Team Project: Inputs

Team 6

MGT310

October 3rd, 2019

**1. Describe the members of the team, including any applicable surface-level and deep-level characteristics.**

Patagonia is a very humble brand with noble beginnings. There is not one person who claims the limelight for the brand, and the culture of Patagonia workplace is unconditionally collaborative. These ideals and expectations were set in place by founder Yvon Chouinard. Born in Southern California, Yvon fostered a passion for rock climbing. He, while climbing, realized that the equipment that was available back in the 1960’s was made of soft iron and was designed to be used once and left in place. This inspired him to forge his own steel and sell climbing rappels from the back of his car. The equipment sale started to grow because of the high quality of the equipment and Chouinard equipment became the highest seller of climbing gear of the United states by 1970. by forging his own steel to make and sell climbing rappels. Afterwards, coming from his trip to Scotland, he bought a rugby shirt which he saw fit for climbing. It was bright blue in color, which surprised everyone. His friends demanded that he brings some more. He thus bought another pile of shirts which got sold very quickly and thus, Patagonia clothing line was found. His desire was not business but making utility-based equipment for climbing. This inspired him to create his own equipment. This was his true passion and despite the fact his profits were initially very slim, he continued this pursuit living on less than $1.00 a day. This set the tone for the amount of dedication all leaders in Patagonia would possess. The collaborative aspect of the team comes from Patagonia’s ability to recognize all the people who are a part of what makes them successful. On their home website, there is a balanced representation of devout ambassadors and employees of the brand from high-level purchasers, to part-time product shippers. Employees of Patagonia all share a few similar deep-level characteristics: passion, dedication, drive, and an undying sense of community.

**2. What evidence do you see of diversity or non-diversity on the team? How did this affect the team?**

Each team member who contributed to the beginning of Patagonia was similar in their interest for outdoor activity, which made their common goals very clear. They also established their love of outdoor activities by projecting and establishing common values for protecting the environment. These commonalities allowed for easily established team norms and priorities. The leader of the team and creator of Patagonia Yvon Chouinard began the company by creating pitons, and later added aeronautical engineer Tom Frost to the team. Chouinard believed that he could contribute by bringing in a more innovative design perspective (“History of Patagonia - A Company Created by Yvon Chouinard.”). Their recruiting website states, “We're always looking for motivated people to join us in our retail stores; at our Ventura, California headquarters; Reno, Nevada Service Center; and occasionally in our overseas offices. We're especially interested in people who share our love of the outdoors, our passion for quality and our desire to make a difference.” (Patagonia, 2019) This proves Patagonia wholeheartedly has the desire to empower people of all colors, ages, races, religions, and backgrounds, so long as these individuals can aid in maintaining their common goal of truly making an impact on society and the globe. What is a better way to reach several parts of the nation than by having representation from every corner within their workforce?

**3. Choose three of the following and describe. How did they affect the team?**

1- Working support for the team: Patagonia grew out of a small company that made tools for climbers. A big part of Patagonia’s mission involves support for the team and huge engagement. They give the opportunity to share their ideas and experience with the biggest business community, colleges and universities, activists, designers and policymakers. By having support, it developed their skills with high confidence. The increase in support helped in establishing high-performance standards for the founding team. Patagonia has been able to establish a name for itself, not only for their environmentally conscious products, but also having one of the best work-life cultures of any company in the US. Yvon Chouinard made sure to make himself available to all members of the company. His legacy still lives on.

2- Norms within the team: The norm or what you may call as the common trait within Patagonia’s founding team was its passion for climbing. The main goal of the founding team was to create cloths that could improve the climbing experience for climbers. This, however did not restrict their market, as they were able to separate Patagonia from Chouinard equipment. This passion made them the brand that they are today.

3- Structure of the team: their values reflected those of a business started by a band of climbers and surfers, and the minimalist style they promoted. The approach that they took to design the product demonstrates a bias for utility and simplicity. Their structure for the best product rests on how it works, its repairability and durability. One of the important structures for Patagonia’s team was to use this business to protect nature.

**4. How was the team launched? Was it a successful or unsuccessful launch? Why or why not?**

The Patagonia team was launched in 1973 by Yvon Chouinard as an offshoot of the Chouinard Equipment company. Chouinard was originally worried that Patagonia would fail due to lack of brand recognition, but eventually Patagonia launched when Chouinard decided that his new brand should be distinguished from his equipment line. This choice paid off in the end as Patagonia was able to access a new customer base of average consumers while maintaining its original Chouinard Equipment clientele. Patagonia carried on the legacy of Chouinard Equipment at launch, which led to successful store openings and a quick return on investments. One tradition that Patagonia inherited from Chouinard Equipment, was the constant need for innovation in both design quality and material strength. This led to the innovative use of polypropylene and a unique mix of bright colors into the company's outdoor apparel. These new innovations were often pulled from already existing products, which caused Patagonia to significantly increase its research and development budget. Patagonia also had a strong starting manufacturing team, as Malden Mills had greater access to capital and the business knowledge to help Patagonia fulfill its unique vision. Yvon Chouinard also used catalogs to highlight new Patagonia clothing apparel, this helped the company establish a reputation. This form of advertising attracted both outdoor enthusiasts and fashion seekers alike, but it was originally used by Chouinard Equipment to sell its new mountain climbing gear. Part of Patagonia’s success at launch also came from its family-oriented business practices. At the insistence of Malinda Chouinard, Yvon Chouinard's wife, childcare facilities were set up at Patagonia offices. These facilities were some of the first in the country and helped paint a family image of the company as employees and their children ate together at lunch. The final thing that helped set Patagonia apart, was its environmental friendly focus, as Yvon Chouinard had a deep respect for the environment. This led the company to develop sustainable business practices and to take on their corporate responsibility by donating to small environmental protection groups.

**5. Based on your analysis of the team’s inputs and reading of course material, what could have been done differently in this team to make it successful and/or what made the team successful and why? Provide at least 2 examples.**

Patagonia experienced great successes due to the culture they established early on. On the Patagonia website, they explain the values that the first few in Patagonia ingrained into the culture writing “we must defend the place we all call home”. Chouinard built the company on the idea of sustainability even when they were a small team of individuals. This created a clear basis for what their team was working for and the standard their work would be held to regarding sustainability (“Patagonia Mission Statement - Our Reason for Being.”). Chouinard has also established great respect and concern for the well-being of his fellow employees even very early on. Chouinard never wanted to confine himself or fellow team members to a desk and took on the “open-office” concept. Establishing freedom for team members to express and choose to work where they feel most comfortable. Without limiting the space Chouinard has never limited ideas and kept diversity and innovation at the forefront of his brand (“Yvon Chouinard”).

**Works Cited:**

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