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Integrated Case Study: Bandon Group, Inc.

Introduction

Bandon Group, Inc. is a brainchild of Bud Bandon that has its foundation dating back to the year 1953. The company distributes copiers, faxes, electronic printers, and other office equipment. The company has established in four different markets called division in the Western US with every division headed by a president who is charged with the responsibility for developing marketing, sales and business strategies for his/her division (Summer, 2005).

Bandon Group, Inc. has a reasonably small Information Technology unit that is currently being restructured to support better the overall goals, objectives and missions of the organization. With the series of different technical solutions that have been effected through the divisions, it has been challenging providing network support, technical diagnosis, data migrations and training (Sumner, 2006). Data is also not at present incorporated through the various divisions, which leads to sub-optimization and duplication of effort and supplementary cash outflow from the organization. The Bandon Group management has in the recent past identified the need for technical solutions implementation to remain vibrant and competitive. A good number of their competitors have actualized ERP with incorporated CRM solutions. Also, their rivals have instituted a process that will enable them realize e-business solutions (Sumner, 2005).

Step 1: Purpose and Scope of Study

Bandon Group purposes to have an information system study implemented to establish how best Information Technology (IT) can be deployed to help the company meet its overall goals, objectives and mission over the next 3-5 years. The purpose of the Information Technology management system is to pull together, store and analyze business information that inform policy makers on an applicable and correct format. It's worth noting that information technology has undergone radical changes over time.

Professionals currently refer to the prevailing period as the " Customer-Intensive Era" of contemporary computing where users anticipate receiving custom-built experiences crafted on their distinct requirements (Summer, 2005).

The purpose of the study is to ascertain how Bandon Group, Inc. can come up with a more cohesive information system infrastructure that guarantee the following highlighted business aims:

- Improve close data referencing, data migration and information sharing
- Optimize outcomes linked with IT dollars and decrease IT expenses
- Realize e-Business solutions with enabled internet centered supply ordering, meter click reporting, and service call entry.

In attempting to actualize this, the leadership of Bandon Group must focus on reorganizing and reconstituting the business structure. The process will enable every division management to work closely with the IT unit in choosing a progressive & suitable enterprise resource system for the company (Clark & Marois, 2007).

Step 2: Document High-level Direction

As highlighted by the executive management interviews, the high level business direction revealed the countless challenges that required urgent solution in order to take adequately good care of the interest of more than 6,000 enterprises that Bandon Group, Inc. served (Summer, 2005). Of great concern as discovered from the interviews were the incorporation of information-based internet services, enhanced understanding of customer needs, a value-added method to sales and marketing. Others also include meter click reporting, internet centered supply ordering and improved strategic outsourcing. All these requires diagnosis and improvement for the company to remain on the success course (Summer, 2005).

The other business area that need answers are sales, administration and customer service. There are a lot of opportunities within these areas of the business that can help grow revenue, reduce administration costs, and strengthen support within sales and customer service. Through data centralization, there is improved market share and customer conversion from short-term to long-term coupled with improved reporting and invoicing. Customer service, sales & administration are the other critical and high-level concern that must be urgently tackled within the Bandon Group business environment (Summer, 2005). Noted are also the numerous business opportunities and deals within these regions of operation that if addressed will enable the company to increase his revenue & profitability. The bequest systems that have been adopted are unsatisfactory in fulfilling these expectations. The manager handling IT systems has deployed an off-the-shelf platform with a view of trying to support the administration

infrastructure using Office Machines Dealership (OMD). This system is integrated with numerous service and sales management reporting platform, which was not the case with the old versions (Summers, 2006). This system again is fitted with an improved web- based interface that is enabled for customer meter readings and is called I-Management.

Step 3: Key Information Needs and Measures

Goals

The main goals are increasing the business network, market share and business outsourcing, increasing revenue growth by approximately \$7 M, improving IT consulting business growth in market share, growth in business service base, and instituting a link and document framework consulting (Summer, 2005).

Critical Success Factors

There are numerous factors that Bandon Group, Inc. must address at present and in future to remain relevant and on success course and above all to get the competitive advantage over their main business competitors (Summer, 2005). The main critical success factors have been canvassed under the following sub-headings:

Current issues: Effective and efficient sales support, timely and accurate collections and cross-billing, efficient inventory management, Increasing market competitiveness, recruitment and retention of quality staff, sustaining profitability, implementation of modern technologies; (such technologies include: use of digital prints versus old-fashioned copies, improved information service and internet services, modern advertisement

units, etc.) (Summers, 2006). Others include technological education and training, efficient communication unit, internal & external process improvements, prompt information sharing & dissemination, and generation of improved product for customers outside the equipment.

Future issues: Effective incorporation of systems and consultancy services into organization e. g. (ensuring availability of the right services, vendors, service providers, controlling cost etc.), improved integration of internet and information service with old-fashioned line of business, service diversity and efficient solutions delivered to the targeted markets, Successfully dealing with the limitations of OMD: e. g. (failure to promptly bill for non-copier-associated services and the inability to take care of on-line transactions) (Clark & Marois, 2007).

Measures: some of the critical measures acknowledgeable within the Bandon Group, Inc. are as follows: effective rapport building with customers, and the ability to focus on higher ended-margin accounts (Summer, 2005). Others include efficient and effective contact management, effective information gathering on customers and their utilization, effective vendor sourcing techniques, etc.

IT requirements: It is has been noted that Bandon Group, Inc. has a reasonably small Information Technology unit. With the numerous different technical and technological solutions that have been accomplished across the various divisions, it has turned out to be challenging providing network support services, data migrations services, technical support services, and training (Summers, 2006). In view of the fact that Bandon Group is at present trying to determine how Information Technology can adequately

support the overall goals, objectives and missions of the organization, its IT department must strive to address all the following areas of concern:

- **Internet-enabled customer support**

- Automated customer details platform
- Cross billing system for data consulting service,
- Internet-based reporting and project tracking
- Invoicing solution that employs e-mail, fax, paper invoices, and the internet

- Service management report
- Accounting profitability report
- Prompt marketing analysis and sales & marketing reporting
- Improved resources for obtaining explicit industry information
- Internet-enabled information access through PDA well-matched database access solution,
- Customer feedback

Step 4: Document Detailed Business Requirements

Having carefully analyzed and documented the key information needs and measures and high-level business direction of the Bandon Group, there emerged very critical regions of shared priorities that are pertinent and that must be addressed for the company to realize its full organizational goals, objectives, and mission (Summer, 2005). The critical business requirements for the Bandon Group include but not limited to improved sales, improved customer services, customer feedback, and improve business administration.

Bando Group targets to improve and increase its market share and revenue collection by more than \$7 million. This revenue growth was to be sustainable and reaching a double-figure growth rate of more than \$ 15 million by the year 2003. This process required Bandon Group, Inc. to re-engineer particular aspects of the organization and identify key areas of opportunities as highlighted in the executive interviews to be able to endure a competitive advantage over their competitors. Some of the opportunities identified and remain critical are as follows: improved networking and document framework consulting and improve the field of IT consulting. In addition to the mentioned items, there are numerous peripheral opportunities also specified in the interviews, a good example includes; Retrieval & storage and high print volume. These types of opportunities will be instrumental to Bando Group toward goal realization if only deployed effectively (Summer, 2005).

The various aspects and shared priorities highlighted in the executive interviews are enumerated below in details:

- Data migration of OMD into relational database and data warehouse
- E-Business front-end to OMD for meter reading compliance called (I-Manager)
- Integration between administrative systems and sales prospecting
- Business outsourcing and network growth
- Document infrastructure and network consulting
- Provide universal internet-based information access
- Maintaining growth and profitability level of the company
- Revenue and sales growth

- Growing market share potential into Information Technology consulting business
- Growth in business service base
- Expansion of IT structures and infrastructure
- Information integration and data referencing

As highlighted above, Bandon Group, Inc. must appreciate the fact that the bulk of current Office Machines Dealers (OMD), as instituted, may not be deployed to improve and sustain revenue growth for the mere fact that OMD is not an interactive database (Summer, 2005). This weakness and loopholes in the present system, as instituted, makes it challenging for sales and marketing personnel of the Bandon Group to obtain relevant information concerning the customer's aspirations, demands, and future requirements. It is worth noting that an integrating sales system for database prospecting fitted with a reporting capability, an ad hoc query, and administrative systems is vital for the progressive success of the Bandon Group, Inc. in improving sales and revenue (Summer, 2005).

Bandon Group, Inc. takes pride in their resolve to speedily respond to customer's requirements that are indeed the key factor towards realizing and sustaining their market success and profitability. The company's main priority is to improve service rendered to customers by applying relevant Internet-based interface, operational meter readings, e-business solutions digital, and automated invoicing techniques alongside internet generated customer service surveys aimed at to monitoring customer's satisfaction (Clark & Marois, 2007).

Another important aspect that stood out and remains a priority for Bandon

Group, Inc. is the improvement of administration procedures. Effective and efficient administration procedures will greatly reduce the burden associated with administrative cost and service provision. At present accessing invoices, interpreting information contained in the invoices, raising queries on invoices, printing invoices, and invoice generation process are marred with a lot of difficulties (e. g., customers are unable to get particulars such as the number of copies, month or date of transaction, machine types etc.) (Summer, 2005). Inventory generated reports are also difficult to interpret and understand (e. g., customers are unable to associate parts with their corresponding machine type. This shortcoming is for the reason that there exist little or no relationship in the database that would permit part referencing with their corresponding machines) (Summer, 2005). The invoices, on the other hand, do very little in responding to the needs of the rapidly expanding IT consulting business. This scenario has been compelling Bandon Group, Inc. customers to look for options with better-invoicing systems.

Step 5: Document Current IT Situation-Internal

In the year 1994 Bandon Group, Inc. implemented the Offices Machines Dealership abbreviated as OMD, which served as an off the self-system software package built on a UNIX platform. The software is written in COBOL programming language. This system is designed specifically for Bandon Group, Inc. to provide support for the meter click cross-billing software (Summer, 2005).

The current Information Technology internal requirements also include the

inadequacy of a standardized desktop terminal, central licenses business environment, and modern computing software. The prevailing Information Technology infrastructure for the Brandon Group, Inc. is made up of a Server O/S NT4, 2K, and a Desktop O/S Windows. Switched Ethernet, T-1 or Internet access through DSL, and a single division domain (Summer, 2005).

Bandon Group, Inc. has developed numerous database functionality using Pivotal software as highlighted below: Amalgamation of Bradstreet & Dun and I-Market data access using Pivotal software, appointment & pivotal call setup, sales lead, pivotal forecast scrutiny, and compensation report (e. g., commission payout, automated e-mail alerts activated on finalized appointments,) (Summers, 2006). Other include pivotal marketing & sales data, service management reports (meter alerts, surplus service call alerts, feedback time, etc.), lease expiry reports, account tracking information, and customer service report history (Summers, 2006). Note that the sales prospecting software deploys a relational database for the prospective and current customers that include a CRM system component. Salt Lake a subsidiary of Bandon Group also deploys a software bundle that notably has been prosperous within the printing and copier industry called the Soaring. This software has been integrated with the OMD database that is presently in use by Bandon Group, Inc. (Summer, 2005).

In conclusion, Bandon Group, Inc. should appraise the five-step action plan as proposed by the IT systems study, analyze the current IT systems setting, evaluate challenges and establish the feasibility of actualizing the ERP solutions (Summers, 2006).

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