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Case 3 Symantec

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1. **Dilemma:** Symantec Software Company is having internal communication and information flow problems (cash). What is causing these problems and what can be done to fix it?

**Role of IT:** The role of IT, for Symantec, is the software they produce and sell, and the technology systems they use internally (Cash).They have two basic information technology systems: a Hewlett-Packard system for accounting, schedules, and inventory; a network system linking all Symantec employees and allowing them to communicate through electronic mail, as well as a ROLM phone mail system (Cash). The IT architecture defines the policies and guidelines that govern the arrangement of IT tools and data.Symantec’s Tools consist ofsoftware for communication; the basic operations are data transport, which is the process of obtaining and exchanging data and information, including sending/receiving digital information, and converting analog or paper to digital or digital to paper or analog. (Cash)

1. **Critical Stakeholders and their rights:**
   1. **Symantec shareholders –** The shareholders have the right to receive a return on their investment in the company as well as be informed about what is going on inside the company as much as a publically owned company can share.
   2. **Employees –** The employees consist of Product group managers, marketing managers, sales representatives, sales managers, customer service representatives and top executives(Cash). The employees are affected by the problem with communication every single day so the solution directly influences the productivity of everyone in the company. The top executives have the right to manage the company anyway they deem fit although the other employees have the right to fast and accurate information from other divisions inside the company. If the managers want to create a better culture within the company then they must listen to the lower employees such as the sales representatives, sales managers and customer service representatives.
   3. **Customers –** Symantec’s customers are actually the distributors of the software systems they produce (Cash). The distributors have the right to purchase the best possible software from Symantec, on schedule and at a fair price. They also have the right to a loyal company with high customer service satisfaction.
   4. **End users –** The end users purchase Symantec’s software from the dealer, whom purchases the software from the distributor (Cash). The end user has the right to purchase the best possible software from the dealer at a fair price. The end user is using the software that Symantec produces so they have the right to exceptional customer service from the dealer.
2. **Alternative courses of action**
   1. **Do nothing –** If Symantec chose to do nothing to their current IT architecture then they would still be experiencing internal communication and information flow issues, although the company would still be making money just like they always have since the expansions from acquisitions (Cash). The divisions within Symantec are producing quality software in a timely manner so by changing nothing the company would not be hurting themselves. On the other hand, the customer’s switching costs are low; the threat of substitution is high and the software industry has low entry barriers, (Porter) so if Symantec were to change drastically they would be at risk of falling behind and looking their top spot in the market. The lower level employees would still have communication and information flow issues between divisions. The shareholders would still get a return on their investments because Symantec is still making a large amount of profit. Lastly, the customers and end users will still be happy with the products they are receiving because the quality is still high.
   2. **Purchase a new Email system –** Symantec uses an email for the majority of their communication (Cash), so by integrating a new email system it could potential fix some of the issues of the Novell system. The current system had issues connecting to different types of machines and since the upper level managers did not specify what machines each employee must use this was a major issue. The new CC mail system could possibly help them with this issue by increasing the reliability of the email communication flows throughout the entire company. This would increase the employee’s ability to work with other divisions and, specifically, communicate information to the sales representatives before customers inform them of issues they are having. This would benefit the customers by possibly increasing their customer service experience with Symantec. The shareholder could benefit from increased profits if the email system increased productivity and efficiency within the company. Also, since the entry barriers are low and competition is high, it is an advantage for Symantec to have reliable communications throughout the entire company so they stay ahead of any potential new entrants (Porter).
   3. **MIS Department –**The MIS system is notified when there are system failures or technological problems, although the system has been backed up to the point where employees would find ways around using MIS (Cash). Enabling the MIS system to handle all of the necessary requests and possibly getting ahead of the issues could improve the technology throughout the company. The employees would feel more comfortable coming to MIS for support, which would create a sense of reliability in the company. This would benefit the employees because their technology could improve which would increase productivity. The shareholders might not see much benefit although if the increased performance by the employees had a significant impact then their sales could increase. The customers and users could see faster development and better products because of the increased reliability of the technology the company uses.
   4. **Change the organizational structure –** Changing the structure of the company from a functional company to a matrix company could force the employees to create a more unified company culture.Right now Symantec has numerous division and it seems as if each division has their own sort of culture that does not match up with the next division (Cash). This causes dissonance between the employees, which inhibits good communication flow between the whole organization. In order for this to work, Symantec would have to be willing to fund the installation of the new CC mail system. Changing the structure would benefit the employees by increasing the flow of information and therefore improving communication. This could benefit the shareholder because if the communications issue were to be solved they would most likely see an increase in profits. The customers could also see a benefit in the products because when the information reaches them it could be more accurate and faster.
3. **My normative recommendation:** My personal recommendation is to do nothing because Symantec is currently making money and producing exceptional products. Ever since Symantec expanded from acquisitions, they have been at the top of the software industry and that has not changed despite their information flow issues. My second recommendation is to change the organizational structure because if the structure facilitated communication between the divisions then Symantec would be able to create a more homogeneous culture throughout the company. This culture could possibly solve the divisional separation and communication issues they are having. My third recommendation is purchasing a new email system because this is the main resource employees use and if it is compatible with all of the machines in Symantec then it would help facilitate internal communication between divisions. Lastly, I recommend fixing the MIS system so that is can handle all of the technical requests from the employees. This would be a start to solving the communication issue because the employees could worry less about their technology and more about the information flow.

**Works Cited**

Management of Information Systems by Professor Barker/ Cash: Case 3 – Symantec

Management of Information Systems by Professor Barker/ Cash: Chapter 4

Porter’s 5 forces