw material, energy, freight and other operating inputs may influence margins. All of Tate finished goods are derived from renewable agricultural raw materials. All of these materials are subject matter to fluctuations in price due to factors such

as harvest and climate conditions, crop disease, crop yields, alternative crops and result values. Energy usage in our production amenities represents one of our main manufacture costs. In some cases, due to the basis for pricing in our sales contracts, or due to competitive markets, we may not be competent to pass on to our customers the full amount of raw material price increases or advanced energy, cargo or other operating costs and this could decrease our profitability. Tate & Lyle relies on the continued safe operation and the sufficiency of geographically isolated manufacturing facilities. The Group's revenues are dependent on the continued operation of our a variety of manufacturing facilities and the consistent production of finished goods that meet our customers' specifications. The operation of our plants involves many risks, including the malfunction or sub-standard performance of equipment, the inappropriate installation or operation of equipment, natural disasters and potential product contamination. Any important manufacturing disruptions or product contamination could adversely affect our ability to make and sell our products, which could cause our sales and operating profits to decline. Competitors may achieve important competitive advantage through technological step change or higher service levels. If our competitors were able to recognize, develop and introduce on a commercial basis a major technological step change, such as significantly improving the efficiency of the production procedure and lowering costs or introducing a new product with better functionality, we may not be able to introduce a comparable change. Similarly, we must ensure we at least match or exceed competitors' service and quality performance. If we cannot compete effectively with such innovation or

service levels, our sales, profitability could decline. Consumer Trends - Failure to classify important consumer trends and/or counter negative perceptions of the Group's products. Tate and Lyle recognize risks associated with falling behind the curve where emerging dietary trends are concerned, as well as not being fully prepared to counter unexpected and unfounded negative publicity in relation to product offering.

4. 1 Focusing on the Tate and Lyle and its suppliers discuss how important international trade is to the health of their businesses. (4. 1)

Importance of International Trade for Tate and Lyle

International Trade - The buying and selling of goods and services across national borders is known as international trade. Tate and Lyle and International Business - Tate & Lyle is the world-leading manufacturer of renewable food and industrial ingredients that are produced from renewable crops, predominantly corn and sugar cane. Its end-products include sugar, starches, sucralose (splenda), molasses, alcohol, citric acid, and high fructose corn syrup. Listed on the London Stock Exchange, total revenue of £3, 553 million was registered in 2009. With offices and plants in more than 24 countries worldwide, it has an estimated workforce of 5, 718 employees.

4. 2 Analyze how a range of global factors have impacted on Tate and Lyle and their suppliers. Consider market opportunities, global growth and emerging markets. Also look at factors concerning labour, skills, exchange rates and other financial factors , trading blocs and the wide international business environment. (4. 2)

Global Factors Influencing Business Strategy of Tate and Lyle

Factors

Influence on Tate and Lyle

Fluctuations in prices and availability of raw materials, energy, freight and other operating inputs

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Strategic relationships with suppliers
Multiple-source supply agreements for key ingredient supplies
Balanced portfolio of supply and tolling contracts in operation with customers to manage balance of raw material prices and product sales prices and volume risks
Raw material and energy purchasing policies to provide security of supply
Derivatives used where possible to hedge exposure to movements in future prices of commodities
Failure to protect intellectual property

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The Group legal department, supported by expert patent lawyers, monitors all patents Organized and secure process for identifying and recording innovations, trade secrets and potential patentable ideas Competitors may achieve significant advantage through technological step change or higher service levels

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250-strong global Innovation and Commercial Development team to produce innovations in product development, applications, manufacturing technology and customer services Failure to maintain high standards of customer service and identify important consumer trends

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Advance and Commercial Development team works closely with customers and advisors to discover emerging trends Annual consumer-facing research to make sure we are aware of consumers' needs and prospect Global key account managers in place for main customers Management of capital expenditure and working capital during the current period of uncertainty and global economic downturn

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Capital expenditure measures to control and monitor allocation and spend important projects approved and monitored by the Board Debt and working capital levels monitored regularly and reported monthly to the Board Exchange rate fluctuations

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Borrowings in different foreign currencies, principally US dollars, to provide partial match for the Group's major foreign currency assets Banking covenants for US\$1 billion revolving credit facility to eliminate the distortion of foreign exchange volatility Group internal finance manual sets out procedures on exchange rate risk management policies

4. 3 Focusing on the European Union, you now need to evaluate the policies of the EU on UK businesses and their suppliers. Consider their business regulations and how they are incorporated into UK law. (4. 3)

EU and its policies impact on UK business and their suppliers

The Single EU Market has been the source of sizable benefits for the EU economy as a whole. Over the period 1992-2006, of the part of the gains of the Single Market that can be measured, it has been estimated that EU Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) in 2006 was 2.2% higher than it would have been without the Single Market - an average increase in benefits to consumers of €518 per person. An additional 2.75 million jobs across Europe have been created. For UK the effects of EU business policies have been substantial both in terms of the size and dimensions: Among the numerous examples of cooperation leading to a reduction of costs for businesses is the setting up of both the Community Trade Mark and the Community Design. These have enabled UK companies to protect their trademarks and designs throughout the EU by making a single application for EU-wide registration. This cuts down bureaucracy - avoiding the need for trade marks or designs to be examined in 25 different jurisdictions each with its own rules. In 2007, UK firms made 9,228 such trade mark applications. Registration of designs at the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market was introduced on 1 April 2003 and by the end of the 2007 UK firms had also applied to register around 22,000 designs. As a result of membership, British consumers are guaranteed rights similar to their UK statutory rights when buying products elsewhere in the EU, including products bought from other EU countries over the internet. Greater consumer confidence throughout the EU has, in turn, helped build market confidence. Single Market laws require that degradable products, such as food and medicines are labelled with "best before" dates and that they carry a list of ingredients, colourings and additives.

Anti-competitive practices

There are many examples where the European Commission has worked to eliminate anti-competitive practices, an area where the UK on its own would not have been able to make the same impact. One such example was when

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in February 2008 the European Commission fined Microsoft €899 million for failing to comply with sanctions imposed on it for anti-competitive behaviour. An investigation in 2004 had concluded that Microsoft was guilty of freezing out its rivals in products like media players while at the same time linking its internet browser to its Windows operating system.

Consumers and Employees

Consumers and employees are now enjoying far greater protection thanks to the Single Market. As a result of membership, British consumers and employees are guaranteed rights similar to their UK statutory rights when buying products elsewhere in the EU.