Strategic Organizational Communication Paper

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# Introduction

Strategic organizational communication is the purposeful use of communication which assists the company to achieve its strategic goals and objectives (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007). There are certain elements of strategic organizational communication which helps evaluating the company’s communications strategy. This paper seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of Walmart’s organizational communications strategy.

# Introduction to Walmart

Walmart Inc., operator America’s discount stores which was one of the biggest retailers in world and among largest corporation in the world. Its company headquarters are situated in Bentonville, Arkansas. Sam Walton set its foundation in 1962 Arkansas and targeted its initial development in rural areas, hence dodging direct competition with trading giants like Kmart and Sears. As it took its voyage of growth, the company established new formats of retail, comprising Wal-Mart Supercenters (1988), and Sam’s Club discount warehouses (1983). In time period of opening merchandise Supercenters and combination grocery, Walmart became of the greatest grocery store in the United States of America. Walmart stayed a worldwide leader in the subsequent years. In years of the 2010s it initiated to obtain various businesses of e-commerce, comprising Moosejaw and Jet.com. In 2018, its name was changed to Walmart. Current advertising slogan and mission statement are still the same: "Save people money, live better."

Over the years, Walmart has made a wide range of distinctive procedures, policies, processes, principles and rules. All of them aid to create the culture of behemoth’s corporate. Few of the policies of Walmart include open door policy which states that doors of mangers will be always open for the employees at every level, and Sundown Rule which states that Employees need to respond to all supplier and customer questions on the similar day the queries are received as inter-organizational communication enhances performance of both suppliers and buyers (Paulraj, Lado, & Chen, 2008) . Moreover, through policies like grass roots process Walmart struggles to seizure ideas and suggestions from the front lines and sales floor- and to apply them. Furthermore through policies like three basic beliefs and values Walmart tends to enhance and support the respect for individuals, strive for cornerstones and excellence of the business. In addition, by policies like greeting people, offering help to customers and making eye contact with customers who come within ten feet of workers is a 24/7.

# Strategic Communication in Walmart

Walmart is considered as a power house of business and its marketing mix is one of its strength. The company has developed strategic communication practices which contributes to its success. Walmart is known for its cost leadership strategy. As the company’s mission indicates that it aims to sell the low cost products to improve the livings standard of its buyers. Walmart offers variety of products to its customers, through it is a retail business but it attracts customers through its effective customer service. It allows easy one step shopping and home delivery. Walmart aims to be the low cost and price leader in the market and therefore it implements low cost and low price strategy. It generates profit due to its sales in huge volumes. Low cost and price is the main contributor of Walmart’s competitive advantage.

The promotional strategy of Walmart comprises of sales promotions, advertising, and public relations. Company generates sales in huge volumes by offering deals and discounts to its customers. Personal selling is also one of the strategies used at Walmart’s stores. Walmart also uses press release to keep their customers informed of their policies and practices. The promotion is an important element in marketing mix of company which helps it to generate more sales. In addition, the company has intensive distribution strategy and also has a strong e-commerce platform.

Walmart is ranked as one of the most reputed brands and it is also 22nd in the list of most valuable brands by Forbes. Walmart also underwent a transformation of brand reputation management and corporate ethos. Considering the fact that company was criticized for its poor treatment towards employees, it has started to invest in employees’ education and training. Walmart also gives attention to the environmental issues and carbon emissions, while sticking to its principle of providing their customers with low prices. It is also working towards improving its reputation not in the eyes of its customers but also in the eyes of its stakeholders, and communities (Davis, 2007).

Walmart has also used its social media strategy to increase customer engagement (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). This social media strategy of Walmart consisted of sharing corporate news, and sharing information of the ways in which company is helping society. As part of its social media strategy, Walmart has also developed Twitter handles, each of that is targeted at a different audience. For instance, the twitter handle of Walmart’s environmental analysis shows how the company is helping environment and takes part in solving its issues. In this way audience only receives the relevant message, for instance, those interested in knowing Walmart community initiatives get to know about it via Walmart’s environmental awareness. In addition, the social media strategy also involves monitoring of social media conversations to respond to customer queries (Coursaris, Van Osch, & Balogh, 2013). The social media strategy was very successful and company witnessed growth in social media following.

Walmart is also known for using social media in crisis management. The crisis management by Walmart consists of three steps, according to senior director of global communication at Walmart. These steps involve existence with a purpose, reacting with a purpose and measuring and moving. Walmart’s social media existence is not just for press release but to communicate it purpose to its people along with considering its other goals and objectives. It also believes in sharing stories on social media to build trust among its community. It uses its already set benchmarks to learn about social crisis.

In addition to support effective internal communication with over more than 1 million people, Walmart uses walmartone.com for collaboration and sharing of ideas with its people. It is the form of employee extranet which has categories of communities and conversations, so that even the new comer feels a sense of belonging. This is the platform which provides the opportunity for all the associates at Walmart to get know how of the relevant information as soon as they arrive on the website.

# Assessment and Recommendations

As strategic communication involves purposeful communication to meet the strategic objectives of company. This form of communication involves management communication, public relations, effective marketing and advertising. In also involves impressive social media campaigns to maintain a positive relationship with the stakeholders of company and keep them informed of company’s policies and objectives, which is followed by Walmart (Hallahan et al., 2007). At Walmart, the marketing strategy of 4 Ps enable the company to communicate its strategic objective of “save money, live better”, by the effective product, pricing, placement and promotional strategies.

Walmart is also very successful in managing its good will by communicating its initiatives to protect environment. The company has also been successful in managing the crisis and criticism using its social media platforms such as twitter handles. The strategic organizational communication at Walmart is very effective as it is aimed at having effective communication with its stakeholders, customers and community members. In addition, the company has effective internal communication, successful social media marketing strategy which promotes its image as a positive and caring brand. Walmart can further improve its strategic organizational communication by dealing with the criticism of its employees regarding low wages and poor working conditions. In addition, Walmart can focus on steps to enhance the strategic communication by involving the communities in which they operate.

# References

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