



Information



Sources of Information

Internal information

- Company operations

External information

- Intelligence gathering about competitors' activities
- Information about population shifts
- Economic and social factors
- Government legislation



Levels of information

◆ Operational information

- daily events and transactions: employees' pay, orders, invoices, payments, stock levels

◆ Tactical information

- middle managers need to know how fast items move, how quickly stock can be replenished, how well a new product is selling, when is store most crowded

◆ Strategic information

- historical, environmental and local information may be used to build computer 'models' which help to forecast future changes or needs



Quality of information

To be useful to a manager, information needs to be:

– **Brief**

- as concise as possible: too much detail can result in overlooking vital facts. The principle of *reporting by exception*

– **Accurate**

- inaccurate information leads to poor decisions and a loss of confidence in the information source

– **Up-to-date**

- e.g. a booking or ordering system

– **Timely**

- reports must reach the right person at the right time

– **In an appropriate format**



Channels of communication

Data and information flow will depend on:

- ◆ **The nature of the information**
 - whether routine or 'ad hoc' information
- ◆ **The organisational structure**
 - size of the organisation and the number of management 'layers'
- ◆ **The amount of processing to be done**
 - on the data, and the frequency of processing
- ◆ **Geographical spread**
 - between the different parts of an organisation



Presenting management information

Numerous different ways include:

- ◆ **On computer printouts**
 - using the principle of exception reporting for brevity and clarity;
- ◆ **On a VDU**
 - a report or a 'slide show' produced using a presentation graphics package, for example;
- ◆ **Desktop published**
 - incorporating company logo, graphs, diagrams, photographs etc;
- ◆ **Orally**
 - 'over the grapevine', by telephone or in formal presentations;
- ◆ **Using videoconferencing**
 - to enable several people at separate locations to participate in meetings and information exchange;
- ◆ **Over a company-wide Intranet**
 - internal network to which all employees have access and on which important information can be posted



The intended audience

- ◆ The way that information is presented will depend to a large extent on who it is intended to reach.
- ◆ Information on products and sales may be intended for:
 - **Customers**
 - **Wholesalers**
 - **Company Accountant**



Some type of presentation

- ◆ **Graphs and charts can be very effective to highlight problems or trends**
- ◆ **Information can be gleaned at a glance**
 - **Bar charts good to identify trends**
 - **Line graphs good to highlight seasonal figures**
 - **Pie charts show composition of total – as long as number of segments is limited**



Guidelines for presentations

A presentation could for example take the form of

- ◆ a talk accompanied by overhead projector transparencies or slides, or
- ◆ a slide show prepared in PowerPoint or a similar graphics package.

Either way, the information on each screen or slide should be:

- ◆ **Simple**
 - no more than 5 or 6 clearly legible lines, in clear English;
- ◆ **Brief**
 - bullet points are a good communication tool;
- ◆ **Visually appealing**
 - don't use too many different fonts, or all uppercase letters. Graphs and charts are useful where numeric information has to be imparted.



Marketing information

Customer information is a valuable asset. Collected:

- **When a customer makes a purchase or orders a catalogue**
 - their name and details are added to a customer database
- **When customer fills in a guarantee card**
 - frequently asked to provide information about products they own, income group, no. of children etc
- **People visiting a company's Web site**
 - can be asked to 'register' by providing personal information before gaining access to the site
- **Companies buying mailing lists from other companies selling related products**