

Strategy Through Growth

BookWorm, LLC

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Assignment 5

Business Description

BookWorm, LLC is a software service company focusing on technology services and software for libraries, librarians, and teachers. The primary services provided by BookWorm, LLC are the automatic calculation and conversion of book reading levels in the dozen various reading level systems used throughout the United States. These services use artificial intelligence to make accurate predictions of reading levels based on a number of factors and link to the existing APIs for most popular library management systems.

Human Resources Strategy

The human resources department is incredibly important for any small business, as the impact of any individual employee is more significant than in a larger organization. Employee acquisition and engagement are key in order to ensure that a small business like Bookworm, LLC is able to compete in markets with much larger companies.

Team

The human resources team at Bookworm, LLC will be comprised of three distinct roles. These roles are not specifically tied to individuals or teams, as there may be times when it is necessary for multiple roles to be played by one person or a role must be played by someone outside of the greater human resources department. The first role of the human resources team is the outward facing role, which is responsible for attracting and recruiting great employees from diverse backgrounds. The second role is the inward facing role, which is responsible for ensuring the growth, success, and engagement of existing employees. Finally, the third role is the business facing role, which is responsible for ensuring compliance with regulations, maintaining employee documentation, and managing business practices.

The first role of outward facing human resources is concerned with locating and recruiting potential employees for Bookworm, LLC. This role will attend job fairs, write and post job openings, and reach out directly to potential candidates. They are also responsible for building the outward facing image of employment at Bookworm, LLC, such as clearly and effectively stating the benefits the company offers to employees and the values of the company. The outward facing role ushers candidates through the interview and onboarding process, ensuring equitable hiring and setting up new employees for success within the company.

The second role, inward facing human resources, is responsible for ensuring the engagement and growth of current employees. Happy, healthy, and engaged employees are the key to success in any organization, so this role's sole responsibility is ensuring employees are all three. The inward facing role oversees employee training and advancement, as well as monitors employee culture to ensure that Bookworm, LLC is both a responsible and attractive workplace. This role also manages the needs of employees and aims to increase productivity and engagement in any way possible, be it through updating company policies or investigating changes to healthcare benefits.

The final business facing human resources role is responsible for ensuring that Bookworm, LLC is compliant with policies set forth by local, state, and federal code as well as those developed internally. This role is responsible for maintaining employee documentation such as employment verification, benefits enrollment, payroll, and tax forms. The business facing role is meant to ensure that the business itself is performing properly, where the other two roles focus directly on employee acquisition and engagement.

Plan

As Bookworm, LLC grows, so too will the human resources department. At first it may be necessary for the outlined roles to be played by one employee, but the tenets of each role's

responsibilities and accountability should always be maintained. The three-role system is meant to ensure that all three branches of responsibility receive adequate attention by the human resources department. As the company grows and the human resources department fleshes out with more employees, the three teams will focus on their individual responsibilities more effectively than one singular team trying to manage all of the responsibilities necessary for running Bookworm, LLC effectively.

Sales Strategy

Sales is an integral part of Bookworm, LLC's growth. As a small company with a niche product, the primary driver of revenue growth will be in securing new and maintaining existing customers in the small library market. Salespersons at Bookworm, LLC will need to be well versed in all the industry standard library management systems, software, and book leveling systems so that they can better relate to the needs of each unique customer-library.

Team

The initial sales team at Bookworm, LLC, like everything else, will likely be very small. As the company grows, the teams will grow to suit its new needs. The ideal structure for a sales team for Bookworm, LLC will likely be split along regional boundaries within the United States. Since the library sector is so close-knit, the prevalence of certain software and book leveling systems is generally common among libraries in certain geographical areas. Breaking up the sales arm of the company into smaller sales teams which specialize in the specific needs of certain regions will help the teams best cater to libraries and librarians in those areas, improving the overall customer experience and increasing the likelihood of maintained business. As the regional sales teams increase in size, natural leaders will emerge and be groomed to find leadership which can be responsible for the continued output of a region's sales team's members.

Plan

As a very niche company in a relatively small market, Bookworm, LLC's sales plan will have to focus on both creating new customers and maintaining existing customer relationships. Salespersons will focus on new and continued customer engagement from libraries, librarians, and teachers through direct outreach, attendance of industry conferences, and referrals from existing customers. By maintaining a database of customers and potential customers, successful and failed sales, the sales team will be able to better inform executives and the development team of the needs of customers, guiding the business to develop new software and services based on established marketplace needs.

Marketing Strategy

The library services sector is dominated almost entirely by two or three massive companies that provide all of library management systems, software, and services used by almost every public and school library in the United States. As such, the small Bookworm, LLC will need to rise to meet un- and underserved needs in the library community instead of attempting to compete with giant competitors. Bookworm, LLC's marketing strategy for growing their customer base will primarily focus on three elements: customer service, search engine optimization, and industry conferences and conventions.

With a fairly small number of universities offering ALA certified MLIS degrees, and most school and public libraries requiring at least an MLIS for employment, librarians are a close-knit community of professionals. This makes word of mouth and customer satisfaction incredibly important to Bookworm, LLC's success as a growing company. A single review, good or bad, could easily spread to a significant percentage of this limited market's customers. Bookworm, LLC will need to implement stringent customer service and customer satisfaction policies in order to maximize the marketing capacity of the company as it grows to serve this market.

When encountering a problem in the library such as being unable to quickly identify the reading level of a book in a certain leveling system, librarians will often use search engines to see if the true level is publicly available or if another library has manually calculated the potential level. This gives Bookworm, LLC the opportunity to use search engine optimization to reach potential customers. Since queries for book levels in different systems are fairly specific search queries, the company can be assured that a high number of users of these queries are in the target market.

The small size of the librarian community also means that there are a limited number of industry conferences and conventions. Most of these conferences are held by the ALA and will serve as an excellent marketing and networking opportunity for Bookworm, LLC to reach potential customers. The company should strive to send at least one representative to each of these industry conferences, and ideally purchase booth space in or a sponsorship with the conference in order to maximize the brand recognition within the library industry.

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