

Case Study: UPS Competes Globally with Information Technology

1. What are the inputs, processing, and outputs of UPS's package tracking system?

First of all, inputs are about collecting raw data from within the organization or from its external environment. Thus, the inputs, in this case, are:

1. Bar-coded label attached to a package which contains information about the sender, the destination, and when the package should arrive.
2. Special software provided by UPS or by accessing the UPS website that the customers are using.
3. Delivery of the packages that the drivers are doing every day.
4. Picking the packages up
5. Time data
6. Current Location

Secondly, processing activities are about the conversion of raw data into the information or even more meaningful format. Processing activities are:

1. Information from smart labels is transmitted to UPS's different computer centers; then kept for the repossession
2. Recognition of data, and its ability to be tracked by customers, and the company

Finally, outputs are about transferring the processed information to the people who will use it or to the activities for which it will be used. Outputs are:

1. Pickup and delivery periods
2. Routes and package receipts
3. Various reports about accounts and drivers
4. Summary of the reports to management

Question 2: What technologies are used by UPS? How are these technologies related to UPS's business strategy?

UPS uses various technologies in its business. The first one is scannable bar-coded labels. They contain detailed information about the sender, the final destination, and the delivery date of

the packages. Secondly, the company utilizes special software by UPS website in order to download and print the labels. Moreover, the company takes advantage of ORION software for finding the best routes for their drivers. The software considers traffic, weather conditions, and the location of each stop. The advantage of this software is that it allows the firm to save 50 million dollars per year. Furthermore, Delivery Information Acquisition Device is another technological advancement that the organization uses. Basically, this is a handheld computer that shows the daily routes to the drivers. Another function of DIAD is that it also routinely takes customer signatures alongside pickup and delivery information. Also, UPS's mobile apps for different phones are another one. Besides, UPS's website is available for the cost and shipping rate calculations, tracking, checking delivery routes, determining time, printing labels, and scheduling pickups. The company is using some outside sources like Cisco Systems. Finally, UPS provides its staff with various technological tools like UPS Quantum View Manage and UPS Capital. The first one is for monitoring outbound packages and providing better customer services. The latter is mainly about the financial service department of the company.

3. What strategic business objectives do UPS's information system address?

Operational excellence

As mentioned in the case study, the company maintains its leadership in small package delivery services. The reason for this is that UPS invests heavily in advanced information technology. To be more precise, according to the case study, the company spends more than one billion dollars each year in order to provide their customers with premium customer services, keep their costs at a lower level, make its whole operations effective.

Competitive advantage

According to the case study, UPS offers other firms its new service called Supply Chain Solutions. It is mainly about supply chain management and logistics activities for other organizations. In this service, the company uses its expertise in the field while assisting other companies in building their own systems.

4. What would happen if UPS information system were not available?

As mentioned in the second question, the company uses various technological software and tools for different purposes in distinct parts of its business. For example, by using ORION software, the firm saves 50 million dollars per year. Without having this information system, there would be additional costs associated with the company. Besides, since it provides the drivers with proper information about routes, its absence will also decrease the organization's efficiency and productivity. Moreover, besides their business functionalities, UPS's mobile apps, website, and UPS Quantum View Manage also increase customer satisfaction. The reasons for this are that in this way, customers easily can track their packages, calculate the costs, and get some other beneficial information about the firm and their parcels. Finally, the absence of UPS Capital will damage the firm, too. In this case, the organization will struggle to monitor and maintain its cash flow and assets. Thus, without having information systems, the productivity, efficiency, reputation, effectiveness, and competitiveness of the company will suffer too much.

Case Study: Should companies embrace social business?

3. Identify the management, organization, and technology factors, affecting adoption of internal corporate social networks.

Organization factors

Firstly, implementing the internal corporate social networks requires the firm to be more democratic in a flatter and horizontal approach. Also, according to the case study, the application of these systems will increase productivity and efficiency across the organization. Moreover, adopting these systems will boost the process of idea exchange across the firm. The reason for this is that in this case, employees will find informal communication more helpful and friendly. In turn, these will create loyalty in employees' minds toward the company. Therefore, the overall flow of information will not come across any barriers.

Management factors

On the management side, the company will deal with the people who are unwilling toward changes. For this reason, these people will prefer the traditional ways of communication across the firm. However, as mentioned in the case study, organizations could apply the push strategy in order to adopt these systems to the firms. Moreover, push strategy is about motivating employees toward adopting changes by offering them some

incentives. Finally, from my perspective, a broad explanation of these systems' benefits to employees will be useful in terms of promoting the system across the organization.

Technological factors

Technological factors in adopting social networks will imply their quality. In this case, quality will imply factors such as being up to date, relevant to the business strategies and objectives of the company, and accessible by employees.

4. Why were some companies successful? What role did management play in this process?

Throughout the near history, many companies adopted internal social network systems. However, as mentioned in the case study, not many of them were successful. For example, NASA's social network tool called Spacebook failed because the authorities did not consider organizational culture and politics while developing it. In contrast, Covestro's and Hawk Ridge's systems were successful. In the case of Hawk Ridge, it reduced the number of daily emails from 200 to 30. Besides, name of the system that this firm applied was Glip. It allows real-time messaging, video conferencing, too. It also provides the company with cloud services. In addition, the most adopted social network tool by companies is Microsoft Yammer. The reasons for it are its functionalities and easy use. By applying Yammer, companies achieve large amounts of time and money savings. Another advantage of this platform is that it prevents people from duplicating the work. Thus, when it comes to these companies' successes in implementing these systems, they are mostly tied with the management functions of these companies. For example, while implementing these kinds of changes to the company, management should consider the organizational structure and policy of the firm. Finally, they also have to make sure that people are open-minded enough to catch up with these technological advancements. In order to solve the problems associated with catching up, they could consider some training and incentive programs for their employees, too.

5. Should all companies implement internal enterprise social networks? Why or why not?

I believe all companies should adopt internal enterprise social networks. To be more precise, there is far more reason for that. However, before implementing this kind of technological advancement, it is essential to confirm that employees are ready for the change. For this reason, as mentioned in the case study, in the first stages, companies have

to create some test groups and implement social networks only for those groups. It will give the firm managers insight into whether their staff and organizational structure are ready for the change. Then, after analyzing the test group's performance, companies could decide what further steps they have to take.

Moreover, when it comes to whether the organizations should apply internal enterprise social networks to their daily operations or not, the answer is definitely, yes. One of the reasons for this is that enterprise social network platforms create a friendly, effective, collaborative, efficient, and productive environment in the workplace. Also, it decreases the barriers in the information flows while promoting a quick way of idea exchange. Thus, these types of systems help the companies to save costs along with making the organization flatter in terms of its structure.