# Term Project: PC Mail-order System

Your software consulting firm has just won a contract to develop a software system for a start-up PC mail-order company. The project is to automate their order handling and customer support. This PC mail-order company would like to grow its business by emphasizing the following services:

1. A customer can order a PC configured exactly the way he/she wants. He/she can choose peripheral devices and software to be installed on his/her PC from the company's extensive catalog. When the unit is delivered, it is already configured and ready to be used.
2. A customer may also choose from prepackaged configurations.
3. A customer may contact the company to inquire about the status of his/her order.
4. A customer may contact the company to obtain technical support on the PC they purchased.

The strategic emphasis of this PC mail-order company is to cater to a customer's individual needs, so that he/she can avoid the trouble of purchasing peripheral devices and software separately and configuring them him/herself. The company would like the software system to allow its customer representatives to act as though they cared enough to remember a customer's situation.

Given this company has a volume of sale justifying the cost of the development of such a system, various departments of the company must coordinate to fulfill a customer's order and after-sales support. The system must promote this coordination as well. Here are some of the departments involved and their functions:

1. *Customer representatives*: They take the orders from customers, answer inquiries on the existing orders, and may also need to advise customers on which peripherals they need to configure a PC to satisfy their needs.
2. *Manufacturing*: Once an order is taken, the specified PC needs to be assembled. Given a PC is individually customized, manufacturing needs to know what peripherals and software to put on a PC, how to configure them, and what quality assurance steps to perform.
3. *Accounting*: When an order is taken, it needs to be verified that the customer is creditworthy before the order is accepted. Also, because of an accounting principle, the transaction amount needs to be reflected as a company's liability until the order is shipped. At that point, it needs to be moved over to the asset side.
4. *Purchasing*: Naturally, as more PC's are sold, the inventory needs to replenished. The purchasing department needs to be notified when the supply of components falls below a critical level.
5. *Customer support*: Not all customers can solve technical problems they encounter with their new PC's. All the technical questions are referred to technical support for resolution.

Customer interactions occur through a toll-free number. There is a financial incentive to keep the length of customer calls to minium without degrading the quality of the service provided. The software system needs to help in this direction as well.

This project description is (intentionally) under defined. Your instructor and TA will act as the representatives from this PC mail-order company to answer your questions.

Like any software project, there probably will be a change(s?) in requirements somewhere along the way. Dealing with it (them) is a part of this project. You have been warned.