

Chapter XXVII

Going Global: A Technology Review

Mahesh S. Raisinghani
Texas Woman's University, USA

Denise Taylor
University of Dallas, USA

ABSTRACT

The World Wide Web opened the door for many organizations with international ambitions to go global. Organizations that did not have a global presence or access to international markets could create Web sites to offer products/services to a new customer base, and companies that were already internationally entrenched could make their products easily accessible. However, developing a process to deliver products in a timely fashion and ensuring availability of items is still a challenge. This chapter explores the impact of telecommunications, customer relationship management (CRM), and supply chain management (SCM) and its impact on meeting customers' expecta-

tions, regardless of location. We also address the challenges, advantages, and future trends in each of these areas. Finally, this chapter provides suggestions to help companies implement strategies that will effectively overcome the challenges of globalization.

INTRODUCTION

With the rapidly evolving telecommunications industry, especially in the US, it is becoming all the more challenging for companies to innovate and integrate. This is more so with businesses that choose to globalize, since even with the right telecommunications solution technologi-

cally, companies still need to ensure that they are communicating effectively with customers and providing them with detailed product information. This is where the supply chain systems become extremely important in modern globalization scenarios. An effective customer relationship management (CRM) solution will allow companies to provide timely and accurate data on customer orders and/or demand that can be used by the supply chain management (SCM) system to plan and schedule the manufacture of goods with minimal overruns. However, there is concern about whether domestic and/or global sourcing can effectively manage CRM, SCM, and telecommunications. These concerns arise from the fact that, although technology has evolved, the question of whether it is possible to improve the process of globalization by merely improving functionality of the technology in the areas of CRM, SCM, and telecommunications still remains. Before reviewing the technology components needed for globalization, it is imperative that a discussion occur on the means of communication. Implementation of a correct telecommunications solution is a key element in successfully managing and meeting customer demand. Therefore, a review of telecom technology and strategies will follow in order to understand the role it plays in the supply chain management process as well as the effect it has on meeting customer expectations. Later in this chapter, we provide an overview of the steps that companies can follow to review the customer needs and processes and develop a strategy that will help them achieve globalization.

BACKGROUND

The introduction of the World Wide Web opened the door for many companies seeking to go global and made it easy for companies to create a way to view their products online. However, developing a process to deliver products in a timely fashion and ensure availability of items is the challenge.

As companies strive to reduce expenditures by outsourcing jobs to locations beyond the US, they also want to grow revenues by attracting international business. This chapter explores the impact of telecommunications, customer relationship management (CRM), and supply chain management (SCM) and its impact on effectively meeting customers' expectations, regardless of the customers' locales. It addresses the challenges, advantages, and future trends in each of these areas. Finally, this chapter will provide suggestions to help companies implement strategies that will effectively help them overcome the challenges of globalization. Taking a closer look at all of these components will enable a review of the full cycle of customer processes, which will aid in developing a comprehensive global software strategy.

ROLE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE GLOBALIZATION PROCESS

Telecommunications plays a significant role in globalization. Even with the implementation of good CRM and SCM systems, it is not likely that a company will realize the full potential of its business endeavors if the correct telecommunications strategy is not developed. The following section discusses the challenges and opportunities organizations face when embarking on global markets.

Telecommunications Challenges and Opportunities

When discussing global telecommunications' challenges, it is important to note that they differ from one country to another. While organizations in developed countries have stable infrastructures that are continuously enhanced by innovative technologies to manage electronic processing, in developing countries they do not have this luxury; rather, they tend to focus on how to exploit their in-house existing resources. Furthermore, unlike

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