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2

INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PROJECTS

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Introduction

The reliance on digital transformation to expand the business and help new start-ups grow has become a common theme. Digital assets in a business, therefore, need to be strengthened to enable a better flow of sales in the business and reach a wider target audience. The current study focuses towards the development of a management plan for digitally transforming a new Start-up that is currently functional with 3 physical cafes in central London. The idea is to benchmark the digital transformation carried forward in a similar organic coffee business such as Pret a Manger and suggest suitable methods by which the new Start-up could digitally transform the business. Project Portfolio Management (PPM) theories would be used to address the necessary measures needed to counter the challenges that could form as a result of following the digital transformation trend in the business.

Management plan for a digitally transformed business

Challenges pertinent to projects in the digital era and the value of PPM theories

Digital technological solutions are helping businesses expand on a rapid scale and cope with the changing consumer demands periodically. As per the views of Correani et al. (2020), there are certain challenges faced by projects in the digital era as without proper information technology (IT), effective decision-making, collaborative business culture, and risk management efforts, a project

is expected to suffer from failure. Therefore, a looming digital skill gap in the business should be looked after effectively if the new Start-up has to attain success from the application of the new digital marketing and operational measures in the business. As in the case of the new Start-up, only being operational with 3 physical cafes in central London is suggestive of a very low brand exposure among the customers in the UK. Hence, there is an ample degree within the new Start-up to pave for digital transformation in the business and creatively market the product offerings. According to the study by Guinan et al. (2019), increasing complexity between the project tasks becomes hard to manage when a business has to apply a digital project. Without the presence of a proper work breakdown structure, and scheduling tool, it becomes hard to track the developments in the project. Apart from this, the challenge of not using key performance indicators to keep track of the project progress also derails the success of digital projects. Furthermore, a new Start-up would not be having plenty of access to digital resources, hence predicting customer experiences and processing big data will be a big challenge for the business.

Figure 1: UK: software spending in the hospitality industry 2018-2024 (Source: Vailshery., 2022)

As per current reports, hospitality industry spending on software is expected to rise to $346.32 million by the year 2024 (Vailshery., 2022). Hence, there would be a need to shift focus towards digital business solutions to amplify business growth. PPM is identified to be the centralised management of business projects. PPM helps in the process of managing the gap present between the strategy and implementation. Maximising business efficiency with the optimised use of PPM is made possible in businesses. As per the study by Jing

et al. (2021), there are five steps to applying the PPM such as identification of the business objectives and guiding them, capturing ideas, selecting the best projects, validating portfolio feasibility, and monitoring the portfolio. According to the case of the new Start-up, the idea is to digitally pivot and ensure that the services offered are appealing to a wider customer group in the UK. For the new Start-up, the goal is to align the business objective of expanding the sales and multiplying the revenue streams other than the 3 physical cafes in central London. Effective stakeholder communications are developed as a result of PPM, whereas the ability to promote informed decision-making is increased to a certain extent as well. As viewed by Moretto et al. (2022), PPM theories are indicative of the fact that an adequate degree of visibility has to be present in a project from a tactical and strategic point. Increased visibility about a project helps accept the changes in an organisational setting and gain better insights on the cost of the project, quality deliverables, and resource usage.

In the case of Pret A Manger, the new digital customer experience relied on the revolutionary Pret Coffee Subscription service. The development of Pret's first loyalty programme 'Pret Perks' reflected the massive growth of the business in the hospitality sector (PA Consulting, 2023). As in the case of the new Start-up, to succeed in the dynamic hospitality industry it needs to follow the application of a Coffee Subscription service and launch a mobile application that would be compatible across platforms such as iOS and Android. While PPM theories shall help these digital objectives.

Critical evaluation and selection of suitable methodology for the digital transformation project

There are several approaches and techniques applied for the management of projects with a high degree of control and success. According to the views of Marnada et al. (2022), Waterfall, Agile, PRINCE2, Lean and Six Sigma are

identified as the project methodologies that could be applied to enhance the quality outcomes of a project. Among these project methodologies, the Agile project management method is flexible and offers high collaboration opportunities for the stakeholders in the business. These project methodologies are applied based on the volume, domain, and length of a project. For smaller projects, where there is a need to make flexible decisions and use digital technology, the agile methodology seems to be a good fit. It shares a wide array of benefits such as incremental value addition, effective cost management, and fostering team collaboration. As stated by Marnewick & Marnewick (2022), the agile methodology helps in the process of breaking the digital transformation initiative into smaller iterations with a test and learning the process for each of the phases. Hence, the process keeps the door open for considering any kind of additions or changes in a project, throughout the digital transformation process.

According to the case of a new Start-up, a Coffee Subscription service and new app development for the smartphone would require an ample degree of investment in the software. While software based project is tested thoroughly within the Agile methodology, thereby referring to their application in the current project to be a good fit. As mentioned by Bhatnagar & Grosse (2019), team dependent nature of the Agile methodology makes it a viable choice for a digital project as different groups of stakeholders are required to participate to produce quality outcomes in the digital project. As in the case of the new Start-up, stakeholders such as the app developer, founder of the new Start-up in the hospitality business, staff, and marketing team would be required to work collaboratively to succeed with the digital transformation project. According to the study by Buganová & Šimíčková (2019), customer centricity and speed of project delivery could be seen as areas that are positively influenced by the

application of Agile methodology. Since the idea is to make availing services easier from the café, the reliance on smart QR code scanners just like Pret A Manger becomes a long-term solution. On the other end, in-person interactions have slowed, thereby referring to the need for digitalisation in the business as well. Furthermore, the possibility of continuous improvement is assured with the Agile methodology which is also a major value within the PPM.

Application of communication and social engagement initiatives for stakeholder management

Stakeholder management in a project is necessary to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders are distributed with accuracy. A sense of collaboration is developed due to the presence of Agile methodology, but there remains the need for social engagement initiatives to promote digital transformation in the new Start-up. The customers are valuable stakeholders in the business that are required to be socially engaged with the business in an attempt to realise the merit of products and services offered by the business. As per the views of Arora et al. (2019), Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are social media platforms that are used by businesses to socially engage with the stakeholders and take necessary feedback on the products and services to shape them according to the consumer needs. The brand would be looking to rely on the idea of generating creative online content to increase awareness among the customer groups. This would also assure that number of likes, comments, and shares per social media posts would rise and the business would have better brand exposure. Hence, the possibilities for electronic word of mouth (eWOM) would remain there for the new Start-up. As discussed by Dollinger & Vanderlelie (2021), co-creation, collaboration, and co-designing is a social engagement initiative that helps the customer group act as stakeholders in the decision-making of project activities. The co-creation process could be

applied in the current project to discuss with the consumers the type of service experience they would want from the new Start-up such as offering the café products via a dedicated mobile application and offering discounts for new signup.

The co-design suggests the User Centred Design (UCD) within which the user knowledge is used effectively to design the new services. In the current case, the new mobile application development and user interface design could be done based on consumer feedback. Additionally, the co-production process makes use of the available information technology extensively. Here, the service users and developers should collectively engage to test run the new mobile application and verify if there are any more additional inputs required. In an attempt to ensure that there is an ample degree of acceptance for changes in a business surrounding the process of digital transformation, the digital business agility model could be used. According to the views of Saputra et al. (2022), the digital business agility model comprises the factors such as hyper-awareness, informed decision making and fast execution. As in the case of the new Start-up, the staff should be made aware of the fact that customer data should be reviewed thoroughly to predict user preferences with a greater degree of accuracy. This will help form a digital culture in the new Start-up and help make informed decisions based on several key performance metrics such as customer retention, net promoter score, cost per click, customer lifetime value, and many more. Lastly, dynamic use of financial, technological, and human resources will be necessary for the business for fast execution of actions and deliver the digital project successfully.

Frameworks suitable for the digital project

Reach

Application of social media promotions and SEO to target an expansive audience

Act

Online presence across social media and contacting[1] over the mobile application

Convert

Organic traffic generation and higher lead quality

Engage

Loyalty Programme

Table 1: RACE framework applied to the digital project

Reach, Act, Convert, Engage forms the RACE framework as the Agile nature of the framework makes it suitable for digital projects. As per the study by Behera et al. (2022), the RACE framework is a structured, strategic, and data-driven approach to make sure that digital marketing tactics are optimised to generate handsome sales. According the case of a new Start-up, awareness building would be done via increased social media promotions and search engine optimisation (SEO). As viewed by Makrides et al. (2020), diversifying the revenue channel in the business is made possible as a result of effective digital marketing. Similarly, the footsteps of Pret A Manger would be followed by the new Start-up to use Loyalty Programme and establish stronger engagement with customers. RACE framework would allow converting the customers by boosting the quality leads with organic traffic.

Factors

New Start-up

Pret A Manger

Reach

3 stores

370 stores

Loyalty Programme

Need to apply it alongside the app launch

Pret Perks

Virtual training

Need skilled workforce

2000 staff members

Compatibility across iOS app and Android app

Forecasted to be live for both iOS and Android

The mobile app is live for both iOS and Android

Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Moderate compliance is expected

A high level of compliance is present

Brand reputation

Poor due to social inactivity

Award-winning and revolutionary Pret Coffee Subscription service

Table 2: Benchmarking current new Start-up digital transformation with Pret A Manger

Conclusion

The present findings assist infer that the new Start-up can successfully execute the digital transformation with a dependence on the PMM theories and Agile methodology since both share the theme of boosting the flexibility in the business by adding value to the digital assets. RACE framework should be helpful to continue with the digital project for the new Start-up and replicate the success of Pret A Manger in the UK hospitality space.

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1. ~~contacting~~ →
    contact   Confused words   Correctness

2. The strategic   Determiner use (a/an/the/this, etc.)   Correctness

3. ~~role~~ → Role   Confused words   Correctness

4. the COVID-19   Determiner use (a/an/the/this, etc.)   Correctness

5. ~~era~~ → Era   Confused words   Correctness