*Problem Faced by Symantec*

The problem faced by Symantec is in its rapid growth leading to a poorly developed information flow control system. This leads to poor communication between organizational units of the company.

*Industry Competitive Analysis*

Mission Statement: The goal of Symantec is to design, deploy and support a diverse range of information management software across the world

Generic Strategy: The general strategy of Symantec is Diversification. Through a wide variety of information management software, Symantec is looking to be applicable to a variety of customer needs and in turn, form long term commitments between themselves and customers.

Porter’s 5 Forces (*Michaux 1)*:

1. Competitive Rivalry – High, there are several major players such as Lotus and Ashton-Tate, after a company has a contract formed with one of these competitors they will be locked in and off the market for Symantec to sell to.
2. Supplier Power – Low, the only supplies that are going to be in constant demand are electricity and computer parts for the workplace.
3. Buyer Power – High, there are other high-profile companies in the market for customers to choose from knowing they are a finite resource.
4. Threat of Substitution – High, IT systems are constantly changing and updating, the decision to change provider or undertake a personal development effort are possible substitutes to Symantec’s services.
5. Threat of New Entry – High, In IT the options for new development companies to enter the field are high. The barrier of entry into the marketplace isn’t particularly high if the company isn’t looking to take many clients initially.

Value Chain vs Value Shop: Symantec is a Value Chain organization, after developing and deploying their software there isn’t any personalization in the products only support. The rest of their focus is Marketing and Sales.

Organizational Structure: Symantec is a Divisional organization *(Cash 109)* broken down into several organizational units located in a variety of locations under the umbrella of one brand. The brand of Symantec has also acquired several other IT companies to have under their brand while leaving that company as its own organizational entity for decision making

*Stakeholders*

1. Stockholders – The stockholders have a financial interest the long-term success of the company they own stock in.
2. Employees – The employees are dependent on the success of Symantec for continued source of revenue to support themselves.
3. Clients – The clients currently using Symantec services are dependent on the success of Symantec for the business processes utilizing those services to continue uninterrupted.

*Actions & Effects*

1. Do Nothing: Symantec could elect to continue down their current path without changing the control systems in place or information flows. This course of action will lead to miscommunication and decreased productivity and reliability in their services and support.
2. Change the Control Systems around the flow of information and leave the HP System and Novel Network alone: It appears Symantec has a policy to have constantly changing policies and the different departments all seem to work on their own schedules to prevent too many budgets or reports overlapping at the same times. Under Morgan’s Images of an Organization, I would treat this as an Organism with a need for constant change and adaptation *(Morgan 1).* Symantec should invest time into redeveloping the control systems around these information flows as the constant changes occurring through rapid acquisition seem to be exposing their weaknesses in communication. *(CP 142)*
3. Focus time and resources to updating the HP system and Novel Network hiring knowledgeable individual to admin the system: Another approach Symantec can take toward remedying the poor flow of information is putting time and resources into the two IT systems already utilized by the company and work to update those systems to prevent downtime. In addition, they would need to hire individuals to head the IS department that are knowledgeable with the system or spend resources on training them thoroughly *(CP 143)*.

*My Choice*

I would opt for option number 2, To change the control systems around information flows and leave the HP Systems and Novel Network alone. I believe under this scenario the company spends the least amount of money on systems that will need to be constantly updated anyway, and instead target the core issue which is the control systems in place surrounding the flow of information, who is being reported to, by whom, and when all seem to be issues that should be more clearly defined for easy translation to companies acquired by Symantec. With the flow of information more properly sorted the systems can be updated at later dates more efficiently and effectively to target the new flow defined by Symantec. If the flow can be organized properly the short downtimes that would be very costly to be fixed could be worked around to prevent the slack time *(Goldratt)* that leaves middle managers with excess workforce. Doing nothing in this scenario prevents further acquisitions without speeding up the decline of Symantec as the company would breakdown internally over time with thew current issues in information flows. Pouring resources into the HP system and Novel network is also more of a temporary fix than something Symantec could rely on to be a solution long term. The system would get solved to the scale that Symantec currently operates. But with plans of more acquisitions the fix would be short lived as more divisional units would need to be tied into the system and the schedule around reports and budgets would still be undergoing change every 6 months which leaves the information flow foundational issue unsolved.

*Citations*

Michaux Stéphanie, Cadiat, A.-C., & Probert, C. (2015). *Porter's five forces*. 50Minutes.com.

1. Performed an industry competitive analysis with Porter’s 5 forces

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(142) “The purpose of control is to create a set of conditions that improve the likelihood that desirable outcomes will be achieved, despite changing technologies, markets, competitive conditions and other features of an organization’s volatile environment.”

It is described that control systems are important for improving results in constantly changing environments.

(143) “Managers increase the likelihood of achieving desirable outcomes by selecting people with appropriate skills, values and personality.”

It is described that picking people with the right skills is part of people control to help increase the likelihood of a positive outcome.

Cash, J. I. (1994). *Building the information-age organization: Structure, control, and information technologies*. Irwin.

(109) Cash describes a Divisional organizational structure and its properties

MORGAN, GARETH. *Images of Organization*. CORWIN PRESS INC, 2018.

1. Describes an Organization through the metaphor of an Organism and its constant need to change and adapt to the environment.

Goldratt, Eliyahu M., and Jeff Cox. *The Goal: A Process of Ongoing Improvement*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2016.

1. Goldratt emphasized the importance of managing slack time in a process