Symantec

Case Analysis: Jarui Desai

The Symantec Case went into detail about Symantec, a technology company that supported a varied line of software for the needs of business users. This case discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the company since the time it had been founded in March of 1982. A critical point brought up in the case was that a majority of the corporation believed that there needed to be some key changes made to the company regarding information flow in the company, so that it could be operating in a more efficient and smarter way. After having all the information reviewed and analyzed, the conclusion of this topic is that Symantec needed to invest more time and money into their information technology department in order to create an over-arching business change that was spread throughout the business as a whole. Not only this, but a lot of smaller aspects need to be changed regarding this department which in-turn will affect other departments and improve the business function as a whole in order to reduce the problems Symantec is currently facing. After much revision, there are a few reasons as to why the information technology department specifically is the one that needs to be paid closely attention to in the future. These reasons will be addressed below, alongside the other smaller improvements that need to also be made during this entire process.

To begin, we will have to discuss the way in which this problem first became an issue that needed to be faced. As mentioned previously, Symantec was founded in March of 1982 and within just within 8 short years, this company grew immensely. Starting with just 30 employees, Symantec employed around 316 employees by 1990. Not only that but the net revenue had increased from less than $6,000 the first few years to over $50,000 by early 1990. The earnings per share had also increase to $1.05. This company focused on creating new products and prided itself on releasing the products according to their assumed product release date. Not only this, but the company ended up merging with another called C&E in September 1984. Since then, Symantec has acquired at least three new companies including Breakthrough Software, Living Videotext, and Think Technologies. Gordon E. Eubanks, CEO of Symantec, believes that acquisitions are an effective way to grow the company and expand their horizons for the future. This all shows that the company had set a proper goal, and they knew what they had to achieve and would like to achieve in the coming years. The future of this company looked bright, however, with smaller problems arising time after time, these issues are becoming more critical and need to be addressed as soon as possible so the company can stay afloat and keep seeing their value increase day by day (Goldratt).

Going into the problems that the company was facing during this period of time, we will be able to realize why certain changes need to be made and what actions would be most effective in order to turn the company around so that they can maintain their high standard. A major issue that was already mentioned was that the information flow of the company needed to change. From individuals lower in the company all the way up to the CEO, a majority realized that there were some major communication problems facing the company. Many had mentioned that although they had a lot of meetings from week to week and month to month, there was not enough communication between certain departments in order to make this company as functional as possible. Granted they had a multitude of meetings regarding finances, the issue at hand the company faced was not financial but systematic. A proper business structure was lacking. Although the basic way that the company was set up was proper and management was still some-what efficient, the company needed to make an effort to inform the managers and leaders of the company to enforce proper communication habits between departments and individuals (Mallach). This problem can be taken care of sending weekly reports that summarize problems and possible solutions for each department, a monthly business-wide update, and continuous effort to try and inform others about what is going on. Although the plan of communication was set in place, no one was carrying out that very well in the company, which is why this was starting to become a problem. The environment has been carefully looked at when an initial plan was devised (Cash). This is another reason as to why the information technology department needed to be utilized more.

Another important point is that ever since the company decided that they were going to acquire more and more companies, the decision to not relocate these businesses was something that needed to be discussed more. Although it was beneficial to many that none of these businesses ended up relocating but rather stayed situated in the place where they were founded, this caused critical issues to come up. To begin, communication between all of these branches became more difficult, and even though all the senior members talked amongst one another, they still were not communication effectively to the whole organization. The largest problem with not relocating is that if there is going to be such a great distance between businesses buildings, there needs to be ample communication thought-out the company and within every department. The largest issue with Symantec is that communication was not the same throughout. In certain areas, they would communicate just fine, but in other departments, an individual would not hear what another was doing in their department. As a result, they would have to solve problems themselves even if that problem had already been brought up or assesses within another area of the business. Information technology again would be critical to improve because they can use technology in order to open up their horizons in order to communicate more efficiently with the resources that they are allocated with (Makenzie).

Additionally, when there were annual reviews made within the company for employees and departments, either they were tasked late or were conducted in a poor fashion. As discussed by other higher-ups, the way that reviews were conducted were extremely inefficient. The company would score the individual based on their dedication and duty but they would also score them based on if certain goals were accomplished. A problem that arose with this was that no matter what the position, each person ended up having the same page that they were reviewed against. This is not a proper technique because a job for a developer would be different than someone in finance or marketing. The reviews need to be more specific in the future and will have to be addressed such so that no one is confused and they know exactly what their job requires. This can also be easily addressed through information technology because if proper communication was set-up, then they would have been able to address this problem sooner rather than later. Additionally, managers would have been able to set up ways in which their employees will be able to make suggestions as to how they could improve or how the business could improve as a whole (Goldratt). This would ensure that someone was seeing this and could have pushed the company to look at the smaller problems prior to them being a larger issue in the future. An issue that stems from this is how ineffective some of the upper management is. Granted that there were a lot of people in charge and they all had meetings amongst one another, but they also needed to be trained in a similar manner so that everyone was on the same page for how business should be operated and conducted. Because this was not as big of a deal to the corporation because they were lacking in resources such as time and manpower, they had the ability to go slow early on in order to set a strong base. Because the base was not that strong, it will take more of an effort to change the way the organization is currently set up.

Information technology has been brought up as a solution to these problems, but the reasons as to why exactly that is the solution to Symantec’s problem will now be discussed. Another large issue that was not mentioned is that a lot of departments are worried or frustrated that they are not able to complete their work due to their technologies being down. This has to do with the amount of people that are in the information technology department of the business. They are lacking man power and proper management, and because of this reason, one of the most important parts of the business is lacking stability, which is why the rest of the business is feeling the pinch. Typically, business have a problem with managing finances as a company grows drastically, however this is not the case with Symantec. Their finance department seems to be well taken care of and that is one of the areas of the business that actually enforces and carries out proper communication. The information technology department is lacking because they did not invest proper time into hiring more skilled individuals to maintain the proper structure of the business in terms of technology, There needs to either be someone dealing with the programs and program issues all day long, but then another individual also has to be available and present at night in case something goes wrong. Because they are lacking in numbers and ability to maintain all these databases themselves because of how long it takes to get everything up and running again, this is a department that is critical to focus on over all others. The information technology area needs to focus on better management, stronger set of employees, and more efficient and frequent communication. This itself will begin to solve major problems within the business. The quicker systems are up and running and being attained, the less downtime the other departments have, which result in more productivity and efficient business practices.

Once the information technology area of the business is attended to, then it will be a lot easier for departments and individuals to carry out their jobs. The employees will be able to find great uses of software and applications that can enhance business communication. Once that is on the steady increase, then having more of the employees informed about technology and how they can utilize to their advantage, communication and skill-level will most likely improve around the business as a whole. Being a technology company, they are lacking in the one area they needed to focus on the most. Not only this, but once the technology is in place, then senior and rest of upper management will be able to more efficiently communicate to not only their employees, but to other businesses and organizations (Aveta). This will help to make the business grow and expand the horizons of where the business can go in the future. The goal of the business may also change so that they can reach the level that they would like to down the line. The one downside to this change in business is that it will be a slight expensive endeavor to change everything as it is right now because the business has grown so drastically, however it is a cost that the company should be willing to invest in because it means the betterment of the business as a whole and also means that they will be able to tie up all the loose ends that they are seeing currently.

The business needs to try and do trial and error with this new system because at first it will not be as efficient or as effective, but over time the employees and management will learn how to adapt to the new system (Morgan). This will be beneficial for the whole company so that they can try and learn from their previous mistakes and then they can gain so much experience from this learning process so that hopefully in the future they can continue to use the skills that they gain in order to expand the business and keep on improving upon the areas that need improvement. This will make the company able and more well-rounded as a whole in the future, no matter in terms of information technology, communication, or any other aspect of the business (Porter).

Due to all the reasons discussed and more, the action that needs to be taken by Symantec is to pay close attention to the information technology side of the business so that areas such as communication, business organization, effective leadership, and overall company performance improve in the future. Technology is the key to success, and as the world grows more and more into learning about new technologies and practices regarding them, each business needs to pay close attention to their business processes and how they utilize technology in their environment. This is how the business will continue to grow and prosper in the future while new acquisitions are brought up and new gateways to where the business can be heading later on will be useful.

Citations

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