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CHAPTER 1

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING: AN OVERVIEW

1. Questions

1. One of the word "need" in the paragraph is pejorative. It implies an **unlimited level of demand for information**. However, rational managers apply a **cost-benefit criterion** to information and will only want accounting information if its benefits exceed its costs. Accounting information provides benefits by improving decision making and controlling behavior in organizations. In most organizations, accounting information is very prevalent which implies that its benefits exceed its costs. Hence, successful managers will find it in their self interest to learn how to use accounting information in these organizations.

Clearly, this statement is incorrect in those firms where accounting information has very limited usefulness (e.g. if the accounting information is often viewed as a daily hindrance). In these organizations managers do not find the accounting information to have benefits in excess of its costs, will not use it, do not need to know how to use it and definitely do not need it.

2. a. Historical costs are of limited use in making planning decisions in a rapidly changing environment. With changing products, processes and prices, the historical costs are inadequate approximations of the opportunity costs of using resources.

Historical costs may, however, be useful for control purposes as they provide information about the activities of managers and can be used as performance measures to evaluate managers.

b. The purpose of accounting systems is to provide information for planning purposes and control. Although historical costs are not generally appropriate for planning purposes, additional measures are costly to make. An accounting system should include additional

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