

National geographic
society ngs
challenges marketing
essay



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The challenges that National Geographic faces in light of the changing mix of media platforms include the ability to maintain or increase its advertising revenue at the 2007 level, developing new strategies to deal with evolving consumer preferences as a result of new forms of competition and new players, securing resources necessary for massive investment to compete with Viacom and Disney, managing internal transitions, and embracing Digital Convergence successfully. In terms of being positioned for Digital Convergence, National Geographic Society had in 2007, proactively revamped its organizational structure into three distinct groups, namely the Missions Programs, the Enterprise Group and the Global Media Group. This approach enabled the company overall, to better handle travel and travel expeditions for customers, transact licensing and retail businesses, cataloging, e-commerce and merchandising through its Enterprise entity arm, while its Global Media component was able to bring greater consolidations and rationalizations by coordinately enhancing its role among NG editorial units and refining the digital media content output.

The fact that the Missions Group had remain unchanged and intact, and Global Media Group was effectively and efficiently serving NGS members and partners while rationalizing its mission at the same time, were strong evidence that the organization was well positioned for the emerging digital convergence. Moreover, the Missions Group arguably provided the stability and foundation the company needed to launch into the digital area of the market, in that it facilitated the flow of business from the past while the company through the other groups pursues diverse challenges.

Evaluations

National Geographic became mission oriented and customer driven at the same time, and as such, began viewing its customers more holistically as it develop strategies to maximize revenue from its different product offerings. Fahey the company chairman and CEO, showed how well prepared the company was for the digital convergence, when he remarked that the more matrix and collaborative organizational structure that was established was as a result of organizing that were based on the market place and the direction it was heading futuristically.

In assessing Global Media Group, it could be said that this arm of the organization provided the efficiency component that was needed within National Geographic, because it was able to reduce department overlapping and conflicting digital content materials by ensuring and providing more tailored and integrated content offerings. This achievement significantly contributed to the company's mission of providing a single global brand to its customers. These customers, while enabling National Geographic to increase its revenues would constantly view the brand in strong and positive light, and so ensure its survival and competitiveness is maintained

New Mission

In terms of National Geographic new mission, the organization premised it on relevance to the present generation while seeking to add value to all its products throughout the life cycles, despite the fact that the leaders initially lacked adequate research material to extract the requisite empirical data that would justify and reinforce the strategic directions they would propose.

The new mission was about ensuring National Geographic Society becoming
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mission orientated in nature, as this was perceived to afford very valuable and sustainable competitive advantage, in light of the current market, where satisfying the tastes of evolving customers was critically important.

Additionally, the new mission brought with it challenges and conflicts especially from investing stakeholders and television networks. National Geographic Society by illuminating issues of science with facts seek to empower its international audience but in the process was risking its reputation for objectivity as well as exposing its partners activities and interests negatively. However, the leadership of National Geographic is convinced that the new mission they had created will drive the organization to develop contents that are credible, authoritative, pleasant, readable, inspirational and appropriately descriptive to enable significant product differentiation in the market place, especially with regard to the challenges that emanate from advocacy orientated entities.

Advantages and Disadvantages

This new mission was advantageous to National Geographic in that it not only allowed the company to publish magazines and produce television shows, but facilitated it to pursue a journey where it was able to make discoveries and inspire its global audience. It could be argued that purpose was greatly inculcated within the organization through its new mission, when it was revealed that the institution was deploying scientific, educational and media assets to focus on both problems and solutions in areas like climate, living habitats, and planetary lifelines and the languages and cultures that are pertinent to the human story. As a result of these strategic

accomplishments, National Geographic was able to strive and gain higher
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levels of competitiveness, even in very challenging market environment. A major disadvantage to the organization when it embraces the new mission, was the fact that a number of its activities became incompatible with the interests of its financial supporters and sponsors, and this in the end could cause to its cessation of funding as well reduce advertising expenses and revenues.

The sudden change in the focus of the company after over 100 years of operation, may also in the short term alienate its customers, and when this is coupled with the possible retaliations from its previous partners, who may then provide support to its competitors, National Geographic may have problems keeping its members among the international audience. There is also the likelihood of the company risking its international reputation when it adopted this new mission. National Geographic Society had built a brand image that was characterized by high levels of objectivity and excellent scientific stores, yet it taking a new approach in spite of this image, because of the emerging trends that was threatening it survival in the current market. In light of such threat it was not surprising that the organizational leaders timely proposed a new shift for attracting new members into their business operations.

Proposed Shift for Attracting New Members

The proposal was born out of a survey among employees who felt that (a), membership in the company should be given the highest priority, (b), the present membership was not being leveraged, and (c), the company was not being marketed as a single brand on the international market. This made the

proposal organic as it entails personnel that had the feel of where the
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company they love should be heading. This proposal could be regarded as an excellent one, it that it facilitated a breakdown of the different market segments the company had, and enable its personnel to focus on them using appropriately constructed strategic models. Furthermore, National Geographic was able by this new shift, to extend its membership platforms and expand recruitment to all its readers, because it provided opportunities for engagement, inspiration, education and involvement to them while transacting business.

Thus, National Geographic shift proposals opened new society wide communication strategies for the company to develop, it identify sources of revenue for the next 5 years, facilitated niche market discussions, and most importantly led to an organizational restructuring to accommodate an e-commerce personnel within the organizational structure . The proposal for new membership was therefore a vital towards the future development of the company, especially as it seek strategies to ensure it remain viable and sustainable and a going concern in future market.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the E- Commerce Position

Employing E-Commerce personnel within the company will bring in a person with unique skills, knowledge, and abilities that can facilitate the development of new e-commerce strategies that will engage greater number of members, boost revenues, and increase the level of impact the company had desire perhaps for several years. The E-Commerce employee will also lead to the identification of strategies unique to the Missions Programs, the Enterprise pr Group, and the Global Media Group individually, and this will on

implementation lead to additional revenue streams within National Geographic.

Having an E-Commerce personnel working within National Geographic, may be a novelty at the outset, and may cause Fahey and others to question their decision, but with the threat from competitors, it is hoped that overtime the role of the position will be fully embraced so that the company can rise to the productivity levels necessary to optimize its revenues and market shares while maintaining a strong workforce at the same time. However, the presence of the new personnel within the organization may also lead to members of each group becoming insecure and in the process may not cooperate with the program, thereby causing low productivity and possible attrition from the company.

The Reporting Function

The E-commerce manager at the outset will require high levels of support, authoritative influence and visibility to be successful, and as such the chairman and CEO of the company should be the one in charge to direct operations. Personnel from other department will be less resistant to in terms of cooperation, if they know their actions are being reported at the top of the organization. Challenges that will be faced by this the 15th direct reporting personnel to Mr. Fahey concerning implementing e-commerce strategies within the company, but they will be reported and discussed and resolved at a faster pace near the apex of the organization, and enable the company to advance its competitiveness in this segment of the global market. Additionally, the chairman and CEO will also have the experience

members of his team and the company resources to ensure e-commerce take a foothold within the organization as fast as possible.