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Master's Thesis

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Has been approved by the Thesis Committee as satisfactory
for the thesis requirement for the Master of Science degree
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**Corporate Culture Implications on DAM Implementation Success in the
Greeting Card Industry**

by Philip G. Diamantis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science
in the School of Print Media and Sciences
in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
of the Rochester Institute of Technology

May 2006

Thesis Advisors:

Professor Franziska Frey
Professor Twyla Cummings
Professor Sandra Rothenberg

Title of thesis Corporate Culture Implications on DAM Implementation Success

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Abstract

Digital Asset Management (DAM) has become a necessary concern with the growing number of files used in the graphics industry. Organization, storage, filing, and dynamic distribution of electronic mediums is becoming increasingly more important. The ROI for DAM systems comes from time savings, expanding product offerings via the web, and organization. For testing purposes, the greeting card industry was chosen because of its need for various images across several platforms. The research started by selecting several companies in the greeting card industry to analyze their competence with DAM. From these companies, four were selected and categorized according to size and their level of transition with a DAM initiative. Two small companies and two large companies were chosen on the basis of their financial strength, as well as their employee count. One small company and one large company were selected because their DAM initiative was more advanced than were the other two companies'

From this information, a grid showing those large and small companies with their varying degrees of success with a DAM implementation was developed. Next, structured interviews were administered to determine the levels of success with DAM, as well as to investigate and to characterize cultural traits inherent in each organization. Data was compiled from the interviews and analyzed to determine any links between corporate culture and DAM success in both large and small greeting card organizations. The objective of the research is to determine traits inherent in both small and large companies that contribute to successful DAM implementation.

In conclusion, communication across various business units and silos within the company was very important. Also, early technology adopters had greater success than those waiting to follow marketplace trends. Specific reuse trends were found to be relevant in successfully implementing DAM. Finally, organizational structures with hierarchy in administrative areas while remaining fluid in technology sectors had greater success with DAM initiatives.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The digital revolution has brought rapid change to the way business is conducted. Communication within business-to-business commerce has begun to evolve; common practices of distributing data by paper or by disk have been replaced with digital communication. The advent of broadband has only contributed to the phenomenon. Taking data that was once physical and making it digital expedites the transfer of information. Therefore, cycle times are greatly diminished with accelerated data transportation, while storage has been reduced significantly by limiting or eliminating paper usage. However, with the initiation of such a rapid change, the digital infrastructure that warrants organization and order has grown much less rapidly. While pioneering business opportunities revolve around exchanging data dynamically, the effective systems for storage and retrieval of data have not grown at such a rapid pace.

Data is changing hands at such a rapid pace that most organizations, especially those that regularly deal with data exchange for commerce, are at odds to sort and to store files in an organized fashion. Brick-and-mortar businesses have adopted digital technologies to stay abreast of decreasing throughput and increasing competition, but successful implementation of asset management still seems to be a second priority. The extreme focus placed on keeping up with emerging technologies has created a void in

managing the large asset pool that was created once concrete disks or pieces of paper were converted into a manageable storage medium.

The adoption of new technology or a successful transition from concrete to digital assets could be directly related to an organization's cultural characteristics. Certain characteristics associated with companies that embrace change may facilitate the adoption of DAM systems. In contrast, organizations with cultural artifacts that resist flux could suffer slow adaptation, if any.

Although many organizations have sought DAM as a solution, it is not clear which of them have been successful and, more importantly, why they have been successful. Therefore, as a research topic, it is essential to find any organization's cultural characteristics that are related to the success of effectively managing the use, exchange, and storage of digital assets. More importantly, what impact does a corporate culture play in new technological implementation, such as DAM?

Because of the many variables possible in such a study, the topic must be narrowed. Therefore, this research will investigate any correlation between effective DAM solution implementation and any impact that corporate culture may have on the success of such a system. In essence, the question is: What corporate culture characteristics are relevant in successfully implementing DAM?

Much literature has been focused on DAM within the graphic arts industry. According to IBM, 80% of businesses are in the process of implementing e-business tools (IBM, 2003). DAM is an integral organizational component which must be embraced because of trends toward a digital economy. However, many companies have had

difficulty in implementing technological strategies to remedy marketplace challenges, such as increased competition, increased customer demands, and the Internet revolution (Peck, 2003). The ability for traditional brick-and-mortar companies to implement DAM solutions requires organizational adaptation. Therefore, organizational success for technological initiatives hinge on whether or not companies can make the transformation from managing tangible products to storing intangible data as a service. Corporate culture can determine how successful organizations embrace their chosen technological initiative, such as DAM. Therefore, an exploration of corporate culture may reveal whether or not a DAM program is successful in the graphic arts industry.

Chapter 2

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

Similar to other technological implementations, DAM is a logical solution that is also difficult to establish. There have been similarities with Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. Both systems manage data to mobilize business-to-business commerce, but implementation and infrastructure initiatives separate the successful systems from the unsuccessful systems. Therefore, discovering why some companies succeed while others fail will yield very valuable information.

Research Objectives

In order to discover the corporate culture implications which affect success or failure in DAM implementation, these objectives were followed:

- Use case studies to analyze corporate cultures at selected greeting card companies.
- Determine what elements of corporate culture influence, are attributed to, a successful DAM implementation.

Background and Significance

The greeting card market is ideal for such a study, since various images and text must be stored, repurposed, and distributed for print. As an added consideration, both large and small greeting card organizations were sampled to find any correlation between success, corporate culture, and size. Success was gauged by assessing any streamlined business processes, added value, or revenue. Key areas that were focused on for success are:

- Faster Speed-to-Market
- Automating Tasks Once Manual
- New Business Opportunities
- Rapid Access to Data (Gistics, 2003)

With the ability to shorten work throughput and to get cards to the shelves faster, greeting card manufacturers will gain several efficiencies with the use of DAM. Further speeding up the process, tasks such as image sorting, manipulation, and retrieval for the cards can be automated with a DAM system. Also, the ability to create personal cards across Internet connections or to develop databases for electronic cards can be sources for new business opportunities. Finally, archival and retrieval for common files can be facilitated with an easy to use and efficient database.

Reasons for Interest

After working in several print companies, this researcher discovered that managing data for clients has become a niche to add value and to secure more business. It was observed that several printing companies have sought ways to develop asset storage systems to expedite and to automate the print process. The greeting card industry was especially interesting because of its need to manage a variety of file formats for printed materials. Raster, vector, and text files must all be managed; in addition, cards are often repurposed for different languages. Therefore, this industry seemed ideal to study in discerning any corporate culture characteristics inherent to DAM success.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

DAM is increasingly becoming relevant to the print industry, as the need for archiving, storage, and reuse of files has grown. The greeting card industry's need for such a system is extremely important because of the vast number of images or assets that it must use, reuse, and store. However, in order to implement such a technological system, change must occur. Therefore, very important to change, a company's culture must embrace and adapt to such a system or growth will be hindered. Companies with an effective change-embracing culture will ultimately come out ahead of those who do not.

Digital Asset Management Defined

DAM is often defined in terms of the business or model surveyed. In general, DAM systems simply organize data that takes financial backing to produce (Gistics, 2004). With the advent of the digital revolution, files and databases are becoming increasingly disorganized because of the large volume of information stored, coupled with the speed at which it accumulates. Therefore, the creation of DAM to organize large amounts of information is one essential facet of the technology. According to a 2004 Gistics report, the following criteria constitute a digital asset:

- The organization reused the object in the past 18 months
- The organization recorded the object's development costs.
- The organization recorded how the object has contributed to sales increase or cost decrease.
- The organization made efforts to use the object, while protecting it from misuse.

The DAM concept can be framed in parallel with many industry trends. With increased competition and globalization, in 2003 DAM's advantages were proposed to make information access an on-demand competitive advantage (IBM, 2003). In parallel with the digital object's requirements, the DAM strategy should revolve around the optimization of the following object attributes: creation, use, reuse, and repurposing (Gistics, 2003).

Greeting Card Industry Significance

The greeting card industry is a significant segment of the print industry; in 2004 valued at \$14.77 billion, greeting cards represent 65.1% of the stationary market (Dolbeck, 2004). Also, of the group of adults who participate in sending greeting cards, 51% plan on sending up to 25 cards between Christmas and New Years Day (The Greeting Card Association, 2004). While printing suffered as a result of the September 11th attacks on America, the stationary market does not seem to comply (Anonymous, 2002). The stationary market grew 11.5% from 1999 to 2003 (Dolbeck 2004). There were

those who would think that, with the widespread adoption of the Internet, greeting cards would suffer as a result. The opposite was found in 1999; because the Internet makes communicating easier, demand for greeting cards has been stimulated (The Kiplinger Letter, 1999). However, by 2020, email will negatively affect the greeting card market (Romano, 2005).

The two major categories of greeting cards are Everyday Cards and Seasonal Cards. As shown in Figure 1, the Greeting Card Association (2004) reports these percentages for purchases of Everyday Cards: Birthday 60%, Anniversary 8%, Get Well 7%, Friendship 6%, Sympathy 6%, and other 13%.

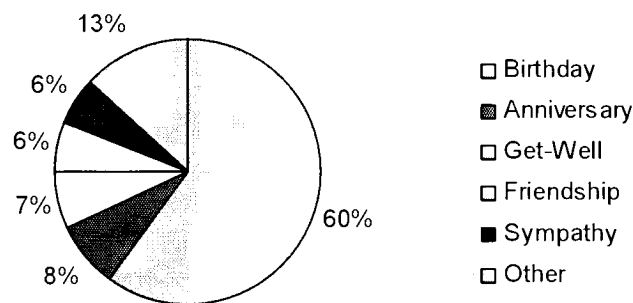


Figure 1. Everyday Card Breakdown

As shown in Figure 2, the percentages for purchases of Seasonal Cards are: Christmas 60%, Valentine's Day 25%, Mother's Day 4%, Easter 3%, Father's Day 3% cards, and other 5%. (The Greeting Card Association, 2004).

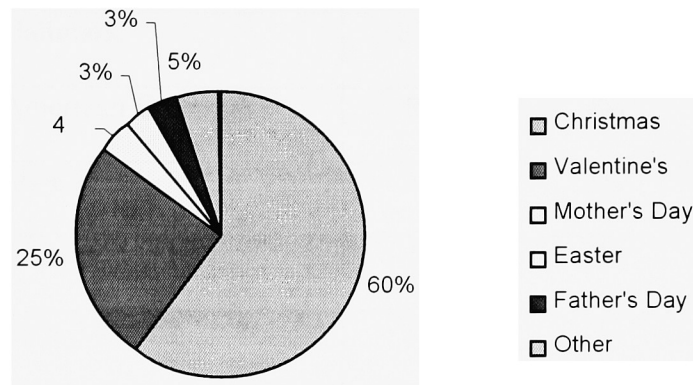


Figure 2. Seasonal Card Breakdown

Considering the hundreds of images that the greeting card manufacturers need to access, to render, and to store, DAM could be a useful software solution. The need for a DAM solution is more significant in the greeting card industry than it is in traditional print companies, as DAM is more focused towards the sheer volume of data that a greeting card company must manage.

Regarding brand recognition, Hallmark won overwhelmingly when people were asked what brand of greeting card they choose (DSN Retailing Today, 2004). Table 1 shows the brand recognition ranking of five major greeting card companies for the years 2002 and 2003.

	2002	2003
Hallmark	81%	86%
American Greetings	8%	4%
Shoe Box	3%	2%
Gibson	1%	1%
Expressions	1%	1%

Table 1. Brand Recognition Ranking (DSN Retailing, 2004)

However, according to *Hoover's Online Financial Services* (2004), the two biggest players in the greeting card industry, Hallmark and American Greetings, do not have that large of a gap between their sales figures in comparison to their brand recognition percentages. For 2004, Hallmark had a sales figure of roughly \$4.4 billion, compared to American Greeting's \$2 billion in sales.

Research about the industry reveals that information about the greeting card market in the United States is sparse. The Greeting Card Association and *Greetings Etc. Magazine* are basically the only sources that support the industry. Even when speaking to the Greeting Card Association, the researcher was told that information on the industry is hard to find.

Printing in general is segmented in 4 categories: informational, promotional, packaging and product. Stationary and envelopes, Internet and Forms, and miscellaneous

print (i.e. wallpaper, wrapping paper, greeting cards, and paper plates, etc.) fall in the product category comprising 17% of print. 26.5% of all print such as periodicals, books, packaged goods, and greeting cards are distributed through retail locations. The number of greeting card printing companies has been steadily decreasing from 2000 to 2004.

However employee numbers have decreased and increased from 2000 to 2003 and leveled off in 2004. Shipments for greeting cards declined from 2000 to 2002, increased in 2003, and fell again in 2004. Overall, 2003 was a good year for greeting cards showing consolidation with fewer greeting card companies, increased employee numbers and the highest shipment value from the years 2000 to 2004 (Romano, 2005).

	2000 Firms	2001 Firms	2002 Firms	2003 Firms	2004 Firms
# of Firms	55	51	49	49	48

Table 2. Number of Greeting Card Firms (Romano, 2005)

	2000 Employees	2001 Employees	2002 Employees	2003 Employees	2004 Employees
# of Employees	3940	3730	3829	3872	3800

Table 3. Number of Employees in Greeting Card Firms (Romano, 2005)

	2000 Shipments	2001 Shipments	2002 Shipments	2003 Shipments	2004 Shipments
Shipments (mil \$)	592.85	571.32	561.04	592.31	585.00

Table 4. Shipment Value of Greeting Card Firms (Romano, 2005)

Greeting cards are produced with a variety of processes. In the broader category of Stationary and labels, the breakdown is as follows: 76% offset, 0% gravure, 11% flexo, 11% digital, and 2% other (Romano, 2005).

Change must occur in order for any organization to adapt to a new technology. The organization's ability to embrace changing market conditions is important. Therefore, the corporate culture of a company is an integral part in the process.

Corporate Culture Defined

Corporate Culture is not synonymous with strategy or organizational structure (Schein, 1992). Although these concepts may be interrelated, corporate culture is more holistic and intangible in nature. Employees may change, but an underlying element of culture will prevail (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). According to Schein (1996), organizational culture is "an organization's sense of identity, its goals, its core values, its primary ways of working and a set of shared assumptions." Corporate culture is the worker's underlying assumptions and beliefs, dependent on the work atmosphere; basically, the workforce links right and wrong, or good and bad, depending on the collective attitude fostered at the place of employment.

Corporate culture can be assessed by noting three levels of culture, including: "artifacts, espoused values, and shared assumptions" (Schein, 1985). Artifacts are those elements noticed upon entering an organization, such as interior design, atmosphere, or ambiance. Espoused values are the underlying rationales for why a company acts as it does, embedded in "values, principles, ethics, and visions" (Schein, 1985). Shared assumptions are the source for evidence in espoused values, such as historical company creation and the beliefs that shaped the organization from its genesis. Attitudes towards

these concepts influence employee behaviors or beliefs and the actions that transpire as a result. Organizational culture can be seen as a collection of common codes or meanings; it controls the rules over the whole that direct thoughtful decisions or actions in a group.

Strong Corporate Culture as a Predictor of Success

Firms with strong corporate cultures are usually associated with a leader or a visionary; these philosophies are often associated with rigid cultures supported by all employees that sustain motivation and achievement (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Strong corporate cultures are those in which noticeable trends between an organization's values and beliefs permeate its actions (Denison, 1984).

Denison's (1984, 1990) Consistency Hypothesis attempts to make a connection between culture strength and organizational success in terms of profits. The reciprocal relationship can be considered as true; high performance or profits within an organization can lead to a stronger company culture (Alvesson, 1993).

However, strong cultures can have powerful consequences, both positively and negatively, each grounded in influence; those organizations with strong cultures can accomplish the extraordinary with new revolutions or, in contrast, can convince otherwise intelligent people to commit acts of foolishness (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

Innovation as a Predictor of Success

A leader or head entrepreneur must develop customs that embrace innovation through cultural values; however, it is not enough for an organization to have a strong

element of research and development. The workforce must have a strong culture to complement the structural advantages of a company (Claver, Llopis, et. al., 1998). An organization's infrastructure is equally important as the corporate culture is in coping with technological change. Claver, Llopis, et. al. (1998) agree that strong culture is important, but the most core element is a commitment to innovation. They state the following key elements which link corporate culture with new technology adaptation:

- Focus on research and development
- Decentralized power structure
- Creativity fostered
- Continual improvement/learning/training
- Teamwork
- Risk taking is acceptable
- Client oriented
- Change is accepted
- Methodical and deliberate commitment to long-term goals

Harper and Utley's (2001) research applied Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid to the success of new IT technology and the significance of corporate culture. Blake and Mouton's Grid is applied by grading companies according to their culture supporting either people or production, or in various combinations, as shown in Figure 3.

Predicting Effective Adaptation in Reference to Culture

When confronted with change, corporate culture will be consistent with past successful adaptations (Schein, 1985). If one set of actions and attitudes were successful in implementing a change in a previous situation, it will be likely that the same action will be taken. Reinforcement theory is parallel; by simply stating that if one set of circumstances yielded an optimum result in a comparable, previous situation, then when a related situation arises, a like solution will also yield success. However, if a culture does not effectively change, then the organization must adapt because failure is the only other alternative, given the current competitive environment.

Successful Corporate Culture

One cultural definition as a predictor to success is too broad a concept. Kotter & Heskett (1992) note that companies which are successful have corporate cultures that are catered towards their individual business needs in their particular market segment. Products and processes have less to do with organizational success, and more with how people are managed. Organizations are expected to stay abreast of quickly evolving technologies and processes; therefore, one of the most effective ways to differentiate one's organization is through establishing a culture that values employees (Pfeffer, 1999). Kotter and Heskett (1992) offer a three-pronged predictor for adaptation success of corporate culture in which leadership initiatives toward environmental adaptation should holistically accent the following groups: stockholders, customers, and employees,

holistically. If an organization's culture embraces these three areas, success should follow.

Potential Barriers in a Corporate Setting for Successful DAM Implementation

Traditionally, organizations are structured in silos. Cross-functional communication is becoming more and more relevant, but can suffer as a result of segmented communication (Reynes, 1999). While asset management becomes a mounting concern, total communication across the organization will become increasingly relevant. Organizations can suffer a weak Return on Investment (ROI) and incomplete technological implementation because silo structures foster competition among business elements and impede valuable communications (LaBonte, 2003). Companies that follow the silo structure do not share their collaborative experiences, which translates into poor technological implementation, as well as opportunity loss (Romanow, 2003).

Corporate Culture Assessment

Corporate cultures cannot be assessed in a simple survey form; it is evident that all organizations are unique, and developing an all-encompassing survey would be too extensive to be practical (Schein, 1999). According to Schein (1999), evaluating corporate culture is initiated by analyzing artifacts. Artifacts can be assessed by looking at the following:

- Dress codes
- Relationship interactions

- The nature of meetings
- Organizational language
- Rituals
- Conflict management
- Training

Values should be evaluated separately from artifact assessment; often cultural artifacts are recorded or published to model the organizational vision (Schein, 1999). The shared historical assumptions may then be addressed in the context of the previous two levels of culture. According to Schein (1999), however, these beliefs may be so deep-rooted that adaptation is impossible.

Conclusion

Very little research has been focused on investigating the correlation between corporate culture and its impact on the successful implementation of DAM. Although many studies cite the importance of DAM systems in the future of asset management, there is a lack of research regarding what cultural characteristics are indicative of organizations successful with such initiatives. This information is valuable for many reasons: DAM systems have been widely adopted, but their success depends on effective implementation. A company's culture will dictate how employees embrace technological change. Through research, cultural phenomenon related to DAM success can be used for those seeking organizational help with DAM solutions.

A strong influence in organizational actions is rooted in that organization's culture. The corporate culture dictates how fluidly an organization will react to technological change. By accessing research findings on the effect that corporate culture has on an organization's ability to adapt to technological change, industries will be able to gain more knowledge on how to increase the potential for success in implementing DAM systems.

Chapter 4

Research Questions

Research questions have been structured to include the topics previously written on corporate culture and their effects on DAM transition. Schein (1999) focuses on workplace dynamics and settings in relation to corporate values. Kotter and Heskett (1992) address corporate strength and organizational structure; they also concentrate on the ability to cope with technological change. The research of Pfeffer (1994) and Blake and Mouton (1966) deals with the value put on employees or production. LaBonte's (2003) research relates to decentralizing power and pushing decisions to lower levels of the organizational structure. Finally, Claver (1998) studies the fostering of teamwork, client-centric business tactics, and change dynamics.

The following list shows the areas that are imperative to study when investigating the impact that corporate culture has on an organization dealing with change. These areas of research were targeted for the study:

1. Will structures be in place to envelop new technologies while still allowing creativity?
2. What characteristics within organizations are conducive for success with a DAM implementation?
3. Will more fully transitioned small organizations be more fluid with less emphasis on job roles and processes for change?
4. Will innovation be respected while pioneering new technologies for added value?
5. Will companies with a silo structure suffer by lacking the collaboration and communication necessary to implement a DAM solution?

Chapter 5

Methodology

Introduction

Secondary research served as the foundation for the research. Case studies were implemented to get accurate and observable information. The case studies followed a structured interview style to allow for accurate information collection and the freedom for the interviewee to express any details to lead to accurate cultural assessment. It was necessary to do thorough research, especially to pick up on subtle nuances in the corporate culture relevant to the study.

Four greeting card companies were chosen according to their size and their success with DAM. Corporate culture characteristics are analyzed to determine relevance between the following variables: company size, DAM success, and corporate culture characteristics. Two small companies, similar in size and market but varied in having success in DAM implementation, were chosen. In parallel, two similar large companies with polar DAM implementations were selected. Interviews were structured with key personnel; in addition, environmental and employee interaction analysis were performed.

Table 5. DAM Implementation Success Methodology Grid

		Size of Organization	
		Large	Small
DAM Success	Less Transitioned		
	More Transitioned		

Detailed Methodology

Choice of Companies

Four greeting card companies were chosen according to their size and DAM implementation success. DAM success is associated with faster speed to market, automated tasks, new business opportunities, as well as any facilitated data storage, manipulation, and retrieval. Small and large companies were chosen because the employee distribution in greeting card companies did not lend itself to mid-size companies. The majority of greeting card companies were either large or small.

Interviews

Qualitative interviews indicated any cultural characteristics of organizations that may contribute to DAM success or lack of success, while taking company size into account.

Survey Data

Data from the surveys was recorded, typed, and analyzed with reference to company size to determine characteristic culture traits of successful or unsuccessful organizations that have implemented DAM.

Research Method

The research method used was based on William Whyte's participant-observer strategy, as illustrated in *Street Corner Society*. Alan Bryman's interpretation of Whyte's work in *Reframing Organizational Culture* was a key reference in making the transition from street corner to corner office. A structured interview was used for each company, while referencing Yin's *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* and Miles and Huberman's *Qualitative Data Analysis*.

Interview Questions

Questions were asked of personnel in two key areas: employees and the technology officer. It was very important to see how values had permeated throughout the organizational structure. Also, the person in charge of technology was an integral person

to address for DAM initiatives. The questions had been left intentionally vague at points to learn more about the corporate culture. The questions asked in the structured interviews appear in Table 6.

Table 6. Interview Questions

Questions for the Technology Officer
How old is the company and much is still true about the business environment from the beginning of the company?
What major technological transitions have you seen in the last 2 years?
How do you rank yourselves as far as being people-oriented or task-oriented on a scale of 1 to 5?
How do you differentiate yourselves from other companies in the greeting card business?
What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
If you had to say what your vision for the company is, what would it be?
What are your core company values?
What is your business strategy?
Is there a specific chain of command that employees follow or is your business model more fluid?
How many levels would you say you have on your organizational model?
What's your idea of a successful year (i.e. customer satisfaction, roi, etc)
Do you see yourselves as a leader or follower among peer companies on a scale of 1-5.
What are the biggest trends that you've seen as far as data management goes?
What types of procedures do you take for embracing new trends... does the mgt do this or do you present new ideas, etc.?
Is there a team approach to implementing technological initiatives?
How is progress or effectiveness evaluated?
Are you expected to come up with new/innovative ideas?
How often do you reuse artwork?
How long does it take you to find a file?

Table 6, continued.

Questions for the Employees
What types of benefits/vacation do you get?
What are your company's values?
What do you like about the company?
What do you like/not like about your work environment?
What is good about how employees are treated?
What improvement would you recommend for the business?
Are new ideas encouraged?
What kind of technological changes have you seen in your time here?

Methodology Summary

Some interviewees were more well-versed than others in DAM and its implementation. Also, some people were more available for questions, while others were more apprehensive to give away company information. Therefore, some questions were omitted by the interviewee, while some other questions were more thoroughly answered. The questions, along with their responses, are compiled in Appendix A through D.

Research Limitations

The research limitations may be only relevant to DAM in the greeting card industry. The research would be more accurate with more studies across a wider array of companies. Also, companies filling the gap between the 12 and 15,000 employee level would be helpful in understanding the effects of culture and DAM implementation.

Chapter 6

Interviews

Introduction

Each company selected was given a structured interview to determine their cultural traits and DAM transition. Small companies were between 2 and 10 employees while large companies were defined as 1500+ employees. In small companies, lower level DAM transitioned firms noted the relevance of image archival while higher level DAM transition dictated web based image search as well as repurposing. In large companies, lower level transition noted archival and storage capabilities while higher level transition denotes specific reuse strategies, web based image searches, and archival abilities. The researcher scheduled an in-person interview at one of the companies to determine its cultural settings and atmosphere. However, it was difficult to get in the door of the remaining three companies, so structured phone interviews served as the research method for them. Some technology officers had a broader concept of DAM reuse strategy, while others were competent in DAM storage and retrieval. Subtle nuances in conversation were noted, especially at the employee level to determine any cultural clues that relate to DAM transition.

Interview #1

Company A: Small Company / Lower Level DAM Transition

Company A, consisting of two employees, is a limited liability company that has been in existence for two years. Their market focus is on clients out of the main stream looking for innovative products with catchy appeal. Their client is looking for top quality card, possibly in the pet owning category, as much of their subjects were the owner's animals. The company is in transition in the area of DAM. According to the owner, with the company growing and experiencing an increase in file usage, the need for a system to manage files is on the agenda for the near future, Although files are easy to find (in under a minute now), the foresight to look into a system for managing files, although not yet on paper, is a near-future concern.

The owner of Company A is a very inspired artist-turned-producer of his own artwork which started as a creative outlet to put his poetry on paper. After several friends started inquiring more about his cards, the owner decided to market himself to smaller boutique shops and greeting card stores. With plans to expand into other promotional items such as coasters and coffee mugs, the goal of Company A is to get into bigger markets and to diversify their offerings

The interior of the business is in a downtown Atlanta renovated loft with a very urban, creative feel. The organizational language is very conversational, relaxed, and inspired. Workplace dress is very casual, and the business atmosphere is eclectic,

The values of the company are to offer greeting cards that are very creative, fresh, and new. A common thread that emerged in the interview is to do things that have not

been done before and to push the envelope of design. There is also a lack of bureaucracy, as the fundamental principles of the organization are to grow and to use their cards as a stepping-stone into other areas of business. As a business principle, Company A puts the customer first. While their vision does not concentrate on production, they use very high-grade paper and printing to sell their vibrant designs and concepts.

There was not much evidence of a strong corporate culture or very rigid values that the company is guided by. Although the owner is motivated and inspirational, there is not a rigid culture. The owner plays an important role in decision-making, but the culture allows a large amount of collaboration. As Company A is evolving, the company fosters creativity, and they are very nimble to change with business and market demands.

The business culture is very much people-centric. With a guiding business principle of taking care of the client, much of the business culture revolves around serving the customer. Employees are also valued, although there is not an infrastructure developed yet for vacations and benefits. The organizational structure is very flat, considering there are only two employees, and much of the culture revolves around collaboration and inspiration. Regarding research and development, Company A performs informal market research by looking at what other companies are doing and by paying attention to what people are buying.

Interview #2

Company B: Small Company / Higher Level DAM Transition

Company B, with 12 employees, is a small company in Atlanta primarily focused on greeting cards. Their target market is someone looking for a formal invitation such as weddings, showers, or any other ceremonial event. The company is fairly hierarchal, with a strict focus on tasks. The interviewee was quick to state that there was not a clear focus on people, and that the company values were strongly tied to production. However, the product focus for the company is to offer a very high quality, impeccably designed product. When asked about areas for improvement, the interviewee replied that the company needs to significantly improve its customer service.

The company values center around quality and production. Producing the highest quality greeting card is an extremely important goal for the company. Communication and culture is consistent across the company. There is a specific chain of command to parallel their three-level hierarchal atmosphere. Also, regarding input for new ideas, everyone has an equal voice in offering new solutions, as the employees are expected to innovate. However, new technological initiatives are adopted by upper management and are spread through the ranks. The company aspires to be a leader with their quality and expects to expand its product line.

Company B has have been in business for 10 years and has seen growth in DAM primarily from a storage standpoint and less so as a way to navigate files. Artwork is reused fairly often to recycle, but there are no set guidelines for reuse. Finding files to reuse can take up to ten minutes, so there is no effective way in place at the moment for a

file search. Increased file storage capabilities, increased archiving capabilities with the advance of more accessible hard drive space, and DVD burning abilities are some of the changes they have experienced with DAM. For archival storage, tape-based back-up has been replaced with external hard drives and DVDs. They plan on embracing the trend of web-based image management, as it is believed to be a trend.

Interview #3

Company C: Large Company / Higher Level DAM Transition

Company C has been in business for 95 years with about 18,000 employees. The company has successfully adopted DAM for quite some time. Actually, even before the digital revolution, Company C's production artists repurposed artwork to reuse assets concretely. Artists would take existing production artwork and either add or delete elements to make them useful for several projects, as opposed to just one.

As an early adopter, Company C had a proprietary system to manage Photoshop assets built over 15 years ago; the researcher found this to be very rare while talking to all of the various companies targeted for research. Regarding DAM, this is a very early start. Company C seems extremely comfortable with the exploration and development of DAM systems. There are several employees dedicated to explore technological trends, as well as to adapt to new processes.

The technology director is extremely well-versed with DAM processes, the use Company C has for asset management, and the future of DAM. There are several people in the organization who are involved with DAM. They regularly attend seminars to stay

ahead of the digital curve for Company C's competitive edge. There are even a few people so involved with DAM that they are considered to be experts at DAM conferences. Also, such concepts as various file types and metadata use was uncovered while interviewing Company C. Throughout their organization, their attention to detail, commitment to technological innovation, and fervor for staying ahead of the technological curve to lead their industry was evident.

Teamwork for Company C was much more evident, as there are several references to cross-company communication. Also, a large amount of attention is given to various employees and their value to the company. The intellectual value and investment in people is very significant, as they mention their main differentiation is through superior creative talent and copywriting. There is a specific chain of command to follow for cross-department communication, and any attempts for innovation are valued across the company.

Company C's business model is hierarchal, but attention is given to flatten specific organizational needs in the technology sector. Any departments that need to move quickly dealing with technology have been flattened to expedite innovation. Company C has looked at their silos as a way to organize data flow. However, special attention is given to those areas in the company that could not get bogged down by organizational rules.

There is an entire department dedicated to advancing technology to foresee future trends. Also, Company C was the only company interviewed to set up an asset reuse plan to recycle digital assets across the organization domestically, while future plans are to

create an asset reuse plan internationally. Company C also differentiates themselves from the other greeting card companies researched by offering several ways to measure their success. They conduct several marketing surveys and focus groups, while concentrating on the concrete financial gains with specific products.

Company C's upper management tries to foster creativity with the artists, while making them stick to deadlines. According to the interviewee, the only drawback uncovered during the interview is that the environment is too corporate; this might not foster creativity.

Interview #4

Company D: Large Company / Lower Level DAM Transition

Company D has considerable focus on its shareholders, as it is dedicated to innovation and supplying social expressions for their clients. They rate themselves as a 3 out of 5 on the continuum between a task-oriented and people-oriented organization, respectively. Also, their corporate culture is relatively strong; this was evident when listening to the interviewee's convictions about vision and values. However, there cultural strength was not as evident as was Company C's.

Company D's business strategy is to create innovative products and services at a superior value to their clients and shareholders. They also want their employees and associates to excel in business, as teamwork is an important part of their business. Their suppliers are also very important to them, as is their responsibility to the community

through leadership and example. Business success is closely linked to their shareholders with new product developments and ROI.

Company D's organizational structure has a specific hierarchal chain of command. However, after noticing communication challenges across silos, Company D sought to flatten its organizational structure to facilitate efficiency by eliminating 300 positions in 2005.

Also, considerable freedom is given to employees to innovate and develop new processes. In this respect, Company D rates itself as a 4 out of 5 in leadership among their competitors.

Company D aspires to stay on top of its industry by offering a varied product mix. They offer such products and services as: party goods, candles, gift wrap, cards, calendars, educational products, electronic greetings, ringtones, and retail stores. A considerable effort to stay on top of the digital revolution has been taken by developing electronic cards and ringtones. One of Company D's greatest assets is their size. However, it feels it has a weakness in the area of organizing all of its various business units.

Regarding DAM, Company D mentioned they have upgraded to the Mac OS 10. They have an employee who takes care of image requests to reuse images, but there is not a system to organize files for easy searching. Their involvement with DAM seems primitive. Also, there are no specific guidelines in place for image reuse.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

Observations on the Companies

In conclusion, Company A is a lower-level DAM transition greeting card firm that has not made use of structured DAM, but they are looking to move in that direction in the near future. Their culture, although not strong, is very relaxed, artistic, inspirational, innovational, and positive. The growth for the company is not rigid or documented, but there are plans for growth and becoming a market leader with its creativity. With the concentration of offering a fresh look at greeting cards and for putting the customer first, Company A puts value on people and is moving forward.

Company B has a more rigid concept of reusing files for specific pieces they are working on. Their commitment to order to a top-down management focus on DAM has put them slightly ahead of Company A. They understand the value of DAM from a storage standpoint and are looking at web-based options in the future to sort files. Their lack of reuse guidelines, as well as an effective file search tool, limits their ability to search through all of their assets, even though they have certain cultural elements integral to DAM success. Company B has a stronger corporate culture, and their vision is more concrete than that of the start-up Company A.

Company C has the most thorough and innovative concept of DAM. Their commitment to seminar work, as well as having specific organizational structure to deal with technological change, is part of their differentiation plan. Company C also places a great deal of emphasis on employee value and talent, while they are committed to quality communication in a rapid fashion. Company C measures their results more thoroughly by significant emphasis on client satisfaction, as well as by financial gain. Company C has a large head start on the DAM revolution (with 15 years of experience), while it still seems extremely dedicated to technological improvement.

Company D has a firm commitment to product development and to staying abreast of communication by flattening their organizational structure. However, their concept of DAM is limited to file storage, and little was mentioned about any effective ways to navigate assets. Company D embraces their value to their shareholders and clients by valuing social expression, but lack of involvement with DAM hinders their implementation. Technological innovation is valued, but no specific roles are put into place to search for new ways to accomplish asset retrieval, storage, and reuse tasks. A key element in Company D's transition is communication, as size was mentioned as a large factor. In addition, the chain of command to organize assets over such a large organization seems difficult.

Research Summary

As shown in Table 7, investigating the link between corporate culture and DAM adoption success has uncovered several interesting observations. With smaller

companies, the more task-oriented culture with a more structured environment had greater success implementing DAM solutions. In smaller organizations, structure is essential to make the intricacies of DAM work successfully. In parallel, the smaller company with a higher level of transition had a more formal dress code and environment. Additionally, the adoption of DAM was much more successful with the company that had a “top-down” adoption and understanding of the new technology. Communication across the company was important for successfully implementing new technology. It was very evident from the interviews with all companies which organization had a firm commitment to technology adoption and implementation. The stronger corporate culture with a higher task orientation had more DAM success with the smaller companies.

Table 7. Research Findings

		Size of Organization	
		Large 15,000+ Employees	Small 2+ Employees
DAM Success	Less Transitioned	Company D Task People Balance Innovation Not on Tech. Forefront Teamwork Fostered Hierarchal Org. Structure No Reuse Program	Company A Informal Unstructured Not Task Oriented Limited Tech. Savvy People Oriented No Reuse Program Limited Success Metrics
	More Transitioned	Company C Effective Communication New Trends Department Formal Culture Hybrid Org. Structure Teamwork Fostered Chain of Command DAM Reuse Program Seminar Involvement Task/People Value Balance Multiple Success Metrics	Company B Formal Top-Down Adoption Good Communication Task Oriented Chain of Command No Reuse Program

Small Company Research Summary

Both smaller companies had not developed search engines or systems to sort through files, but the necessity for such a system is not as paramount, when compared to the larger companies and their need with the vast number of files stored and later needed. The companies not concerned about DAM did not realize the ROI related to saving time to find assets; in addition, they did not realize the proactive value of repurposing valuable

files. Both smaller companies had no system in place to strategically reuse files. It should be noted that smaller organizations may not have the funds to develop a fully functional DAM system. Also, understanding DAM was primitive in implementation, as both companies were aware of the value of asset management, but were not well-versed in making it work; it was seen only as a future concern.

Within the small company category, those who focused on product and awareness of their niche in the marketplace were far more successful in potentially seeking a DAM initiative. Specific goals linked to visions and mission statements produced more successful results with a stronger sense of corporate culture.

Large Company Research Summary

In reference to the larger companies and their success in adopting DAM, there were several interesting observations. The more fully transitioned company had the technological foresight and dedication to innovation -- far ahead of their peers. With a 15- year head start to the DAM revolution, the more fully transitioned company had a dedicated technology exploration department to analyze trends.

Empowerment was also an initiative strongly supporting the success of any DAM system. The company with most success was heavily involved with DAM development for the industry, as two employees were especially integral to symposiums and to research. A delicate balance for success was maintained for the more fully-transitioned to focus on the communication across business units, while maintaining a flattened organizational structure to mobilize technological change. Also, there was a heavy

emphasis on organization and task-orientation, while considerable attention was aimed at fostering creativity. Very importantly to their success, a specific DAM reuse program was in place across all business units domestically, while future plans were dedicated to international reuse of their valuable assets.

With the “Lower Level Transition” in the large company category, there was a balance between task-orientation and people-orientation. They had a hierarchal business model that was flattened recently to offer more empowerment, while removing redundant tasks. Teamwork and freedom were fostered, but there was a hard time tying in all the various business units to make use of their digital assets. Also, with there was no specific asset reuse plan, no team dedicated to early technology adoption, and not as strong of a focus on seminar involvement for the development of DAM. The company did not have a great understanding of what DAM could bring, and their lack of communication and dedication to staying ahead of the digital curve were hindering its progress.

Conclusion

Similar in both large and small categories, organizational adoption across all tiers of the corporate structure is extremely important, as was a strong corporate culture with a balance between value of employees and effective communication across the business. Communication across all business units/silos was important to DAM success, especially with the larger companies. Also, early adopters had more success, especially those dedicated to leading-edge technology and seminar involvement. Specific plans dedicated to DAM success and implementation across the company facilitated the process. The

balance of fostering creativity while implementing a strong organized communication of DAM advantages was more relevant with the larger the companies observed. An organizational structure that maintained rigidity across silos, but still offered flexibility in key areas such as technology, worked best for a successful DAM implementation.

Chapter 8

Recommendations for Further Investigation

This research has provided a foundation for the link between certain corporate culture attributes and DAM success. Interesting developments for the success of DAM were linked to several attributes. Key elements integral to DAM success were early technology adoption, employee empowerment, a hybrid hierarchal business structure with flattened areas for technological adaptation, a balance between task- and people-oriented culture, and a strong sense of communication across the company. Further study of the following topics is recommended to yield a deeper understanding of the elements uncovered in this research:

- Strength of Corporate Culture
- Environmental Conditions
- Balance between Task Orientation vs. People Orientation
- Empowerment and Teamwork
- Hybrid Organizational Structures
- Communication Across Business Units
- Funding for DAM Initiatives Based on Company Size

DAM is a key technological initiative which companies need to get their products to market more efficiently. Competition and technology have driven the need for an effective way to navigate, to store, and to reuse assets valuable to business processes. DAM is extremely relevant, as digital assets are increasing and turn times are decreasing. The ROI for DAM is justified when analyzing the potential to save a great deal of time searching for assets, facilitating communication across the organization, reusing key elements that have associated costs, and organizing a large amount of data.

Therefore, the integral role that culture has on technological adoption is increasingly important. Companies with certain cultural characteristics are more apt to facilitate change, and their success and survival depends on their traits. Corporate culture is closely linked to DAM success, and a thorough understanding of this link is very valuable to implement a technology developed to facilitate business communication and, ultimately, to lead to increased profits.

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Appendix A
Company A Questionnaire

Appendix A

Company A Questionnaire

Questions for the Technology Officer

Responses

How old is the company and much is still true about the business environment from the beginning of the company?	Less than one year
What major technological transitions have you seen in the last 2 years?	Work from 4 color to 6
How do you rank yourselves as far as being people-oriented or task-oriented on a scale of 1 to 5?	1 people oriented
How do you differentiate yourselves from other companies in the greeting card business?	Originality and Quality
What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?	New so they can innovate
If you had to say what your vision for the company is, what would it be?	New Products i.e. Cups, Magnets, Coasters, etc.
What are your core company values?	Quality and Fun
What is your business strategy?	
Is there a specific chain of command that employees follow or is your business model more fluid?	2 employees N/A
How many levels would you say you have on your organizational model?	1
What's your idea of a successful year (i.e. customer satisfaction, roi, etc)	Clients Happiness
Do you see yourselves as a leader or follower among peer companies on a scale of 1-5.	Leader
What are the biggest trends that you've seen as far as data management goes?	Met with a guy to put images on a web based platform
What types of procedures do you take for embracing new trends...does the mgt do this or do you present new ideas, etc.?	Do market research and look at other companies
Is there a team approach to implementing technological initiatives?	Yes
How is progress or effectiveness evaluated?	
Are you expected to come up with new/innovative ideas?	Yes
How often do you reuse artwork?	Going to reuse artwork for new products
How long does it take you to find a file?	1 minute

Questions for the Employees

What types of benefits/vacation do you get?

What are your company's values?

What do you like about the company?

What do you like/not like about your work environment?

What is good about how employees are treated?

What improvement would you recommend for the business?

Are new ideas encouraged?

What kind of technological changes have you seen in your time here?

Responses

Guidelines are not strict

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

Appendix B
Company B Questionnaire

Appendix B

Company B Questionnaire

Questions for the Technology Officers

Responses

How old is the company and much is still true about the business environment from the beginning of the company?	10 years
What major technological transitions have you seen in the last 2 years?	Increased File Storage by moving from tape to DVD
How do you rank yourselves as far as being people-oriented or task-oriented on a scale of 1 to 5?	4 task oriented
How do you differentiate yourselves from other companies in the greeting card business?	High quality and impeccable design
What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?	Design and high quality, negative customer service
If you had to say what your vision for the company is, what would it be?	To continue leading and develop new products
What are your core company values?	Didn't want to answer
What is your business strategy?	Didn't want to answer
Is there a specific chain of command that employees follow or is your business model more fluid?	Most of the time a specific chain of command to follow
How many levels would you say you have on your organizational model?	2 to 3
What's your idea of a successful year (i.e. customer satisfaction, roi, etc)	Didn't want to answer
Do you see yourselves as a leader or follower among peer companies on a scale of 1-5.	Leader at 5 out of 5
What are the biggest trends that you've seen as far as data management goes?	Image Management with web interface
What types of procedures do you take for embracing new trends...does the mgt do this or do you present new ideas, etc.?	Everyone is available for input on new technologies and trends
Is there a team approach to implementing technological initiatives?	New technology is usually implemented by upper mgt and everyone else executes
How is progress or effectiveness evaluated?	Didn't want to answer
Are you expected to come up with new/innovative ideas?	Yes
How often do you reuse artwork?	Fairly often
How long does it take you to find a file?	1 to 10 minutes depending on the image

Questions for the Employees

What types of benefits/vacation do you get?

What are your company's values?

What do you like about the company?

What do you like/not like about your work environment?

What is good about how employees are treated?

What improvement would you recommend for the business?

Are new ideas encouraged?

What kind of technological changes have you seen in your time here?

Responses

Generous

Didn't want to answer

Innovative, a leader in the industry, and making a difference

Creative tools, location, and the people

Rewarded for hardwork, dedication, and job well-done

Didn't want to answer

Yes

Data storage and image management via web

Appendix C
Company C Questionnaire

Appendix C

Company C Questionnaire

Questions for the Technology Officer

How old is the company and much is still true about the business environment from the beginning of the company?

What major technological transitions have you seen in the last 2 years?

How do you rank yourselves as far as being people-oriented or task-oriented on a scale of 1 to 5?

How do you differentiate yourselves from other companies in the greeting card business?

What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?

If you had to say what your vision for the company is, what would it be?

What are your core company values?

What is your business strategy?

Is there a specific chain of command that employees follow or is your business model more fluid?

How many levels would you say you have on your organizational model?

What's your idea of a successful year (i.e. customer satisfaction, roi, etc)

Do you see yourselves as a leader or follower among peer companies on a scale of 1-5.

What are the biggest trends that you've seen as far as data management goes?

What types of procedures do you take for embracing new trends. does the mgt do this or do you present new ideas, etc.?

Is there a team approach to implementing technological initiatives?

How is progress or effectiveness evaluated?

Are you expected to come up with new/innovative ideas?

How often do you reuse artwork?

How long does it take you to find a file?

Responses

95 years with 18,000 employees

Have had DAM for 15 years, new file types like 3-D, Animation, Video, etc.

2 people oriented

Creative talent and copyrighting. Also dedication to social expression

Didn't Answer

New products and services to nurture personal relationships

Chain of command with freedom to innovate

Flatter structure where things need to move fast like technology

ROI, Focus groups, and overall client satisfaction

Definitely a leader 5 out of 5

The use of meta data

Trade shows and department dedicated to new technologies

Everyone is welcome to submit ideas... teamwork is fostered

Didn't Answer

Yes

Often, a reuse system is implemented domestically and working nationally

Not long, they have a system to look it up with descriptors

Questions for the Employee

What types of benefits/vacation do you get?

What are your company's values?

What do you like about the company?

What do you like/not like about your work environment?

What is good about how employees are treated?

What improvement would you recommend for the business?

Are new ideas encouraged?

What kind of technological changes have you seen in your time here?

Responses

Didn't want to answer

Innovation and client happiness

Believes in the product

Corporate with cubicles

Well

Didn't answer

Yes

Movement from primitive DAM to more sophisticated with advancing products and files

Appendix D
Company D Questionnaire

Appendix D

Company D Questionnaire

Questions for the Technology Officer

Responses

How old is the company and much is still true about the business environment from the beginning of the company?	Over 100 years with 25,000 employees
What major technological transitions have you seen in the last 2 years?	New operating systems and software
How do you rank yourselves as far as being people-oriented or task-oriented on a scale of 1 to 5?	2 people oriented
How do you differentiate yourselves from other companies in the greeting card business?	Innovation with social expression
What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?	Industry prowess is a strength but size is difficult to get things done
If you had to say what your vision for the company is, what would it be?	New products
What are your core company values?	Innovation and superior value
What is your business strategy?	Continue to innovate and expand their offerings
Is there a specific chain of command that employees follow or is your business model more fluid?	Specific chain of command
How many levels would you say you have on your organizational model?	Eliminated 300 positions to flatten structure in 2005
What's your idea of a successful year (i.e. customer satisfaction, roi, etc)	Shareholder return
Do you see yourselves as a leader or follower among peer companies on a scale of 1-5.	Leader 4 out of 5
What are the biggest trends that you've seen as far as data management goes?	New software
What types of procedures do you take for embracing new trends... does the mgt do this or do you present new ideas, etc.?	Didn't answer
Is there a team approach to implementing technological initiatives?	Yes
How is progress or effectiveness evaluated?	Shareholder return
Are you expected to come up with new/innovative ideas?	Yes
How often do you reuse artwork?	They reuse artwork
How long does it take you to find a file?	Not too long, have an employee to find artwork, but no system in place

Questions for the Employees

What types of benefits/vacation do you get?

What are your company's values?

What do you like about the company?

What do you like/not like about your work environment?

What is good about how employees are treated?

What improvement would you recommend for the business?

Are new ideas encouraged?

What kind of technological changes have you seen in your time here?

Responses

Didn't want to answer

Innovation and superior value

Didn't want to answer

Didn't want to answer

Didn't want to answer

Didn't want to answer

Yes

New software and operating systems