

Car Care

From a very young age Frank Carr had a keen interest in cars and engines. He helped his older brother when he was working on his car and spent most of his pocket money on car magazines and going to car rallies. When he completed his Leaving Certificate in 1999 he decided to take up an apprenticeship as a trainee mechanic with a local garage.

While serving his time Frank worked from home in the evening and on Saturdays doing repairs for friends and other contacts that he had built up over time. Frank was working every available minute and soon realized it would be impossible to keep working in the garage and also make time for the work he was undertaking on his own. After finishing his apprenticeship in 2003 he decided that when a suitable premises became available he would set up his own business and put all his efforts into running this business. His aim was to satisfy the needs of his existing customers as well as attracting new customers. That opportunity came in 2004 when Frank took a lease out on a premises and set up Car Care. He financed the business by using his own personal savings and negotiating a bank loan.

The premises was ideally located with plenty of space so Frank decided to offer a car-wash and valeting service together with the normal repairs and maintenance service. Frank was extremely dedicated to the business and was constantly thinking of finding new ways of increasing his customer base and of making more services available to them. The lease on the original premises expired in 2007 and Frank decided to move to a larger premises which would allow him further scope to expand. He could now offer a panel beating, crash repairs as well as a tyre and exhaust service in addition to what he was already offering. His idea was to create a "one stop shop" to maximize the opportunity while also making it convenient for a customer to have all the required services at one location.

This venture required a huge investment and Frank borrowed heavily in order to finance the necessary equipment, fittings, stock, and machinery. When negotiating loans with the bank the Manager has always been impressed by Frank's drive and ambition to succeed. Initially Car Care employed ten people but since moving to the new location the number of employees has increased to fifty. Frank is a firm believer in the importance of teamwork together with maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction.

In addition Frank values the importance of information and communications technology, and as the business grows he sees it as a prerequisite for success to keep investing in that area. Car Care is now establishing itself as a market leader. It has built up a reputation for good quality services offered by a very capable workforce. Frank's energy, drive and commitment are essential to Car Care's continued success together with his willingness to take risks and finance expansion through borrowing and reinvesting.

1. Identify and explain the benefits that teamwork brings to Car Care. (6)
2. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has an important role in business. Identify four aspects of ICT which Car Care might be using and describe how each would be used. Give an advantage and disadvantage of each. (12)
3. (i) What are the implications of an enlarged Single European Market for Car Care?
(ii) Outline four areas of the business that Frank must continually focus on to ensure continued success. (12)