8-2 Project Three: Systems Thinking

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After reviewing the client specification document provided by Lost Pines Outfitters, I determined the inner workings of the client's current ordering process. Presently Lost Pines Outfitters offers buyers the ability to purchase merchandise online through the online retail store or in person at their Texas store location. When purchases occur at the Texas store location, the information is collected through the store POS system and deposited into the warehouse inventory repository at the start of the following week. Also, thank you discounts and cards are provided to loyal customers. When purchases occur online, buyers query the warehouse inventory system, which is not current, and orders are placed. Warehouse associates irregularly review the warehouse singularized computer, which facilitates all aspects of order management. The singularized warehouse computer is also used for other purposes not related to order management. Once an order has been identified, warehouse associates scrummage through the warehouse and verify if the requested item is in stock. If the item is in stock, the warehouse associates pull it and provide it to the fulfillment team. The fulfillment team then packages and ships the item. The item is then delivered to the buyer. Lastly, a warehouse employee sends the buyer a thank you card.

My recommendation to resolve the issues expressed by Lost Pines Outfitters’ CEO regarding inventory management discrepancies would be to leverage a cloud-based inventory and point-of-sales management system like ZOHO. To elaborate more, ZOHO offers a plethora of cloud-based inventory management and point-of-sales technology that enables retail organizations to track inventory across multiple platforms. In addition, ZOHO's point of sales application will mobilize the sales experience for Lost Pines Outfitters’ retail stores and online storefronts. For instance, for the Lost Pines Outfitters retail store, the store manager will no longer need to manually update the inventory system to include in-store purchases every week because the ZOHO cloud-based POS application will automatically update inventory to include in-store purchases in real time. Likewise, for the Lost Pines Outfitters warehouse employees, the cloud-based POS technology will eliminate the need to manually update inventory for in-store and online purchases through the warehouse order management computer because ZOHO's cloud-based POS application is developed to update inventory automatically. To elaborate more, ZOHO's point of sales application is a cloud-based POS system that immediately updates stock items as they are sold or returned.

Furthermore, the cloud-based inventory management software will provide Lost Pine Outfitters' retail stores and the Online Retail store with insight into current warehouse inventory levels. This will provide online and in-store buyers with the ability to have access to the most relevant inventory information. For instance, buyers and retail store personnel will have access to inventory availability, synchronization of re-ordering preferences, and information about real-time order adjustments. The ZOHO software also provides bonus features that allow buyers to track their orders in real-time and will allow Lost Pine Outfitters to automatically distribute customized thank-you notes, discounts, and request for reviews after an in-store or online order has been fulfilled.

My recommendation to resolve the issues expressed by Lost Pines Outfitters’ CEO regarding delayed order maintenance would be to purchase another warehouse computer. For instance, the client should provide the employees with access to two computers, Computer A and Computer B. Computer A will be used for all functions unrelated to order management. Computer B will be explicitly used for order management. Computer B will need a powerful processor with at least two cores, basic memory storage of at least 8GB, and an adequate hard drive to ensure optimal order processing experience. For computer B, assigned workers will update and process orders. To elaborate more, assigned workers should have a schedule created every week where they are tasked to review the order management computer (computer B), locate inventory items, pull, and provide the items to fulfillment for shipping. This task should be rotated and assigned to 3 workers during a shift. In addition, each worker should have a unique interval assigned to them where they are expected to carry out the task once every hour during their shift which will exclude their lunch and break periods.

In conclusion, when considering the element of system thinking and how it could be leveraged to solve Lost Pines Outfitters’ ordering and inventory management intricacies from a business environment perspective, I would have to consider the scalability that cloud-based technology offers to all levels of Lost Pines Outfitters employees along with the benefits that a different computer would provide to warehouse employees. A different computer in the warehouse will reduce the time warehouse employees wait to use a single computer system for various role-specific purposes. This will allow warehouse employees to spend more time completing other functional tasks. Additionally, cloud-based technology provides access to inventory insights to all employees in real-time. For instance, warehouse and retail store employees will no longer be responsible for manually managing all aspects of the company's inventory repository, allowing them to focus on other functional tasks that pertain to their role. In addition, cloud-based technology could allow Lost Pines Outfitters’ research team to conduct more precise consumer purchasing trend analysis. The analysis could be leveraged to ensure that the company is making the best decisions when considering which inventory items should be restocked and when. Lastly, cloud-based technology is feasible. Not only can Lost Pines Outfitters’ information technology team expeditiously deploy the ZOHO cloud-based technology, but the solution is also cost-efficient. ZOHO has committed to providing resources to their clients that will facilitate auto-maintenance tasks that will maintain the cloud-based applications and mitigate the need for the organization to invest more of their cash flow into the manageability of the cloud-based infrastructure, which would be a multifaceted benefit for Lost Pines Outfitters.

References

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