# Case 3: Symantec

## Mission Statement

Symantec's mission was to design, develop and support various of software for business users to help with their information management. Symantec was founded in 1982 by Hendrix, aiming at developing advanced technologies, then merged with C&E software. Since them it kept growing by merging and acquiring other companies. It became a major provider in the software industry.

## Generic Strategy

Symantec adopted a differentiation leadership strategy. It was founded in 1982 and back in that time software industry was still relatively new. There were some competitors in the market, but their applications software and system software products stood out to gain more and more market share as it grew.

## Organizational structure

Symantec grew in size and business territories by merging or acquiring other companies. Its organizational structure did not change as much over years. It was mainly divided into product groups and centralized functions. These different product groups and some functions were

spread out over the country with the CEO and some higher management worked in California, due to its characteristics of growth. It was the right decision not to employees move to a centralized location after merging or acquisitions, because they could face more problems, like cost of assisting the relocations and the risk of losing employees. In general, it did not have organization structural issues caused dysfunction.

## IT architecture

People: Ed Paige was hired to take care of the communication system and he made some effective changes for some periods. The MIS department dealt with system failures and technical problems. Employees who used these services were frustrated with it inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

Data: information such as direction or guidance was not completed. “Data storage includes verifying, ensuring the viability determining who will have access and protecting the security of data resources. (Cash)” Without an effective communication system, data through communication process can be redundant, incomplete or even lost. Critical data like Customers’ orders and upgrade requests would not have been transferred timely.

Process: Employees daily basis could be spinning around to communicate to the right person and deal with frustrations. “Employee morale is a risky thing. (Adams)” The process included layers and layers of communication, which could cause not only inaccurate information delivery/loss, but also demotivate employees. The process of transitioning from the Hewlett-Packard 3000 to HP 935 and RISC happened fast without considering the growing due to the business growth.

## Porter's Five Forces

**Competitive Rivalry**: Even back in the 80 and 90s of last century, the competition of the software market was high. Companies like IBM, Panda Software and Rocket Software were their main competitors. Now there are even more competitors, such as SAP, Intuit and Oracle.

**Threats of New Entrants**: Software development has become a more and more common skill. It is relatively easy to enter this industry. Any individuals with creative ideas and skills can develop a good software and put in the market. This threat is high.

**Threat of Substitutes**: As for information software substitutes, there are a lot of options on the market. Business users can recruit their own team or outsource to develop a customized software, instead of buying from Symantec, so Symantec is not irreplaceable.

**Bargaining Power of Suppliers**: Symantec mostly design and develop their own products, so the supplier power is low in this sense.

**Bargaining power of Customers**: buyers' power is high, because there are more and more products in the market for them to choose from.

## Problems and Stakeholders

The biggest and urgent problem in Symantec was the internal business communication problem and information of customers' order/upgrade requests were not processed in an effective and efficient way. It caused energy and time wasted and stopping the company from developing at a higher speed that it should have had.

**Leadership:** as they decided to merge, acquire and expand to international market, new effective communication ways were foreseeably needed. They failed to plan ahead to install a strategic plan to avoid these problems. “Changes in business design combined with the pressure of time to market and new technology create series management challenges. (Kalakota)” After realizing the inefficient communication, their concerns were not high enough to solve this problem for good.

**The MIS Department:** these personnel supported the communication system when there were system failure and technical problems. Their problem was not having a standard for dealing service request and even not having a proper prioritizing system. As a service department, this disorganized setup was a recipe for disfunctions. I agree that they did not take all the blame because their communication system was a mess to deal with.

**Employees**: employees expressed a lot of frustrations, but they did not step up as a group to suggest any advice. Their opinions of how they would like to improve their communication at work would be critical for changes.

**Customers**: customers would be surprised to find out an excellent software organization would have such a problem. They would think creating their own system was an easy choice without thinking the cost and scale of such a project.

## Alternatives and Impacts on stakeholders

**Alternatives 1:** Do nothing. This way would be passively accepting the current situation, dealing with the older problems day by day.

**Impacts**: Leadership's concerns would stay but would not have to worry about the cost of buying or developing new systems. Employees would still suffer from the communication problems. The ISM department would stay busy or even getting busier and busier, the business would grow, the communication need would grow to add their workload. Customers would suffer from the consequences of the ineffective communication, such as late delivery or order info loss.

**Alternatives 2:** Acquiring communication tools which were well designed and a good ticketing system for technical support. The easy way was to use Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Teams for daily communications. They came with many handy tools, like they could create a public on-call schedule, that people could looked up. Using a good ticketing system such as Jira, to improve The ISM department's the support services.

**Impacts**: Leadership could be released from a long-lasting communication concern and focus on growing business. Employees would not have to spend a lot of time just trying to find the right person to connect or getting ahold of someone. They could have group meeting anytime anywhere; it would help the effectiveness of communication and information could be delivered timely and correctly. Customers would be able to get the orders or upgrade requests processed faster and reach customer services more easily. The ISM department's efficiency would be improved by using a ticketing system and stop using paper forms. Employees could submit a request through the system, and it would prioritize and kept them updated.

**Alternatives 3**: Develop their own communication system. Symantec was an excellent software company. It had the talent and resources to develop their own communication system, which

could match its special needs.  They knew what problems they had been having and know what to avoid, employees as the system users could provide designed ideas.

**Impacts**: Leadership would need to get involved in this development process, from considering the budget, the design, and how it would be utilized, to concerns of the effectiveness of the new system. Employees would benefit the most form a customized system which would meet their specific needs. Resources may be taken away from product groups, so customers may be neglected, new products/services could be downgraded. The MIS department could give suggestions to the new design based on the experiences of supporting the old system. With the new system, their workload would be expected to be much lower.

## Selected Alternative and Conclusion

I would think Alternatives 2 **"**acquiring communication tools which were well designed and a good ticketing system for technical support" is the best solution. Because acquiring well-designed communication tools costs much less than developing their own system, and also would not take use of their product groups' resources. Outlook and Teams have been upgrading regularly and often have some great new features to meet new communication requirements. Employees could instead spend more of their time and energy in the meaningful work instead of running around for the communication issues. "Particular attention was focus on the idea of making employees feel more useful important by giving them meaningful jobs. (Morgan)"

Alternatives 1 of doing nothing is obviously the worse choice. "Any organization's future success will depend, in part, on its ability to enhance its existing apps and to develop and

introduce new apps that keep pace with technological developments, satisfy customer requirements, and achieve operational objectives. (Kalakota)" The communication system would collapse eventually without doing anything. By the time it would be too late to do anything.

Alternatives 3 of developing their own communication system could be too costly and time consuming. "New applications were unfamiliar to users, or projects taking too long that requirements changed. (Fried)" Developing a new system from scratch is riskier than buying in this sense.

# Works Cited

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