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Case 4 – 2: Symantec

**Organizational structure**

An organizational structure indicates how various activities are to be done to achieve the organization’s goals. The activities include the roles, rules, and responsibilities of the workforce in the organization (Raymond, 2016). The flow of information, which is a significant factor in a business's success, is determined by the organizations' structure. Symantec was founded in 1982 by an Artificial Intelligence and language processing expert, Gary Hendrix, and was based in Cupertino, California. Gordon Eubanks, a C&E founder, later merged with Symantec in 1984 to form the Symantec Corporation. After the merge, Eubanks became the president while Hendrix became the vice president in advanced technology. Symantec products included 15 main software packages that operated on both IBM MS-DOS systems and Macintosh systems (*Broadcom Inc. | Connecting Everything*, n.d.).

Eubanks believed in acquiring the best products possible. He did this by acquiring three companies in 1987, Breakthrough Software, Living Videotext, and Think Technologies. Once the companies were acquired, they become product groups of Symantec, and they were not required to relocate. Instead, Eubanks would send an executive staff member to the new product group to facilitate the transition. The executive vice president, Rod Turner, worked to identify acquisitions for Symantec.

**Structure**

Symantec was divided into five product groups with centralized functions. Each group contributed to individual product development, marketing, quality control, support, and management. Other functions such as finance, human resource, and sales were handled in the organization's headquarters. Two of the product groups, database management, and utilities, were located in corporate headquarters. Project management was in Novato while outlining, and presentation was in Mountain View, and language products were in Bedford.

Each team designed their products independently of the other groups and receiving help from Hendrix when needed. Once a product is developed, the product group educates the sales force, the technical support staff, and customer service staff. The public relations department devise a product launch strategy while the marketing manager handles the advertising. The sales manager handles the field sales agents of Symantec products.

**Information Flow**

Symantec growth led to the increase of employees and the revenue generated, and this led to the use of the available systems to service the growing demand in the market (Bagad, 2008). Communication between the employees and management was crucial in their decision making. Rod Turner and Dana Siebert would discuss customizing their international sales strategies because of global demand growth. Product group managers would discuss product launches with sales managers. In return, sales managers would communicate with group managers to know the new product features, pricing issues, and how different the latest product is from the old one.

Besides the few information exchange channels, there were meetings scheduled regularly and issuing publications and reports. Symantec also printed quarterly newsletters, which included general information about the company. The international sales department prepared mails and monthly newsletters for their international partners and their products' exclusive distributors.

Bob Dyke, the CFO, used to distribute notes taken in executive meetings to all managers. Eubanks planned to have informal lunches where small, randomly picked employees met with executive members to discuss employees' issues. He also gained information by walking around as the employees performed their daily activities; this allowed him to hear information that would not have reached him.

Symantec planned and held traditional product marketing and engineering meetings to bring all employees from their departments to address these issues. Still, some found information flow from the market to the company was insufficient. Hendrix, responsible for solving software development and designing software, saw a need for people to reserve enough time for communication. Eubanks also believed in people communicating with each other and hoped to have meetings for the entire company.

**Incentives**

In 1990, Symantec developed a new bonus plan where all employees, managers, non-managers, and all software developers shared profit. The product groups were given money to divide amongst their members. The bonus was worth between two and twenty-five percent of the base salary. A third of the bonus was based on the group's performance, while the remainder was based on the company's performance.

Sales representatives would receive 15 percent of their commission based on the achievement of specific objectives. Product groups' product success depended on their ability to encourage their sales force effectively. Eubanks believed this type of competition to be healthy and productive. Symantec employees were supposed to write a list of objectives to fulfill quarterly. The performance of each employee was measured according to the number of goals that were fulfilled. Employees filled evaluation forms, which Dave Sornson (Director of human resource) criticized for being the same for all the employees despite the employees being from different job types.

**Information Technology**

Symantec used two central systems in their operations, a Hewlett-Packard(HP) system and a Network system. The company first used Hewlett-Packard 3000, which was running on its full capacity. Dyke had to find a more extensive system that would incorporate the growth. He chose HP 935, which implemented a Reduced Instruction Set Computation (RISC) architecture, which bypassed rarely used instructions and diverted all the computing power to high volume transactions. After adopting the new systems, Symantec had to find a new MIS manager, and for the time being, they used software engineers for the role. Ed Paige, experienced with HP systems, and ASK commercial software, was recruited for the position.

Until mid-1989, the system worked well, but once the company grew even more extensive, the system could not process many orders. It became frustrating to many employees, as many did not have work to do when the systems were down.

The Novell LAN was used to connect the IBM PCs and clones in the company. All employees had access to e-mails while the software developers had access to the central file service used for programming. The 80 Macintoshes could not use the e-mail software, and where they were used, the users would require IBM PCs or clones to access the network. The Network Courier, Symantec e-mail system can send messages to a person, group, or the entire company. Employees also communicated through phone-mails or regular phones. These methods were frustrating and unreliable. E-mails sent to a group of people were unreliable because some people would not get the e-mail, as mentioned by Turner. Paige wanted Symantec to buy CC mail, but the board members belonging to the other company's board wanted theirs bought.

**Porter Five Force and Industry Competitive Analysis.**

Symantec was a big and established brand of software systems. Their development made them quickly develop software that was needed to satisfy the growing demand in the market ("Porter’s Five Forces of competitive position analysis," 2013). The company faces little competition from other similar companies as the brand has been able to spread internationally. The buyers do not have the power to control software prices since the group managers are the ones responsible for this duty. The availability of several similar companies in the market makes it possible to lower the suppliers' power experienced by Symantec. The demand in software creates new market entries for small companies. Although investing in technology is quite risky, most small companies tend to give the dominant companies a little competition.

**Solution**

Symantec is a large company, and when the groups are always large, the communication channels increase. The no relocating business policy of Eubanks further increases the difference between communication. Employees also fear their managers or executive members. For a company to grow efficiently, there should be free-flowing of information and ideas from the low-level employees to the company's president. Some company's departments should be decentralized to increase the levels of communication between departments (Goyal, 2014). Adopting reliable communication channels that support all the company's staff will also improve information sharing.

**Other solutions considered.**

The other solution that would have been considered was using a system that would not fail once the transactions increases. A System should incorporate the company's growth as one of its functionalities ("Information systems project management," 2019). Systems should be dynamic to capture issues concerning some transactions processed at a time. The other one would have been improving on the metrics of measuring performance within specific groups. Different groups require different methods of evaluating their performance.

**Conclusion**

Tech companies may be the riskiest to invest in, but it can bring a revolution to the information technology world through the right communication channels ("Introduction to the art of communication," 2005). The right types of systems should be used to develop a particular technology to increase efficiency and proper utilization of resources. Eubanks had development plans for the company but lacked the necessary infrastructure to do so. It made Symantec use systems that were not reliable for their growth. Communication in an organization solves a lot of problems and avoids the recreation of already existing data. Employees need better working conditions to improve communication levels in a company. It increases their confidence even in facing a monumental task.

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