SYMANTEC

CIS 410-50 Case 3

Baltazar,Trisia May

2019

**The Problem**

Symantec was founded in 1982 with just 30 employees in the organization. In eight years, they grew to around 316 employees, added new products, updated and developed versions of old products, and became a major player in the software industry. As Symantec grew, it merged with other companies such as C&E Software in 1984 and three other companies in 1987. In just a short number of years, many organizational changes have occurred a problem of communication and information flow has emerged within the organization. Employees had too many communication channels and ways to communicate with each other that it became an overwhelming and frustrating problem for the growing company.

**Industry Competitive**

**Mission Statement**

Symantec is a software development company that designs, delivers and supports a line of software for information management, productivity, and software development needs of business users.

**Core Competency**

Symantec provides both service and product for the business user’s software needs. They have a diversified line of software for information management, productivity, and software development and in just seven years have brought in $50 million in revenue. By specializing in both service and products, they can achieve success. They are a major player in the software industry and compete with may big names such as Lotus and Ashton-Tate.

**Primary Markets**

Symantec provided products and services to business users nationwide. This includes other businesses that has software needs that they cannot provide themselves.

**Generic Strategy**

Symantec uses a differentiation strategy. “Differentiation is aimed at the broad market that involves the creation of a product or services that is perceived throughout its industry as unique” (Tanwar). In the seven years it was founded, they have launched nine new products, as well as updated and developed different version of old products. This can be seen as economies of scope as they have different product lines and tweaked it so that it appeals to as many consumers as possible. There are five different product groups and its product line included fifteen main software packages. Each group also had its own technical support department and a centralized customer service department. With these different divisions and products, they can meet their client needs.

**Porter’s Five Forces**

**Supplier Bargaining Power**

Supplier bargaining power for Symantec is low. There was no specific supplier stated. Their main product is software so people and hardware may be a supplier for Symantec. The bargaining power will still be low as they have many employees employed and as for hardware, they use clone versions of brand-name hardware so they have many suppliers they can replace if need be.

**Buyer Bargaining Power**

Buyer bargaining power is medium-high for Symantec. There are other companies that provide similar product and service that Symantec currently provides but buyer’s loyalty may lower this power.

**Threat of New Entrants**

Threat of new entrants is high for Symantec. As a relatively new software industry in its time, they may not have culminated a lot of buyer’s loyalty. Since their focus is software development, if another company were to make a better version of their current product or meet client meds better than their products, then Symantec can struggle with its new competitor.

**Threat of Substitutes**

Threat of substitutes is medium for Symantec. They develop software depending on what their client needs, and they have lowered threat of substitutes by creating different product lines and improving existing ones, but there are other companies that can develop their own version or a better version of their products.

**Threat of Infra-Industry Competition**

Threat of infra-industry competition is high for Symantec. They are competing with other big companies such as Lotus and Ashton-Tate.

**Stakeholders**

**Symantec Employees**

This includes management and employees exposed to day-to-day operations. Employees are affected because they are the ones communicating and are expressing concern with the current communication channels. Change in the way the organization communicates will affect what information each employee will get as well as the efficiency of information flow.

**Customers**

This includes the clients that Symantec provides products and services to.

**Shareholders**

Shareholders are concerned with the success of the company. The success of their financial gain is dependent on Symantec’s success. So far, revenue has been great for Symantec, but with internal company issues this may change.

**Alternatives**

**Do nothing**

This alternative would mean that Symantec does nothing and continue with their current process. There will still be many communication channels and communication problems in day to day operations. Email and phone issues would continue to pile up for the MIS department.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Symantec Employees**

Daily operations will continue as normal. The MIS department will continue to be overrun with issues and employees continue to be frustrated with the information flow within their countless communication channels. Gordon Eubanks will have said changes need to be done, but with no action taken place, this may give him a bad reputation and give him a bad relationship with employees.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Customers**

Customers will not see any change in operations. If communication issues continue to grow because no change has been implemented, they make choose a different organization to provide their software service and product needs.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Shareholders**

Shareholders will not see any change in operations. If business continues to grow in company and client size, communication issues may catch up to Symantec and cause growth to slow down due to internal issues. In the short-run, shareholders will see the continuous and positive growth that Symantec has had since it was established.

**Move away from early decisions made by past MIS leaders**

This alternative would mean changing the current IT architecture to lower the workload for the MIS department. Current issues that Symantec has seem to be based on early decisions from earlier leaders of the MIS department. For example, “The MIS department allowed employees to choose their own hardware, but it set standards for how e-mail should operate and what types of phones and phone switches employees should use” (Gladstone). Steering away from different hardware to one uniform hardware could solve multiple issues that occur in daily operations. This would also include retraining current employees in the MIS department. Ed Pagie, the MIS manager, stated that the company had a “do-it now, fix it later” mentality that caused a surge of support cases for MIS (Gladstone). Retraining employees in the MIS would help this alternative the most as employees depend on the department when problems occur.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Symantec Employees**

Employees will get directly impacted because the hardware and email software they use will change. There may be some employee that will be unhappy because their hardware may change, but in the long-run, the email issue and phone issue that they are currently struggling with will eventually go away. The MIS department will have less breakdowns and have more time to improve other systems. MIS employees will also have more communication training which will help them troubleshoot bigger problems and provide on-demand trouble shooting for the company.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Customers**

Customers will not be immediately affected. As the company gets adapted to the new IT architecture and communication systems, it is possible that better service and products will be put out in the market as the employees have more time to work than wait for communication channels to give them the correct information. If Symantec cannot handle the uniform system of communication, the quality of product and service many go down and this will cause clients to look for a better company.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Shareholders**

Shareholders will not be directly affected. They could see an improvement in communication and an overall happier employee culture. This can positively affect Symantec’s sales which the shareholders will gladly benefit.

**Train or hire managers that have training in communication**

This alternative would mean that current managers would need to train on the importance of communication and building communication mechanisms. Many employees in Symantec view that training managers on communication will help set the tone and the philosophy Symantec needs to build a strong commitment to communication. Loretta Wagener, the director of corporate communications, believed that the company needed more face-to-face communications. Training managers can create an open-door policy in the workplace which could be a good initial step in figuring out other internal issues as well as fix current ones. Because product groups are geographically dispersed, the newly trained managers will bring the groups closer together through open communication mechanisms. Current phone and email systems would remain unchanged.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Symantec Employees**

Managers in different product groups would get trained on new communication mechanisms or get replaced by those who have more experience with communication. Many meetings held in Symantec are for managers and Eubanks saw that groups did not communicate because each group believed they knew the best way to do something and did not need to share it with the others. Training managers will help melt this egoistic boundary between employees and create a more open channel. Useful information will be delivered in meetings which could help improve their current products.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Customers**

Customers will not be immediately affected. Just as the second alternative, depending on how Symantec handles this new structure will determine the organization’s success with their clients. If employees take advantage of the communication training, information exchange can bring to light client needs and Symantec can improve their products and services through those needs.

1. **Impact on stakeholder: Shareholders**

Shareholders will not be immediately affected. The adaptation of Symantec will decide their impact. If managers can benefit through their communication training, information and ideas will flow easily within the company and Symantec will hopefully launch newer or better products in the market, thus increasing revenue.

**Recommended Solution**

I recommend Symantec move away from early decisions made by past MIS leaders. Their main communication issues that they have are caused by early decisions and top leaders such as Dykes, Paige and Eubanks believes that the root of problems lies in MIS, which is a major issue as the company relies on MIS for their problems. One of the main issues is the hardware. They let the employees pick their equipment causing incompatibility issues to arise. This caused a lot of issue when Symantec moved to their second information system the Novell LAN as some PCs were not compatible with the email software. A uniform hardware policy would steer them away from those issues and improve the phone and email capabilities which employees heavily rely on as a tool of communication. After having a uniform set of PCs and phones for the company, software developers can build a new software tool that will fit Symantec’s growing needs. Dykes, Paige and Eubanks all felt that the MIS department needed better training. Dykes saw the poor decisions made early on and the inability for MIS to respond to company needs were because of lack of willingness to communicate by the managers. Paige saw that that Symantec has grown too fast for MIS and that the department needs more people to solve the growing list of issues. Eubanks believes that by finding a new MIS leader, the MIS will function efficiently. Most of what people saw in the company that needed to change were the people along with the hardware. “Information is a critical source. Accurate, timely, and relevant operating information improves organizational effectiveness by improving its member’s communication and understanding” (Cash).

There are four parts to Leavitt’s Diamond: People, Task, Structure, and Technology (Thakur). In order to effectively change the organizational culture of a business, three of the four elements must be changed, and one of them must be people. Any less will only change things short-term and operations will go back to how it was before the change. With this alternative, we are changing technology, people, and task. Technology is changed by upgrading to a single and uniform PC and phone system. People is changed through employees. This does not necessarily mean people, but also their skills and knowledge. This is done through the communication training and an organization must master IT Project Management Tasks are changed because of the training and “this component can include goals in addition to tasks” (Thakur). The MIS department will have less troubleshooting issues with emails and phones and more of fixing the bigger issues that Symantec has internally. The department will have more time to train employees and users on the software they have created. All three of these components will change company culture and increase the importance and commitment to communication. IT groups will be rewarded with project excellence as the MIS department will be less focused on email and phone issues and more focused on software development. Users will be rewarded with effectives as they will be able to do more work with less communication issues. Managers will be rewarded with efficiency as business will run more smoothly and their schedules will be less crowded as the communication tools will not be a big concern anymore. Due to Symantec’s rapid growth, this will fix long and short-term communication issues.

**Rejected Alternatives**

Do nothing would not impact Symantec right away. The company is doing well without any immediate changes in the consumer and shareholder’s perspective. Employee frustration would grow significantly and may cause a large turnover rate. Managers also notice the importance to change something in the communication channels. Short term, this would be a good solution, but long-term and because Symantec is growing, this would not be a good alternative. These communication issues would put a strain on the organization’s focus on main organizational goals as well.

Train or hire managers that have training in communication would be the second recommended alternative and is a part of the recommended alternative. This alternative is given because many employees believed that by fixing management styles, communication would dramatically improve across the organization. While this alternative is a great solution, it is not a long-term solution and only fixes part of the problem. The current phone and email systems prove to be in bad condition for a communication tool that it drowns the MIS department with issues daily. Fixing management does not fix the hardware issues. In Leavitt’s diamond, this will only change two dimensions, people and tasks which will only fix issues short-term. For Symantec to thrive in the future, they must fix internal issues before it stops creativity and work in their company.

**Citations**

Cash, James I. Jr., Eccles, Robert G., Nohria, Nitin, Nolan, Richard L., *Building the Information-Age Organization: Structure, Control, and Information Technologies*, Richard D. Irwin Inc., 1994. Print.

Gladstone, Julie, *Symantec*, President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1990. Print.

Tanwar, Ritika, *Porter’s Generic Competitive Strategies*, IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 2013. Web.

Thakur Sidharth, Leavitt’s Diamond: An Interactive Approach to Change, Bright Hub PM., 2013. Web.