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# **Symantec Case Study**

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# Overview

Symantec was founded by Gary Hendrix, an artificial intelligence and language processing specialist, in 1982. Symantec merged with C&E software to create Symantec Corporation. While the organization grew, it continued to acquire other companies including Breakthrough Software, Living Videotext, and Think Technologies. These companies were located elsewhere from Symantec's headquarters and remained in their locations after their acquisition. Post-acquisition, the companies would have an executive staff member sent to their location to aid in the transition and assess manager performance.

## Mission Statement

Symantec Corporation satisfies the needs of business users through the design, delivery, and support of diversified software lines that handle information management, productivity, and software development.

## Generic Strategy

Symantec attempts to make their services unique and distinguishable in comparison to their competitors, resulting in a differentiation business strategy being followed (Porter). They provide software for both Macintosh and MS-DOS systems allowing them to offer their services to a wide range of customers acting as an economy of scope (Barker). Symantec had an addition of 9 products, provided upgrades to older products, and is known for never missing

scheduled release dates. These qualities allow Symantec to differentiate themselves from others in their share of the market and propel them as a leader.

## Organizational Structure

Symantec operates with a matrix organizational strategy. The company is organized into decentralized product groups with centralized functions. According to Cash, a multinational organization may need to coordinate across functions, products, and geographical locations (Barker). Symantec operates 5 product groups that include data management, project management, outlining and presentations, language products, and utilities. The development, marketing, quality assurance, support and management of each product is managed and controlled by its own product group. Outside of product development, centralized departments handled finances, human resources, sales, database management, and utilities at corporate headquarters. Outside of corporate headquarters, there were still some centralized functions such as purchasing, manufacturing, and training in different locations. This organizational structure allows each product group to create their own culture, which according to Morgan is self-organizing and always evolving (Morgan).

## Porter's Five Forces Analysis

1. Competition – High Threat: Symantec operates in the software industry which has high competition. Their competitors include Ashton-Tate and Lotus, both of which are well-established companies.

2. New Entrants – High Threat: The threat of new entrants is high for Symantec because of the market they operate in. Software and technology is a straightforward industry to get into as all you require is a computer and programming expertise allowing many new entrants the opportunity to enter.
3. Substitutes - Threat: The threat of substitutes is high due to the large size of the industry. Symantec's competition is able to create new products, improve on existing products, or replicate software already on the market.
4. Suppliers – Low Threat: The bargaining power of suppliers is low for Symantec. They maintain relationships with two main suppliers, Hewlett Packard (HP) and Novell LAN. While these companies provide them with services, Symantec also develops software in-house.
5. Customers – Low Threat: The bargaining power of customers is low for Symantec. The price of the services offered is set by the market due to competition. They must maintain a competitive price, but buyers will choose to stay with an organization they are familiar with and exercise customer purchase behavior by staying loyal to a company in a saturated market.

## The Problem

The internal processes of Symantec are being questioned due to the rapid growth the organization is experiencing. There is a lack of establishing and maintaining communication channels at work. Product groups were not used to sharing information outside of their domain or reporting to a parent unit. The deficiency of proper communication and volatility is causing

Symantec to disable itself. There have been attempts to remedy the situation at hand by incorporating newsletters, reports, and additional meetings. Despite these attempts, there is a lack of supervision that could allow the product groups to operate collaboratively.

## The Stakeholders

1. Symantec Employees: The day to day functions of the employees are directly impacted by the lack of communication. All employees including those working under acquired companies are included. They also experience pay increases/decreases depending on the success of Symantec.
2. Symantec Executives: Executives within Symantec are responsible for decision making within the organization. They are in charge of information flows which directly affects how the information can be communicated throughout the company. They are also responsible for creating and fostering the company culture.
3. Symantec Shareholders: Shareholders invest in Symantec with hopes of increasing their investment to return a profit. The performance of Symantec will dictate the return investors will see on their investment and future investments.
4. Symantec Customers: The customers would benefit from Symantec delivering products more efficiently through an improved communication flow. If the communication issue is not fixed, customers have the option to switch to a different product.

# Alternative Solutions

1. Do Nothing: If this course of action is taken, Symantec's communication issues will persist. The current MIS system that is implemented will continue to stay in place along with the communication tools. The growth of the organization may experience hindrance in the future, but the profits would continue to rise so long as new products are being developed.

## Impact on Stakeholders:

1. Symantec Employees: They day to day functions of the employees are dictated by the communication through the company. If Symantec chooses to do nothing, work will be prevented from being accomplished and employees will continue to be frustrated. If employees continue to be frustrated, they may leave the company and go elsewhere such as a competitor.
2. Symantec Executives: The executives within the organization will continue to operate the way they have been. One of the job functions of the executives is to promote the organization's culture, but the lack of communication is preventing that from occurring which may push Symantec behind its competitors.
3. Symantec Shareholders: As long as Symantec is growing, and profits continue to increase, the shareholders of the organization will not be too impacted. Should the organization see a negative shift in the profits the shareholders would not be likely to continue their investment.

4. Symantec Customers: The customers of Symantec would continue to receive the same caliber of products and service. The environment that Symantec operates in is highly competitive giving customers other options if they are no longer satisfied.
2. Improve MIS Structure: The information flow and collaboration amongst business units is hindering Symantec from continuing to be a top competitor in the market. The current email provider in place is not reliable and corrupt emails are sent frequently. Symantec must find a replacement that will not have these constant complications. The issues that the MIS department faces would be much easier to handle if there was a system in place that prioritized tickets based on their impact to the organization rather than employee rank.

Impact on Stakeholders:

1. Symantec Employees: There will be less corrupt emails sent and the communication of technical issues will be able to be more clearly communicated. MIS issues would be addressed based on priority allowing the issues that need to get fixed quickly that opportunity.
2. Symantec Executives: The executives within the organization will see an increase in the number of solved tickets because of the prioritization in place. There will also be a decrease in the complaints about the email system as it will be more reliable and consistent.
3. Symantec Shareholders: As long as Symantec is growing, and profits continue to increase, the shareholders of the organization will not be too impacted. Should



the organization see a negative shift in the profits the shareholders would not be likely to continue their investment.

4. Symantec Customers: The customers of Symantec would receive an increase in the caliber of products and service, increasing their satisfaction. If the customers are satisfied, they are more likely to maintain their loyalty to Symantec.
  
3. Implement Communication Result Control: According to Cash, control systems are in place to increase the likelihood that a business will produce desirable results and control systems help attain company goals (Barker). Symantec desires a culture that will allow open collaboration amongst business units, however, the proper controls are not in place. Morgan states that leaders must understand how they can shape and create meaning that guide organized action (Morgan). Employees at Symantec are currently rewarded based on the self-evaluation of their dedication to the company which can be arbitrary. Leaders of Symantec could motivate employees and provide rewards based on collaboration and communication instead which creates a new result control.

Impact on Stakeholders:

1. Symantec Employees: The employees of Symantec would be able to directly benefit from the increase in communication and collaboration. They will receive monetary compensation for collaborating with one another and contribute to the overall company culture.
  
2. Symantec Executives: The executives of Symantec will have to undersee the implementation of these controls to ensure they are put in place effectively.

Executives may experience praise from the increase in communication and changes to company culture.

3. Symantec Shareholders: As long as Symantec is growing, and profits continue to increase, the shareholders of the organization will not be too impacted. Should the organization see a negative shift in the profits the shareholders would not be likely to continue their investment.
4. Symantec Customers: The customers of Symantec would see an impact based on the collaboration and communication that is going on between employees, alluding to increased quality of services and products. If the customer is satisfied, it will remain loyal to Symantec.

## Recommendation

I would recommend Symantec to implement a communication result control. Through the implementation of this control, collaboration would increase amongst business units and there is a monetary incentive to do so for employees. IT control systems are imperative to creating conditions that allow desirable outcomes to be achieved, even in an evolving environment.

Symantec's company culture will continue to evolve based on the incentives in place.

Implementing this control is not the be all end all, but it can contribute to the overall solution to the problem. Incentivizing the communication between employees will help to create a standard that is upheld throughout the organization. Once this standard is discovered, it will become easier to have a threshold for what is acceptable. There will eventually need to be an upgrade to the communication channels that are in place otherwise MIS will continue to see

problems. If Symantec chooses to do nothing, it will continue as it has until the organization has run its course and loses customers to their competitors. Along with that, if they chose to only upgrade the MIS structure the employees are still not incentivized to collaborate and utilize the features. Communication would be increased, but it would not be enough to justify the cost without first igniting employees with a drive to improve the information flow of the organization.

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