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Community Engagement of John and Lewis Partnership

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Introduction

Community engagement is one of the most important parts for every service-offering industry because it helps the company to reach its clients in an effective way as well as expand the profit level of the firm. The term “Community Engagement” is the process of influencing the generation of effective relationships with different customers simply by interacting, communicating, identifying their needs and others (Ismail, 2017). Community engagement also comprised with the process of increasing the involvement with both the internal and external members for expanding the overall profit level of the firm (Lakin and Scheubel, 2017). John and Lewis Partnership is founded in the year 1929 by John Spedan Lewis in London, UK. The company is a publicly owned company that offer more different retail products and insurance service facilities to a maximum number of people present in UK (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020). The main aim of this paper is to discuss the role of different employees of the said firm in developing community engagement for improving the organizational profit. This will also discuss the company’s goal and the importance of a training program for improving employee skills.

Discussion and Analysis

Detail overview about the goal, vision and structure of the John and Lewis and Partnership firm

John and Lewis Partnership is a famous British organization that operates different departmental small firms, a big supermarket named Waitrose & Supermarkets and other financial and banking services. This company has focused on providing various financial and insurance facilities (home insurance, car insurance, wedding insurance). Besides this, the company has offered different partnership cards and other home appliances or electronic products as well as retail products. With more than 80,000 employees the company has earned at least £10.2 billion and its net income is almost £ 172 million in the year 2018 (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020).

The John and Lewis Partnership follows the matrix organizational structure operated by three governing or organizational bodies namely the **Partnership Council**, **Partnership Board** and the **Chairman** (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020). Every department of the company is interrelated with each other and focused on providing the value to the views and the ideas of various partners associated with the firm. This may help the company to fulfil its mission of the firm is **to make all its partners, employees and customer happy by providing job satisfaction and customer**

satisfaction respectively. The main value of the company is **to focus on providing the best to satisfy different customers by providing the best quality products.**



Figure 1: Matrix Organizational Structure

(Source: Created by Learner)

Identify its customers and what they expect from the organisation in terms of goods and/ or services

This firm focused on satisfying the different needs of upper-class people by offering the finest products and services at a high price. The company has served more than 1000 customers who prefer to buy luxury skincare products, cars and best quality retail products without concerning about the price or the budget of the same (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020). After conducting different market research, it has observed that maximum numbers of customers has shown the interest of having high-quality goods and services (Boiral *et al.*, 2019).

With the growing demand for the new products and services, the company has launched new home appliances and electronic products with the help of **Value - Added Pricing Strategy**. This has not only helped the firm to meet the emerging demands of different high-end customers but also increase the profit level of the firm. The sale of different electronic goods and home technology has increased by 1.3% in recent years (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020). The company has now focused on launching new women wears and other fashion related accessories based on the present fashion and lifestyle trend.

PESTLE analysis of John and Lewis Partnership

Political

The recent scenario of the no-vote situation of the Brexit and several EU sanctions has cast an ominous scenario on the political situation of UK. It has adversely impacted the operations at John Lewis Partnership as it has been a difficult time for them in importing various products from EU nations at higher customs duty rate, which has been characterised by the instantiation of the EU sanction. Thus, they have not been able to target the low-income customer faction and only cater to the high-end customers as they have not been able to transcend on affordable pricing strategy. It is because they are not able to accommodate the rise in the customs duty and lowering of the product prices simultaneously.

Economical

The inflation rate with the UK economy has witnessed a significant decrease from 3.1% in 2017 to 1.9% in 2018 (Kaminska *et al.*, 2018). It has been understood to have a positive impact on the operations of the John Lewis Partnership. It is because it has hindered market liquidity and has also increased its valuation for the premium product. Thus, it has been able to serve the high-end customers appropriately and generated commendable annual revenue at the same time. The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) has stated there has been an increase in the wages of employees from £7.2 to £7.5 per hour. It has been understood to have an adverse impact on the operations of the John Lewis Partnership. It is because in order to accommodate the rise of employee wages they must cut their spending on the market campaigns that focuses on targeting high-end customers.

Social

The disposable income among the UK population has increased by 4.7% annually (Ons.gov.uk. 2020). It has been deemed to be beneficial for the enterprise as the increase in disposable incomes elevates the spending capacity of the high-end customers. Thus, John Lewis Partnership has been able to accumulate increased annual turnover by targeting the high-end customers. The education landscape of the UK is ranked within the top 10 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) and is vested with the abundance of prospective undergraduates. It has made positive influences in targeting the high-end consumers as they have been able to recruit these young prospects in order to interact with the high-end customers factitively and in turn enhance the customer experience.

Technological

There has been a sharp rise in the research and development of Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies. The recent investment in this sector has amounted £28 billion. It has made a positive impact on targeting high-end customers. It has been supported by the evidence that highlights John Lewis Partnership's initiative in the introduction of VR technology at the London store. VR technology has been installed in order to enhance the customer experience by creating virtual showroom and has named it "Visualise your Space" (Johnlewispresscentre.com. 2020).

Legal

The recent change within the General Data Protection Rights (GDPR), which is illustrated by the incorporation of the Data Portability Act, has posed to be a challenge for the enterprise. It is because, most of their high-end customers make online purchases and the storage of the online transaction data, in accordance to the data format of Data Portability Act has been identified to be a perplexing task for the enterprise. The Minimum Wage Act has increased the wages of employees. It has been understood to have an adverse impact on the operations of the John Lewis Partnership.

Environmental

The Environmental Protection Act has illustrated the fact that the carbon footprint within the UK has to be decreased by 30% within 2030. It has made positive implications on the business at John Lewis Partnership as they have been making use of renewable technology in order to power their stores. This, in turn, has also been in coherence with the perception of high-end customers that asserts on the importance of sustainable development.

Role and responsibilities of different employees in contributing to the development of the firm

The main aim of the John and Lewis Partnership is to focus on engaging different customers for increasing the overall profit of the firm. In order to maintain a fix position in the market, the company need to identify different needs and demands of customers, offering the best quality products and improve the customer services facility. Employees are the main resources that may help the said company to achieve its ultimate target.

Role of Marketing Team in the Organization's benefit

The marketing department of the John and Lewis Partnership has focused on developing innovative ads at the time of different occasions that may help the company to attract new customers (Han *et al.*, 2019). In order to seek the attention of different high-end customers, the marketing team of the firm has focused on designing classy and sophisticated tools (advanced lighting, costly equipment and attractive models) for promoting their new products in an effective manner.

Role of Finance Team in the firm's benefit

The finance team of the company has aimed to reduce the manufacturing price of different goods and services for increasing the net profit level of the firm. With the use of different recyclable materials and high rated designs the company has produced several items belongs to any particular product line by the same raw materials (Matrian and Khan, 2017). This has helped the company to reduce its operational cost and increase its net profit. This may also help the firm to provide attractive discounts on different premium products to increase the overall client base.

Role of the Customer Service department

The customer service department or the manager of the firm has played a vital role in engaging different clients by assisting them to choose right products required for long term use. Members belong to this department has aimed to maintain pleasant behaviour while dealing with various clients. This has helped the firm to satisfy the different needs of its major customers and make them feel engaged with the same enterprise. Besides this, managers of this department have analysed different problems of customers while availing any online and offline shopping facilities (Jun *et al.*, 2018). This may help the company to increase its engagement with different customers and retain the same to increase its annual profit.

Importance of the conducting training program for organizational benefit

Here are some importance of conducting different training programs for improving the skills of employees of John and Lewis Partnership:

1. It may help different employees to clear their doubt about offering different products and services to major customers and gain knowledge about developing good relations with them.
2. An effective training program may help the manager of the leaders of the firm to identify different problems of employees that restrict them to meet organizational goals. Thus, it

will help them to develop innovative ideas for solving various problems of internal members.

3. It will also help both the manager and his subordinates to develop effective communication required for framing new product promotional strategy effectively.

Importance of the marketing department for increasing the company's profit

The role played by the marketing department of John and Lewis Partnership firm has helped the company to increased its annual revenue by 1.3% in the year 2018 (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020). Besides this, it has helped the firm to maintain a good brand image required for sustaining among different major competitors like Tesco, Walmart present in UK. The reason behind the generation of huge client base as well as the £172 million net profit is the effective promotion of different products and services (Johnlewispresscentre, 2020). Besides this, the company has entirely depended on the efficiency of this team required for identifying the changing market trend and the level of competition provided by all the above-mentioned competitors (Armstrong *et al.*, 2018). This team has also played a vital role in monitoring different business strategies applied by different competitors and market response to the same. This has further helped the John and Lewis Partnership firm to make some changes in the company policy required for determining the proper existence in the market. Thus, it is important for the company to focus on the improvement of the development of its marketing team for ensuring effective outcome.

Explain the skills and knowledge needed to carry out the role

With the purpose of improving the profit level of the firm, the company need to recruit professionals who have effective problem-solving capacity and customer engaging talent. The ability to frame an innovative promotional strategy may help the company to grab the attention of different customers who prefer to buy the finest retail products. With the aim of competing for different similar brands, the human resource department of the firm needs to focus on recruiting individuals who have the skills of making effective decisions within a short time (Chiang *et al.*, 2018).

This will further help the company to manage different emerging risks efficiently. Besides this, the company needs to focus on investing money for improving the marketing skills of ground-level employees who have the direct scope of communicating with different customers. Generating a charming attitude and pleasant behaviour of various subordinates may help the company to

attract a wide range of customers (Reinartz and Berkmann, 2018). This will ultimately help the firm to improve its client base as well as the overall profit level of the firm.

Recommendations for developing an effective training program for improving employee skills

Here are some recommendations that may help the firm to conduct an effective training program for improving the skills of new employees present in the marketing section of the firm:

1. The managers need to develop effective audiovisual content for communicating the main objectives of the firm. This will help the new marketing team to understand their job roles and duties required for meeting the organisational aim.
2. The leader or the manager needs to identify the real problems faced by different members while performing their duties. Besides this, the manager needs to focus on improving the communication skills or power of every member present in the same department or the team.
3. The leader needs to convey the strategies and the benefits of using advanced communication tools like social media required for informing different clients about the recent launches. This will further help different members of the marketing team to develop the community engagement capacity and help the company to reach its desired target.
4. Lastly, the manager needs to generate an effective communication channel between all the members present in the marketing team. This will further help the firm to utilise different business promotional strategy by using the strengths and expertise of every member associated with the marketing team.

Conclusion

After analysing different data, it has observed that the John and Lewis Partnership firm has focused on developing effective promotional strategies required for attracting different high -end customers. The company has aimed to produce high-quality products and services for customers who prefer to spend huge money for availing the finest products and services. It has observed that employees belong to the marketing department of the firm has helped in increasing the profit level as well as determining the sustainable position of the firm in the market. Thus, it is important for the firm to develop an effective training program for improving the skills of different new members present in the marketing department of the firm. It will also help the company to develop community engagement and expand its business.

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Appendices

Factors	Training Time (days)	Impact
Improve communication skills - through group discussion, frequent meetings, small projects	30	Helps in engaging customers
Improve promotional skills – working on ad campaign	15	Helps in attracting new customers
Improve decision-making skills – Group discussion on topic, project-based work	12	Helps in managing risk

Table 1: Training and development plan

(Source: Developed by author)