

UKS31399

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ASSIGNMENT 2

Executive summary

This study has discussed the operational issues of LCT and in this study, it has been found that the major operational issue in this organisation is communication. Therefore, Slack, an integrated communication software has been recommended for LCT. With the help of this software, the company can ensure effective inter-departmental communication in the organisation. However, it is important for the organisation to provide adequate training, computers and special allowance to all the employees. Moreover, it is important to ensure that all the employees are motivated and no employee is feeling isolated at home.

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1. Introduction

This study will be based on the potential solutions and recommendations to facilitate the business operations of Luton Community Training Ltd (LCT). LCT is facing severe problems in communication and data integration and due to this business operations are being hindered. Moreover, due to COVID-19 and remote working communication gaps have become more widen. Dissatisfaction among employees is increasing and they are losing their motivation to work. Therefore, this study presents the required planning and processes to enhance communication. Moreover, measures for effective data processing and data security will be discussed here. In addition, this study provided an estimated cost, which would be required to implement the potential recommendations and solutions to mitigate the hindering issues.

2. Recommendations

Recommendation 1, Providing appropriate computing devices for remote working

During COVID-19, and lockdown restrictions in the UK, employees of LCT were given the opportunity to work remotely. This idea was accepted and praised by the employees, particularly by those employees who stay at a long distance from Liton and also by those who stay with their families. The employees did not raise any objections in the initial days to work with their personal devices. However, for a lengthy period of time, it is recommended that all the employees should be provided with computing devices by LCT. Organisations have an obligation to provide computing devices to their employees for remote working because personal devices are not solely allocated for official purposes, whereas an office computing device demands a completely dedicated system for office work only.

Recommendation 2, Integrated platform for communication

The employees at LCT communicate through emails and this leads to miscommunication because different departments communicate with each other through emails thus an email inbox of the employees gets filled with a high volume of emails, which eventually causes miscommunication, delays in action and other operations hindrances. Therefore, it is recommended here that dedicated software for communication must be introduced. However, these platforms must be easily accessible from mobile devices because it is not possible for “The Facilities Manitaince Team” to carry a computer device for everyone. It has been argued by Yang *et al.* (2020), that data breaches and data security should be given high priority while implementing a new platform for communication. Therefore, Slack is the recommended platform for LCT, because Slack allows

organisations to delete messages permanently and ensures data security at the same time. Moreover, the General Administration Staff for this company have to handle a pile of Word and Excel files, which made it quite difficult for them to work with full productivity. Slack will allow them to save and use their file at any time at their convenience.

Recommendation 3, Special allowances for connectivity

Employees of LCT feel that the management of LCT has supported them during the difficult times of COVID-19 by providing them with WFH opportunities. However, the major concern that has been raised by staff of different departments is connectivity issues. During remote working, Video conferencing, zoom meetings, and other business requirements demand a stable high-speed internet connection. It has been argued by Cetrulo *et al.* (2020), that a basic and foremost requirement for remote working is uninterrupted and stable high-speed internet so that employees can work with ease and effectivity. However, many staff at LCT do not have a broadband connection and they have been facing difficulty working remotely. Some employees have purchased broadband connections at their own expense. It is the responsibility of the organisations to provide special allowances for remote working because employees are working for their organisations and consequently organisations have this obligation to provide an allowance for broadband connection.

Recommendation 4, Adequate training for familiarisation with the new platform

It is recommended that training of the employees be ensured so that they get familiar with the new platform. The employees of LCT have been using emails for communication for a long and as a result, they are not familiar with an integrated system of communication. Therefore, it is quite obvious that some employees will require adequate training. It has been stated by Guterresa *et al.* (2020) that training is required for employees in order to make them familiarise with technologies and business operations. Employees are used to the existing mode of communication and the sudden adoption of new technology can hamper the productivity of employees. Therefore, a training programme needs to be organised for all the employees so that they can understand and utilise the full potential of the new technology.

Recommendation 5, Supplying motivation and support

Remote working has allowed employees at LCT to work from their homes. However, it has been found that many employees feel isolated and demotivated while they work from their own space. Therefore, it is recommended that proper communication with the employees needs to be ensured.

Here, communication should not be related only to business-related work because in office environment employees communicate beyond their job and this helps in the process of their socialisation. It has been argued by Galanti *et al.* (2021) that employees feel lonely and demotivated because at home they do not get proper guidance and at times they need to work beyond their usual office hours, which makes it quite challenging for them. Employees at LCT complain that while they were working from the office they had the opportunity to talk beyond their official duties and this helped them to stay motivated. Therefore, the management team of LCT should ensure that they are properly communicating with the employees and at the same time they are motivating the employees in their work. Moreover, it is recommended that the management team should take provide adequate guidance in case an employee needs support.

Recommendation 6, Mutual Trust

The senior management team of LCT Constantly monitor the world activity of the employees. This strategy of the senior management is not fruitful enough because employees do not like the idea of being under surveillance all the time. It has been stated by Lee and Li (2021) that the management team of an organisation should exhibit a minimum level of trust in their employees so that the employees feel motivated and valued.

3. Work Breakdown Structure

Project	
1	Adopting a new communication platform - Slack
2.	Training of the employees for the newly introduced platform
3.	Providing computing devices to the employees
4.	Allowance for broadband connection
5.	Strengthening inter-departmental communication for enhancing work productivity and ensuring customer satisfaction

Table 1: WBS

(Source: Self-Created)

In LCT the major concern is communication, before COVID-19 communication through Email was still somewhat effective. But after the arrival of COVID-19 and the commencement of remote working, communication through e-mail has been extremely difficult. The employees are complaining that they are exhausted from checking mail and the actual work is being left out or

delayed. Communication has become difficult because there are different departments in the company. The customer service department is more engaged with reading mail and sharing files, rather and moreover, it has been seen mail takes a lengthy time in the communication process and as a result, customers have to wait even for weeks for their solutions. This has eventually led to increased customer dissatisfaction. Slack is one such platform that can provide an integrated communication platform to employees (Slack, 2023). Therefore the very first work that needs to be executed in the company is to introduce Slack to the employees. Every employee will be categorised according to their department and designation. This would further help to maintain transparency in the communication. Besides this, Slack can be easily accessed from a mobile phone and thus it can easily be used by the “Facilities Maintenance Team”. Employees of this department cannot carry a laptop or computer everywhere because their job is field base. Therefore, slack can be most beneficial for them in the sense that it will allow them to communicate effectively from their mobile device.

The second most crucial work that needs to be executed is the training of the employees. The employees of this organisation have been habituated to emails for their daily official communication. Therefore, they lack essential and practical knowledge of using an integrated platform. However, it has been argued by Zeebaree *et al.* (2019) that an integrated business system is required particularly because it allows an organisation to make strategic decisions within a short time span. The communication gap severely hinders the decision-making process, in fact, in an organisation where communication is not effective enough, business decisions are not as effective as they could be with proper communication. However, the training of the employees is needed to get maximum benefits of the integrated software because with proper training they would feel more comfortable and motivated to work in that new system.

The third stage of this project is to provide computing devices to all employees, who are working remotely. Organisations should provide computing devices to work remotely because personal devices are not for office work in the sense that official work includes confidential information which can be more vulnerable to be breached in personal devices. Moreover, the employees of this organisation are of the view that they do not like to use their personal devices for office purposes. In fact, some of the employees do not have a computer or laptop at their home and consequently, they are unable to work remotely. Considering the concerns of the employees, LCT must provide computing devices to all employees.

Lack of stable and high-speed internet connection does not permit the employees to work with ease from their homes. Moreover, it has been seen that employee raised complaints about the fact that they have to bear the expenses of broad connection for their office work, which is otherwise not required for them. It has been argued by Marshall *et al.* (2021) that it is a basic responsibility for organisations to provide allowances to employees for broadband connection. This would further help to motivate the employees to work remotely with full motivation and productivity. Therefore, after providing computing devices, LCT must provide allowances for broadband connection.

Finally, the last and one of the crucial steps of this project is to establish effective connectivity among all the departments. LCT even before the arrival of COVID-19 was unable to maintain effective departmental conflict. Emails slower down the process of communication and in many situations it has been seen that employees have missed out on vital information due to heavy email traffic. Therefore, with the help of the integrated software, the company need to establish inter-departmental communication.

2 Network Diagram

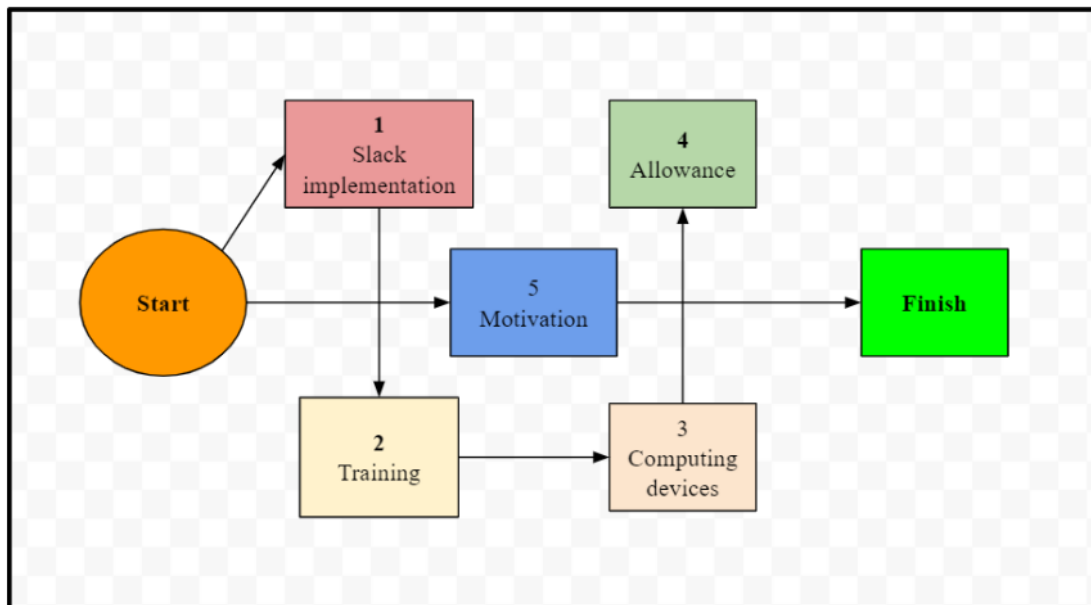


Figure 1: Network Diagram

(Source: Self-Created)

The above figure describes the proposed network diagram of the project and from the above figure, the entire progression of the project has been shown step by step. The project needs to begin with the implementation of the integrated platform. It can be expected that after implementing the software “Slack” for communication the employees at LCT can communicate effectively. However, this process needs to be implemented gradually and employees should be provided with some time to adjust to the new system. It has been argued by Chang *et al.* (2019) that the existing system affects the employees' behaviour and they need some time to adapt to a new system.

A training programme needs to be organised to orient all the employees to the new system. Moreover, some employees have urged that they do not feel confident enough to use the new software and that they need sufficient training. Therefore, a training programme will be substantially beneficial for the employees because on hand this would orient them to the new software, on the other hand, they would feel motivated and confident to use the new software. Thus, it is expected that the business performance of this organisation will be boosted and enhanced because appropriate communication will lead to appropriate decision-making and finally to enhanced customer satisfaction.

After the adaptation of the new software “Slack” and the compilation of the training programme, the senior management of this organisation needs to focus on delivering computing devices like a laptop or a computer to all the employees. The employees have argued that for a short length it was fine for them to use their personal devices but for a long time they expect that their organisation would provide computing devices to them. Therefore, to ensure maximum customer satisfaction, at this stage, the organisation must provide computing devices.

After providing computing devices, the company have to ensure that all the employees have a steady internet connection. A steady internet connection is required in remote working, employees frequently need to have video conferences for which a high-speed internet connection is required. The company have to provide allowances for this because all employees do not have this facility at home. Finally, the project will be finished but the managers of this company continuously need to supply so that the employees do not feel isolated and discouraged.

4. Critical Path Analysis

Tas k	Activity	Duration
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A	Implementation of Slack	4 days
B	Training	5 days
C	Delivery of the computing devices	10 days
D	Allowance	2 days
E	Inter-department communication	14 days

Table 2: Critical Path Analysis

(Source: Self-Created)

It has been estimated that within 4 days the managers of the company can create accounts for all the employees in Slack and subscriptions for all them can be purchased within those days. After that, the company need to organise a training programme so the employees get familiar with the features of Slack; it has been presumed that this training programme will be continued for a minimum of 5 days. After training, all LCT has to provide computers to all the employees, it has been expected that within 10 days this will be executed by the managers of the company. After that, the company has to provide allowance for broadband, so that all employees can have high-speed internet connection for remote working. After that, that, it has been expected that within 14 days of continuous practice all the employees will become deft at using Slack and they will start communicating effectively. Thus, it is expected that the entire project will be completed within 35 days. However, the company has to ensure that it provides strong support to the employees so that the employees feel motivated to work remotely and they do not feel isolated or lonely.

5. Risk Management Plan

	Consequences		
	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low</i>
New communication platform			
Training of the employees			

Computing devices			
Allowance for broadband connection			
Inter-departmental communication			

Table 3: Risk Management Plan

(Source: Self-Created)

New communication platform-Slack

The respective study has analyses regarding the risk factors, and due to rise of the communication gap between the employees highlighted a vast number of concerns in the company. Engaging work-from-home services are necessary to engage with a proper communication platform or channel which necessary aspect for helping other team members working on the same project. An effective communication platform is necessary which held in straightening the sense of belonging and engagement. To mitigate the highlighted issue, the adaptation of a new communication platform is necessary. Engaging Slack, which is a messaging app, especially for business and organisation work helps in connecting people in terms of the distribution of information which is necessary for work purposes. Slack Is a messaging app which provides real-time information for connecting with the team and it includes the transmission of media and documents at the same time (Kates et al., 2020). It is essential for remote working aspects and it also helps in staying connected with coworkers during the working period.

Training of the employees

Respective challenges in terms of using the new communication platform are representing people to work with the new communication platform and due to new technology engagement, it is harder for the employees to work with the messaging application. Hence, for overcoming the challenge, proper education and training are necessary to provide to the employees through which it is easier to be applied in the workforce. Management and team leader engagement are necessary for the training purpose for introducing a new platform to the employees through which it is easier to get connected with the work. According to the rich management planning, it provided moderate results where employees showed interest in training for the adaptation of communication platforms

in the work. Training engages less amount of time where the training must be provided in the leisure period which never hampers the workflow.

Computing devices

LCT has to provide computing systems to all its employees and this would be quietly costly. LCT is a non-profit organisation, therefore, this cost may exceed the budget limit of the project. Moreover, the newly bought computing devices may have some manufacturing defects, which would further create disruptions in business operations. Proper investment needs to be assured so that the company do not face a scarcity of funds.

Allowance for broadband connection

49 employees need to be provided with a broadband connection and the expense of this would be quite high. The company did not have to bear this much expense for broadband connection when the employees were working from the office. Therefore, arranging adequate funds for the broadband connection of all employees may exceed the estimated cost of the budget for the project. Therefore, to mitigate this risk, the company has to focus on securing proper investment.

Inter-departmental communication

The major success of this project with be an enhanced and optimised inter-departmental conflict. Achieving this goal is less risky, however, the success of this depends on the earlier steps of this project. It can be expected that if all the employees are provided with the necessary training, counter device and broadband connection, within few weeks the company can witness a highly effective inter-departmental communication.

6. Proposed budget

Task	Cost
Slack subscription	£392 (per month)
Training	£500
Computing devices	£5000
Allowance	£ 2000 (per month)
Inter-departmental communication	No cost is applied

Table 4: Proposed Budget

(Source: Self-Created)

The company has a total 49 active employees and every employee needs to have an account in Slack. The average monthly charge of Slack per user is around £8. Therefore, the company have to spend around £392 per month so that all the employees can communicate through Slack. During the training period, the company's business operations would be on hold for a few days and proper trainers need to be allocated for the training process, thereover, it has been estimated that around £500 will be the cost of training. After completion of the training, the company has to ensure to provide computing devices to all the employees. It has been estimated that the cost of this would be around £5000. In addition, the company has to spend around \$2000 as allowance for broadband connection. Therefore, so far the estimated cost of this project stands at **£6,092**. However, the benefits that this project will ensure and bestow upon the organisation are invaluable because Slack will ensure highly effective communication in the organisation. Effective communication will result in effective business decisions. Moreover, it will enhance the productivity and agility of all the departments, consequently customer satisfaction will be enhanced. This project will ensure enhanced inter-departmental communication and for this, the company do not need to spend a single pound; it is just a matter of time. After training and guidance, it can be expected within a few weeks the business operations of this company will be more enhanced and effective.

7. Conclusion

To conclude this study, it can be noted here that the major organisation problem at LCT is a lack of communication and employee motivation. Lack of communication is the result of the absence of integrated communication software, on the other hand, employee motivation is lacking in the organisation because employees are feeling isolated and socially distanced while they are working remotely. Therefore, the company has to adopt Slack, an integrated communication software. However, proper training, allowance for broadband connection and support should be provided as well. Finally, to ensure that all the departments are communicating properly, the company has to make strategic business decisions.

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