Smith systems consulting

The assignment for week two is to study three virtual organizations, choose one, and write about an information system that is critical to that organization's business processes. The chosen organization for this paper is Smith Systems Consulting (SSC). SSC Inc. is atechnology-driven company that offers services building and maintaining databases, designing and hosting websites, and all types of programming. This makes SSC the perfect organization to focus on because their entire business focuses on some aspect of information systems. This paper, however, will focus on how important computers are to SSC Inc.

To understand how information systems affect SSC, it is necessary to first understand just what an information system is. An information system can be described as " any combination of information technology and people's activities using that technology to support operations, management, and decision-making" (Wikipedia, 2010). Jon Jensen, instructor for the Business Systems in the IT department at University of Phoenix in Taylorsville, Utah, teaches that information systems are things that " collect, store, analyze and disseminate information for a specific purpose. An information system includes inputs and outputs.

By either of these two definitions, a computer is undoubtedly an informtion system. A computer actually contains smaller classes of information systems like a processor, hard drive, and keyboard, but for the purpose of this paper they will be combined as a single item. The focus then becomes how computers are critical to the business processes of SSC Inc. A business process can be defined as " a collection of related, structured activities or

tasks that produce a specific service or product (serve a particular goal) for a particular customer or customers" (Wikipedia, 2010).

There are three types of business processes. 1. Management Process: This is just as it sounds. Processes involved in the management and supervision of the business. 2. Operational Process: This is the " what" of the business. What the business does, makes, sells, distributes, or the service it provides. 3. Support Process: These processes are there to support the " what" of the business. Things like payroll and accounting, inventory and supply, call centers and tech support. Management Process- Since its founding in1984, SSC Inc. has grown from a small business of five people to a multimillion dollar enterprise employing more than 350 people.

A business won't grow to reach these numbers without great vision andleadership. Computers no doubt played and continue to play an important roll in SSC's management processes. Software programs ran on computers help visionary leaders forcast and track the success of their ideas. Using computers, they can compare results of similar ideas in similar markets. The automation made possible by computers takes away much of the tedious labor involved in supervising so many people and makes it possible for less people to manage more.

Managers are able to track statistics and numbers of their sales and production forces. Computers and software help them find areas of improvement and ways to streamline in order to cut costs in increase revenue. Of course management has been able to do these things for years, but with the help of computers, they are able to do them much faster, with

less risk of human error, and without needint to hire secerataries or assistants to help with such a large workload. Operational Process-SSC Inc. is a company who specializes in technology related services.

Without computers, SSC would not be able to offer any of the services they provide. They offer services such as computer programs that will allow other companies to use computers to more effitively manage their own personnel in the same ways discussed in the management process praragraph. They offer services such as database creation and database management; both of which are information systems, and would not exist without computers. SSC offers web based services such as web design and site hosting.

Again, there would be no internet and no web sites to design without computers, and SSC would not be able to host sites for their clients without a computer to act as the server. With all the things computers are able to do for a business, they would be useless without the trained personnel to operate them and ensure that they perform the functions that they are designed to carry out. Thus, people become an important part of any information system and it is critical that SSC employ qualified IT professionals.

Without these skilled workers, SSC would have a difficult time offering many of their services. Support Process-In a company as large and complex as SSC Inc. has become, there is an increased need for quality support. As defined above, support includes areas such as human resources, accounting and payroll, inventory and supply, and call centers and tech support. Inventory

and supply aren't as critical to SSC's business model as accounting and tech support.

Imagine tyrying to keep track of the finances for a $45 million company manually; handwritten invoices, all the possibilities for human error that could potentially cost millions of dollars. Think of the man hours involved in calculating payroll for 300 plus employees every week, and again the margin for human error. Computers make it possible for only a few people to manage these enormous tasks in less time than it would take numerous people to do it manually and with considerably less risk for human error. Tech support and call centers are invaluable to a business model such as that of SSC Inc.

They are providing technical services to clients that may not be tech savvy. There needs to be a way to ensure that these clients are able to use the products and services that they are subscribing to. If SSC isn't able to provide support for these customers, they will take their business elsewhere. Computers and trained personnel are necessary for these types of services. A trained technician may be able to remotely access a client computer and correct problems or walk the user through how to use a software program that they purchased.

Computers at SSC can rout calls to available customer service personnel saving hold time and keeping customers happy. SSC can store customer data and history in a database and access this information later to batter service their customers. As this paper has shown, computers are an information system that is an essential part of the business proccesses at

Smith Systems Consulting. They are used in virtually every aspect of their day to day operations from management and operations to their support processes.

As the world becomes more and more technical, and businesses andcommunicationbecome global, it is all the more important to integrate the use of information systems into business processes. If unable to do so, a company like SSC Inc. would soon become obsolete. However, SSC has the insight to see where the global economy is heading and has developed a business that uses informations systems to cater to the needs of an increasingly technical society. This insight has brought them great success and made them a leader in the world of information technology.

References

http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Information_system

http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Business_process