

The silicon valley technology

Technology



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The Silicon Valley Technology simulation created a good opportunity for me to observe situations and expectations under a corporate environment. Through interactions with other managers and executives, I had experienced many issues regarding business operation and management that were mentioned in the class. I would like to share what I observed, encountered, and applied into four main topics: interpersonal communication, relationship management, influencing people, and decision-making process.

Interpersonal communication technique played a crucial role in the SVT simulation.

As a Director of Advanced Product, I had to report to the vice president and also pass information to other directors and managers. Our division worked closely because all of us knew each other from the same class. That basic trust was built quickly during the early stage of development. The Vice President of Advanced Product made sure everyone's voice and concern were included into every discussion to reduce blind spots. For example, I had a request to set aside at least 21 million dollars to fully develop the video products. The VP asked the Director of Product Development if she had the same budget plan or related concerns.

This way, we could allocate the budget efficiently to prevent double-spending. We also set a basic norm to focus and respond appropriately when others were sharing important information. This active listening will help others to gain clear understanding of the situation, so I can take responsible actions. When I talked to the product managers about the shipping schedule, I would let them finish their talk first and try to suspend my judgments, and

then repeat what I have heard to ensure correctness and share my point of views.

What I observed was the way I received messages through multiple channels, the facial expressions, gestures and non-verbal language to clearly understand their points. Although our group communication was truly informative and supportive, I am aware of spending a lot of times in prioritizing the issues and exchanging information to the extent that I ran out of the time to come up with possible alternatives and had to make decisions hastily. What I could have done better was to avoid ambiguous communication and emotional involvement.

When I suggested hiring new sales forces and establishing international offices in Europe, I did not provide a clear answer or data to support my ideas. When our discussion became heated, I felt that the greater the emotional involvement, the greater the likelihood of distortion. If I could eliminate these communication issues, I could have allocated more quality time to make better decisions and received fewer complaints about the deadline. Management of Relationship is one of the key functions in the SVT simulation.

There were several situations where I had applied what I learned from the case study “Managing Your Boss. Even though everyone in our division knew each other already, I had no clues about their preferred working styles. It took me some times to figure them out. My VP was very energetic with a get-it-done attitude, but she intended to interrupt the discussions and instructed us to get to the main points directly. The other product manager

was very down to earth and a detail-oriented person. For example, when I spoke to the VP about our target estimate for video products, I used bulleted points and data, such as the focus on global market expansion, hiring qualified sale engineers, and budget allocations.

On the other hand, since the product manager is more detail-oriented, I would cover information in depth whenever possible. Thus, understanding your boss and peers would definitely enhance the efficiency. I also had experienced a paradox of information flow in two different directions. I usually received a lot of information from my region sale forces and supplied to my VP to make decisions. The upward flow of information, which was adapted by the VP, was a standard norm in Advance Product division.

Besides, I could report both good news and negative surprises. When the level went up to the president and vice presidents, the flow of information went downward. There seemed to be much information was related to Advance Product but only known by the top management. When it comes to gaining supports from top management under Silicon Valley Technology, the best way to do it was through influencing people. For instance, in order to reduce employee turnovers and shipping costs, the production director and I tried to relocate the manufacturing factory to Indiana.

However, unless there would be an additional budget and an action plan approved from the top management, this plan wouldn't work out. Therefore, I went to the corporate library to look up the forecast of future regional sale growth and the shipment schedule predictions. I implemented influence tactic by persuading the VP with a complete budget plan and forecasts

through an adequate levels of communication. The VP also chose the correct combination of influence tactics such as ingratiation and a rational plan for the president to be influenced. Finally, the committee meeting granted our request to include sufficient funds in the next year annual budget. What I observed was that the persuasion went smoothly because it was a simulation; there were not many arguments and push backs. It will not be as easy in real world settings. In addition, the another way to influence people was developing a network of resourceful people whom can be called upon for assistance, such as the special project manager who was in charge of the strategic planning for the future of the company.

With deadlines in mind, the timeliness of decision making process became relatively important in SVT simulation. As a director, I have many decisions to make between my regional sales teams and international salespeople. Many of these decisions are programmed decisions, which are repetitive and routine. A routine procedure has been developed for handling them, such as a request from my Northwestern Sales Office to have rewards to celebrate the success of getting the biggest order from NorCal Power.

In this case, I would follow the recognition policy to give them rewards. However, most decisions are non-programmed not only in SVT simulation, but also in the real world situations. These decisions were required by unique and complex management problems and were consisted of a complete process including a clear objective, resource allocations, time management and so on. In our first meeting of Advance Product with the VP, the product development directors and product managers, the VP urgently informed us that Flemming Inc. ould like to partner with AP to expand its

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market in Europe and a division decision was due before the committee meeting in 45 minutes. Under this time pressure, we quickly established specific goals, using this opportunity to increase market presence in Europe and to test out international markets of new home video products. We also identified problems that Flemming Inc. might steal our technology because SVT was mainly responsible for the R&D, not marketing and sales. It might delay our own R&D process since this partnership would receive most of the resources.

Thirdly, although the VP was patient to include our voices and ideas, we spent a lot of time prioritizing issues and doing cost/benefit analysis to come up with only a few alternatives, such as asking Flemming Inc. to include our brand name on the future products, and increase our forecast revenue to almost double by 40%. But In the end of the discussion, we ran out the time to evaluate the alternatives and decision was made by the VP hastily since she had to go to the meeting and had the final say. After the VP left for the meeting, I reflected on our decision making process, which was inefficient in term of pre-work and time management.

First, in the beginning, I did not have any information about Flemming Inc. since the information was from our President to only the VP as an urgent matter. Second, when the meeting was called, I was not informed of the agenda that would be discussed. As a result of that, time management generated the most impact on the decision making process. This could be improved by setting up a clear agenda before the meeting, obtaining extra information from the corporate library, and working out the cost-benefit analysis.

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These improvements would bring us to a reasonable expectation on what we were trying to achieve and would not waste time to brainstorm the pro and con during the meeting. Instead, the time we spent could work on evaluating the alternatives and choosing one. Eventually, we could have more time to make a group decision rather than relying on one person's decision.

Although there were many mistakes and learning opportunities during the decision making process, I was glad to have the managers and peers who were willing to listen and accept everyone's ideas so we could quickly establish specific goals and identify the problems.

Through the SVT simulation, it was a great experience for me because I had never worked in a corporate environment so I was impressed what I observed and experienced. Although the time wasn't enough for me to apply what I have learned from the class, I could tell the importance of interpersonal communication and relationship management that. These techniques would definitely help me sharp my tactics of influencing people and then apply to the decision making process.