

# Reflection paper on group cases

Technology, Information Technology



Essay: Reflection paper on group cases The Vermont Teddy Bear (VTB) case is one case which really has got a lot of learning to be done as far as Information technology is concerned. VTB was facing challenges on its strategic IT alignment, something that was heavily weighing down on the company in terms of cost as well as competition. The management was tasked with the responsibility of changing the entire system and turning around the company's fortunes by bringing it back to profitability.

As a chief information officer, I learnt a lot from this case. First and foremost, it is not a good business practice to be operating without having a primary infrastructure as well as use of only a particular system to take care of all other necessary elements. Any company worth its salt should be equipped with an enterprise resource planning system (ERP) to ensure that its operations are carried out smoothly. This is because, without such an effective management system, a company's business may be unable to coordinate its work across all functions, something that may lead to serious losses, even collapse of the business. The VTB case clearly illustrates this phenomenon and the company was in a terrible rush to make sure that it has its house in order just before peak seasons such as Christmas, Valentine's Day as well as Mother's Day.

Secondly, I have learnt that it is good to always have a single centralised command from where an application can be run to manage the business functions. VTB for instance had a lot of complicated middleware as well as incompatible applications which did not provide the company with any benefits at all. Investment into a robust IT system therefore brings with it several benefits such as seamless working by eliminating lack of standard

operating procedures, facilitating transfer and maintenance of information as well as allowing for strategic development of a firm's information system.

Information system therefore can be used as a tool for competitive advantage and can strategically be used to add value to a firm's customer service by maximising the efficiency of the supply chain as well as solving operational constraints.

The second case was that of IT outsourcing gone wrong. Clean & Cure, a multinational company had engaged the services of XperTrans; a provider of human resource outsourcing (HRO) to provide its services all over the world in 44 countries. However, this was never to be, and XperTrans encountered so many problems and finally had to engage a consultancy firm to bail them out. This is a case that really taught me a lot. That no matter how small or big a project being undertaken by a firm is, it is always good to have a clear communication structure amongst departments. If XperTrans had an efficient structure, it could have avoided some of the problems that they faced. A firm should ensure that it has a good communication structure in place so as to avoid lapses in its operations.

Secondly, business practices entail being honest with one another especially your suppliers and/or partners. XperTrans had promised to offer so much without first doing due diligence to ascertain whether they were capable of delivering or not. The company had never before worked on such a massive project, and for your information, it was not their core business. It is therefore always good to be honest with what you are promoting so as to avoid disappointments that arise because of failed delivery. Being honest as well as promising what one can handle might save a firm a lot of

embarrassment as well and help it to keep its credibility intact.

Clearly, then, outsourcing can be a nightmare, complicated as well as very expensive if not well planned out. As a result, this can greatly affect not only a company's communication, but also its goals as well as the quality of services provided. The biggest lesson I have learnt here is never ever bite more than you can chew and it's always prudent to consult as well as discuss various projects within an organization before going out and announcing to all and sundry what you can do. Such a discussion will ensure that there is proper planning and adequate communication at all levels to achieve harmonised seamless processes that will lead to the accomplishment of an organisation's goals. These are very good lessons for any employee to learn, especially those tasked with the responsibility of steering an organisation key departments such as outsourcing and marketing. Leaders therefore ought to see far and avoid shortsightedness as they are the captains of their ships and should guide them safely via rough waters.