

Daniel Veretenov

ORGB 3201

12/10/2024

Organizational Behavior Analysis: Syntes AI

In this analysis, I'll examine Syntes AI, where I've worked as an ML Engineer for over a year. Syntes AI is a small company that initially focused on data collection and analytics. They hired me when they decided to expand into AI tools for their platform. Their data collection department works well, and no one has any issues with that side of the business. However, the AI portion faces significant challenges in technical leadership, business-developer communication, and remote work culture. These issues impact organizational effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and project outcomes. I will apply organizational behavior concepts to analyze these challenges and propose possible solutions.

The biggest issue at Syntes AI is the absence of strong technical leadership in the AI division. The leadership structure currently involves three people, with overlapping responsibilities and other responsibilities outside of the AI division: the CEO, the Scrum Master, and my direct lead. While both the CEO and my lead possess technical expertise, they lack the time to effectively drive the AI projects forward. The Scrum Master, who oversees all development, lacks specific expertise in AI development. This leadership vacuum creates several organizational problems. Because there is no clear technical direction, the cohesion between developers and designers suffers, making the development process very slow. Effective leadership is crucial for the development process. A project manager provides a clear roadmap of

the different tasks that need to be accomplished, which then assigns the specific task to the respected employee, and assigns a deadline. This ensures efficiency between the developers and designers, so all of the parts come together towards the end. This is even more important for specialized fields like AI, where expert knowledge is needed to guide the team's progress to stay on track. Because we don't have such a project manager, the development is slow and the deadlines are constantly being pushed back. This lack of a technical project manager also impacts employee motivation as developers, because we feel like we are putting in all of this work without going anywhere or being uncertain if the feature will ever be developed.

Another issue within Syntes AI is the communication breakdown between technical employees and business-side employees and stakeholders. This creates organizational silos and poor cross-functional communication which causes a lot of problems and challenges for the developers, especially their efficiency and effectiveness. The product vision lacks clarity and detail, leaving developers with insufficient guidance on functionality and design. This leads to developers taking it into their own hands to make assumptions about what the product should look like and function. There is a disconnect between what the client wants and what the developers think the clients want. We are selling these tools to clients at the end of the day, so it would be great to share the feedback that current clients made during testing to improve the functionality and usability of the tools. One potential issue is that business employees or shareholders may not fully grasp the limitations and development process of AI tools. This lack of understanding can lead them to make unrealistic promises about functionality to clients or fail to suggest the full range of potential AI applications.

Another more interesting issue is the remote work environment at Syntes AI. Remote work is relatively new and the executives don't know how to maximize productivity, organizational culture, and team cohesion. While remote work offers advantages like allowing teams to work across different time zones and countries, there are challenges at Syntes AI. We lack team cohesion due to limited team-building activities. Currently, we don't have any team-building activities, the most is if someone is sharing anything interesting other than work during meetings, which is rare. Because of this, we don't know much about each other's backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses. This often forces us to rely on ourselves instead of seeking help, as we are unsure who can provide support. This lack of social identity and connection, and around 5 hours of team interactions a week, can be frustrating and demotivating. This can lead to limited idea-sharing, limited creativity, and problem-solving capabilities.

Luckily, I am in the perfect position to fix these issues in the AI division. I am currently working as an ML engineer but right after graduation, I am being promoted to a project management position. I voiced these concerns to my employer and offered to expand my current responsibilities to project management and interacting with clients as the technical manager. My recommendations are structured as an action plan that addresses the issues and challenges in technical leadership, communication, and remote culture.

To improve the technical leadership and communications, I will first interact with the clients to understand their needs and expectations for AI tools. When I get the general picture of what the AI tool they want, I will hold multiple meetings to discuss implementation and design. The meetings would be ordered by brainstorming, UI/UX, and then development. These

meetings would help me create a roadmap that the whole team must follow to stay on the correct path during the development process. When the roadmap is developed, regular technical meetings will be held to understand how far along each section is. Continued channels of feedback with the clients will be held to discuss new technical and user interface features and share the feedback with the team. This would create a roadmap for the developers to base their development on and see progress in the project.

To enhance the remote work culture, I will first establish a meeting so everyone understands each other strengths and weaknesses. They will need to create some sort of presentation or talk about their previous work and experiences. I will also create multiple meetings in which the developers will meet the business-side employees to discuss what they are working on. I will encourage a 30-minute weekly discussion to let the team share anything that happened that week or what they are excited about in the future.

The challenges faced by Syntes AI in technical leadership, communication, and remote work culture require a holistic approach. By fixing these issues through a structured approach, the AI division can improve its operational effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and project outcomes. These improvements will all start with technical leadership, the leadership will enhance communication, and because of the improvements in communication, it will enhance the remote work culture. If these issues are addressed it will lead to a more cohesive and effective work environment that better serves both its employees and clients.