

Syngenta - Summary

Developing an effective organisational structure

Introduction

Syngenta is a world-leading plant science business. It is committed to promoting sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology. It makes a wide range of products for crop protection as well as professional products (like seeds) and garden plants. It employs more than 24,000 people in over 90 countries. The business needs not just scientists, but people in important supporting roles, such as sales and marketing and information systems. Syngenta uses a matrix structure approach to manage projects. This uses employees' talents and abilities to the full.

Organisational structure

A business must operate within the structure best suited to its aims. Traditionally large businesses are divided into functional areas and are likely to have several layers of authority. The number of levels depends on whether it has a:

- hierarchical structure – this has many layers, each with a narrow span of responsibility. It can offer clear promotion opportunities and tight control. However, communication can be a problem. Staff may not be fully empowered, which may reduce motivation.
- flat structure - this has few layers. Each manager has a wide span of control so often delegation is necessary. Communication is faster and problems may be solved quicker.

Syngenta is committed to empowering its staff so a hierarchical structure is not suitable. It uses a matrix structure where teams and their leaders manage tasks and projects. It is not an alternative to management in functional areas but works alongside it.

Roles and responsibilities

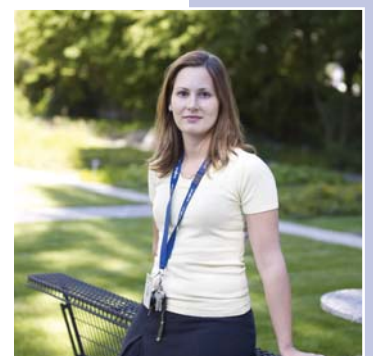
Syngenta is organised into key functional areas:

- Research and Development (R&D)
- global supply
- sales and marketing
- global support functions (legal, financial and HR services).

Each area is effectively independent. By using a matrix structure, Syngenta can call on the skills and abilities of its people in each area to contribute to a range of projects running at any one time.

Skills and competencies

Syngenta empowers its people by allowing them to take control of their work. To fulfil Syngenta's aims and objectives, staff must also demonstrate specific skills and abilities. For example, in a manager's role planning and organisational skills are vital. Good time management is necessary to avoid delays. Delay could lead to rivals bringing out new products first and Syngenta losing business. Clear leadership is vital to make projects work as smoothly as possible.



Human Resources (HR) strategy

Syngenta wants its staff to be:

- passionate about achieving business goals
- focused on essential areas
- keen to develop new skills
- recognised for achievements
- creative in how they work.

Syngenta's HR team provides training and development opportunities for staff. Balancing risk and reward is an important aspect of Syngenta's management approach. It is committed to R&D to keep ahead of competition. It also expects its people to learn from mistakes and be motivated to do better. Employees' achievements are acknowledged through awards that further inspire employees.

Conclusion

As a large business, Syngenta must organise its resources and use the talents of its people effectively. A matrix management structure is best suited to bringing together people with diverse skills into project teams. Managers leading project teams are trained and supported to achieve the highest standards. Syngenta is committed to recruiting people with skills that it can develop long-term. This benefits both Syngenta staff by providing challenging opportunities and also the business by ensuring good talent resources are available for future growth.

