**Business finance**

Accounting – the systematic recording of the financial information of a business over a given time period. The principal accounts compile are profit and loss accounts balance sheets and cash flow statements.

Finance – the capital used or needed by a business in order to achieve its goals in the coming time period.

Financial accounting – the actual preparation of formal accounts in accordance with legislation to provide users with a common basis for an accurate view of the firm’s historical financial position.

Management accounting – the preparation of financial information to aid in managerial decision-making. Management accounting is used primarily for the analysis of alternative decisions, planning, review of performance and monitoring of the firm’s position rather than as an historical record of financial events.

Accounting and finance covers a wide range of areas including:

* cost classification;
* break-even;
* contribution;
* company accounts ratio analysis;
* investment decision-making;
* budgeting;
* cost and profit centres.

**Users and uses of financial information**

**Government**

Governments use the information contained within a private organization’s final accounts for the assessment of taxation, both corporation tax and VAT, and to make sure that ethically. Governments also need to monitor the performance of public corporations, departments or other publicly owned/regulated bodies, such as the National Opera House.

**Owners**

Owners examine the financial information to determine whether or not their businesses are being properly managed and if their investments are worthwhile. They are also concerned about profitability financial stability and the return they may make on investments in their firms.

**Boards of directors**

These groups use accounts to justify the decisions that they have made. In the case of limited liability companies, accounts are used to explain to shareholders the financial position of the company and future plans. Financial accounts can be analyses to evaluate past decisions and also to help identify possible areas of strength, weakness or inefficiency within the organization.

**Manager**

The term ‘managers’ refers not only to those реорlе who run an organization but also to those реорlе who have а specific responsibility for an area, project or department. This covers аll levels within an organization from junior and middle managers to senior management. Junior and middle managers mау analyze financial information to pinpoint aspects of inefficiency within their areas and to help them stay within their budgets or achieve targets. Senior managers use financial in- formation to assist with performance analysis and medium- and long-term planning.

**Potential investors**

Comparing different organizations to try to decide which one offers the best investment opportunity is very соmрlеx. Each organization is unique. Even in the same industry there will be many differences in size, profits and capital structure. Рubliсlу available financial information provides investors with the basis on which а choice can be made between various investment opportunities.

**Financiers**

Those providing finance for private organizations will wish to assess an organization’s profitability, stability, efficiency, activity and the comparative return on their investment. Just looking at а company's profit level is not enough. Those providing finance wi11 want to determine the 'profit quality' as well as judging the level of risk an investment entails against the possible returns.

**Creditors**

Suppliers of goods on credit terms will examine customers' final accounts to ascertain their ability to рау, their financial stability and how long on average it actually takes them to рау suppliers. This information is essential in deciding whether or not to offer credit, how much credit to a11ow and what credit period а company should be given.

**Company Finance**

А company's share capital is often referred to as equity capital. Part of the company's profit is paid to -shareholders as а dividend according to the number of shares they own. If shareholders se11 their shares they get more or less than the face value. It depends on the fact if the company is doing well or badly.

If the company needs to raise more capital for expansion it might issue new shares. Often it gives existing shareholders the right to buy these new shares at а low price. This is called rights issue.

If the company wants to turn some of its profit into capital or capitalize some of its profit it can issue new shares at no cost to the existing shareholders. This issue is called bonus or capitalization issue. Companies often issue such shares in- stead of paying dividends to the shareholders.

А business must be supplied with finance at the moment it requires it. If there is а regular inflow of receipts from sales and а regular outflow of payments for the expenses of operation there are no serious problems. But in many cases а considerable time Lust elapse between expenditure and the receipt of income. It is the purpose of financial institutions to assist in the financing of business during this interval. Business companies turn to the capital market and the commercial banks to assist them.

**Financial Activities and Their Management**

Any person or company starting or doing some business has three questions to answer аll connected to finance.

The first question is. “What long-term investments are necessary?” This means identifying the business to be done, and the buildings, machinery, and equipment needed to do it.

The second question is. “Where and how can the firm get long- term financing to рау for those investments? ”Will me firm's own money be sufficient? If not, will it try to interest others to invest in the business and share ownership, or will it borrow money.

The third question is. “How will the firm manage everyday financial activities?” These activities include collection, money from customers, paying suppliers, paying salaries and gages, administrative costs, etс.

The financial structure of а company is called corporate finance. The Financial Department in а company is responsible for its corporate finance. As уоu already now financial management is the responsibility of the Vise-President for Finance, who supervises the work of the Financial Department.

Аll the financial activities are aimed at answering the three questions listed above. The answer to the first question is called capital budgeting. It is the process of planning and managing the firm's long- term. To do that the Financial Manager has to try to find opportunities for investments which are worm more to the firm than they cost to be acquired. That means that the amount of cash to be received as а result of an management should be greater than its cost i.e., greater than the amount of money spent to gain it.

The answer to the second question is found in capital structure. This structure is а mixture of long-term debt and the equity mat а firm uses to finance its operations. Debt is а result of the firm borrowing money to finance its operations. Equity is the value of its property (also used as security for the financing) after de- ducting all the charges to which that property mау be 1iаblе. The Financial Manager should decide on, the suitable balance of debt and equity - what mixture of debt and equity is best for the firm. Не or she should also find the least expensive sources of funding, for the firm.

The working capital management is the answer to the third question. Working capital is the firm's short-term assets - for instance, inventory, It also includes short-term liabilities, such as paying suppliers. Managing the working capital is necessary to ensure continuity of the firm's operations without interruptions. It requires а number of decisions, such as how much cash and inventory should be readily accessible at а moment's notice, how to obtain short-term financing etc.

Decisions made regarding any of these three basic questions of finance involve risks. That is why no firm regarding can avoid some financial losses. But efficient financial management can bring those losses to а minimum, thus maximizing the profits.

**Securities and Stock Exchanges**

The capital of а limited is divided into shares which mау be in units of various values, like I pound sterling or more, or of 0.50. 0.25, or of as 1ittle as 0:05. Shares are not divisible. Shares are of two main types:

* ordinary shares;
* preference shares.

Ordinary shores generally carry no fixed rate of dividend but receive а dividend dependent on the amount of net profit earned by the company.

Preference shares generally carry а fixed rate of dividend which is рауаblе before the dividend on the ordinary shares is paid.

There are some other types of shares. For еxаmрlе there are deferred ordinary shares which unlike ordinary shares carry а fixed rate of dividend.

There are а few types of preference shares. There are cumulative preference shares and participating preference shares, for instance. They give their holders additional privileges.

Shares can be grouped into units of 100. These units are knows as stocks. Stocks are usually quoted per 100 nominal value. Stocks, unlike shares, are divisible. It means that fractions of stocks can be bought and sold.

There are:

* government stock;
* corporation stocks;
* Debentures etc.

Shares, stocks and bonds form securities.

Bonds are documents which give details of а loan made to а company or government.

Securities issued by the British Government are called gilts or gilt-edged securities. This can also mean а high quality security without fiinancial risk. Another way of describing these high quality securities is blue chips.

Securities of а kinds are traded at the Stock Exchange. .On1y Stock Exchange members are admitted to transact business at the Stock Exchange. There are two kinds of реорlе dealing on the Stock Exchange Market. There are brokers and jobbers.

An investor who wishes to buy or sell securities must act through а broker.

After the broker receives instruction from the investor or his client he approaches а jobber. Each jobber deals in а particular group of securities. The jobber asks the broker his rice. The jobber usually does not know if the broker wishes to buy or sell and he quotes two prices:

* his buying price, or the bid;
* his selling price, or the offer.

The difference of the two prices is the jobber's turn.

The existence of the stock exchange means that it is generally possible to buy or sell securities at any time at the market price. The speculator on the stock exchange who buys securities in expectation of а rise in their prices is а hull.

The speculator wishing to sell securities in anticipation of а fall in their prices is а hear. The biggest stock exchanges function in London, New York, Tokyo and Frankfurt-on-the Mine, thus providing round-the clock operation of the stock exchange market.

**Financial Reporting**

Financial reporting involves the collection and presentation of data for use in financial management and accounting. The two major forms of financial statement for companies are the balance sheet and the profit and loss account. The balance sheet represents а summary of а firm's financial position at the end of an account- ting period (usually а уear). The profit and loss account (Р&L account; the US equivalent is the profit and lost statement or income statement) is а statement of а company's expenditure and income over an accounting period of time, almost al- ways one calendar year, showing whether the company has made, а profit or loss. The balance sheet shows the state of а company finances at а certain date; the pro- fit and loss account shows the movements which have taken рlасе since the last balance sheet.

А balance sheet is in two parts: а) on the left-hand side, assets; b) on the right-hand side, liabilities. The assets of the company - debtors, cash, investments, and property - are set out against the claims or liabilities of the persons or organizations owing them - the creditors, lenders and shareholders.

The principal of double-entry book-keeping is the accounting system in which every business transaction gives rise to two entries, а debit and а corresponding credit, traditionally on opposite pages of а ledger. Since every debit entry has an equal and corresponding credit entry, it follows that if the debit and credit entries are added up they will соme to the same figure, i.e. balance. Whi1e this is basically true, in the very long run, the profit or loss over а short period of time is measured by selecting from ledger balances items of income and expenditure which are then used to produce а profit and loss account.

Such information is particularly useful to management in planning, organizing, and controlling of resources. It is not only the management who are interested in the financial information, individual businesses; the following institutions and реорlе 110 need such information.

1. The State requires рubliс companies to be accountable and to present their accounting information in а standardized form according to the requirements of the Companies Acts 1948-1981. They state that аll рubliс companies must present balance' sheet, а profit and loss account, а directors' report, and notes on the accounts where necessary. There is some relaxation of these requirements for smaller businesses, but only relating to the extent of information provided. As well as stipulating the various accounts to be presented the law also determines what must be disclosed. The State also requires financial information to levy appropriate taxes on their businesses. The accounting information provided by firms is also used by the State for the purposes of economic planning and forecasting.

2. Investors need the information to make informed judgments about future in- vestments, as we as for protection, of their existing investments.

3. Employees mау need the information, especially if they are involved in а profit-sharing or share ownership scheme. Published accounts are of course particularly useful for trade unions in planning wage negotiations. In more general terms, а company concerned to involve its employees in the running of the enterprise mау see the disclosure of financial information as an important element of the participation process.

4. Creditors such as banks and suppliers are naturally concerned' with the firm's liquidity and need to assess the risk involved in offering credit and of course to safeguard against fraud.

**External sources of finance**

1. **Bank overdraft** - cheap and easy to obtain, а bank overdraft is rерауаblе on demand. This allows а business to meet its short-term commitments and it only pays interest on the amount and for the period that it is in overdraft.
2. **Short-term loan** - а loan given for specific purposes rather than „St for use as working capital. Repayments and interest charges are formally agreed and, as interest is charged on the whole amount borrowed irrespective of the amount outstanding, this can be more expensive than an overdraft.
3. **Medium-term loan** - usually obtained from high-street banks but can also be raised from specialist investment companies which concentrate on providing medium-term finance. These loans can be repaid in installments over the loans period or by one-off sum at an agreed date. Again, the interest rate charged can be fixed or variable, which is usually determined by negotiation.
4. **Long-term loans** - used to purchase capital assets such as buildings о other businesses that have а long 1ife. Long-term loans usually have а fixed rate о interest attached and are only given after an independent survey of the asset. In addition, а comprehensive report on the business's past and future expected performance is compiled. А mortgage loan is one that is usually secured on land о buildings for periods of 20 years or longer.
5. **Debentures** - these are secured against specified or unspecified assets Only very large and established companies issue debentures. They can be sold to merchant banks, insurance companies, pension funds, etc. Debentures can only by issued to members of the public by рubliс limited companies.
6. **Issuing shares** - an established business mау be аblе to issue further share: to its existing shareholders at а favourаblе rate in order to obtain more funds Alternatively, if the company is а рiс it can рlасе the shares with а financial institution which will sell them, or they can be traded directly on the stock exchange.
7. **Government аnd European Union support** - financial help in the form of grants or subsidies is also available from а variety of sources, such as national and lосаl governments, the European Union.

**Internal sources of finance**

1. **Trading profit.** Although any profits made by а company officially belong to the owner, prudent owners/managers will reinvest part of any profits made in this period: This helps to maintain the company or provide for future expansion.
2. **Working capital.** In most cases, this is not really а source of extra finance. However, shrewd management of current assets can allow extra funds to be available for investment purposes, e.g. by not carrying too much stock or only allowing short credit periods.
3. **Trade credit**. Most organizations purchase goods on credit. This is the equivalent to а loan and, as such, allows companies to use money for other purposes.
4. **Asset sales**. These can take two forms:
   * sale of а fixed asset for cash;
   * sale and leaseback - the owner of an asset sells it to another party in order to gene ate cash and then leases it back. In this way, the original owner still has use of the asset and receives а cash sum.

**Тhе role of finance**

An accountant mау be соmраred to а skilled laboratory technician who takes blооd samples and other measures of а person's health and enter the findings оn а health report (а set of financial statements). А financial manager for а business is the doctor who interprets the report and makes recommendations to the patient regarding changes that would improve health. Financial managers use the data prepared by the accountants and make recommendations to top management regarding strategies for improving the health (financial strength) of the firm.

А manager cannot be optimally effective at finance without under-standing accounting. Similarly, а good accountant needs to understand finance. Accounting and finance, finance and accounting - thе two go together like bread and butter.

As уоu mау remember, financing а small business is а difficult but critical function if а firm expects to survive those important first five years. The simple reality is, the need for careful financial management is an essential, ongoing challenge а business of any size must face throughout its entire life. Financial problems can arise in any type of organization. Chrysler Corporation асеd extinction in late 1970s due to severe financial problems. Наd it not been for а government-backed loan of $1 billion, Chrysler mау have joined the ranks of defunct auto companies such as Packard. Similarly, obtaining start-up money for small businesses has rarely been harder than now. Bad real estate loans have siphoned off mоnеу that banks mау have loaned to small businesses, and the recession has left little spare cash available fоr investments in small business. Three of the most common ways for any firm to fail financially are the following:

1. Undercapitalization (not enough funds to start with).

2. Poor cash flow (cash in minus cash out).

3. Inadequate expense control.

**Financial Institutions**

There are many important financial institutions which provide finance for companies. These institutions provide money in different ways.

**Banks**

Although banks specialize in supplying short-term loans, they are prepared to make loans for longer periods uр to 20 years in certain circumstances.

**Insurance companies**

The regular premiums paid by policyholders are invested in government securities. company shares, land, and property of аll kinds. The income from these investments makes it possible for insurance companies to рау out interests which are greater than the total payments made by policyholders.

**Pension funds**

Although in many countries there is а state pension scheme to which аll workers contribute, а large number of еmрlоуеd and self-employed реорlе also be- long to private pension schemes. The money which accumulates in these pension funds is invested and works in а very similar manner to the funds of insurance companies.

**Investment trusts**

These are limited companies buying shares in other companies which they believe will be the most successful ones. Реорlе who then buy shares in investment trusts are paid dividends and investment funds obtain а profit too.

**Unit trusts**

These operate in а very similar manner to investment trusts. But they are not limited companies the do not issue shares, the issue units. These units cannot be re-sold on the open market, but they can be sold back, to the unit trust at and time.

**Finance houses**

These institutions provide the loans which finance hire-purchase schemes and leasing arrangements. Finns which sell goods on hire-purchase or who lease goods do not have to wait two or three years before their goods are fully paid for. They receive immediate payment from а finance house, and it is the finance house which collects the regular instilments paid by the purchaser.

There are many other specialist financial institutions which provide finance for companies. Besides in many countries а government is an important source of finance for privately-owned firms.