Ms Fields Cookies Essay, Research Paper

The textbook, Information Technology in Business – Principles, Practices and Opportunities, defines the purpose of information systems as, “An (IT) Information system is a system which data and information flow from one person or department to another.” (Senn, 1998, p.643). The books continues with Business Information Systems and identifies these operating systems as, “IT applications that underlie the activities of running and managing a business.” This paper will discuss how Mrs. Fields Cookies uses these two interchangeable accessories, will explain how these systems have impacted the roles that the Information Age – those of assistance, adviser, and communicator. In addition, this paper will address how Mrs. Fields can function as an organization using a small-scale ratio of management to employee.

“ Debbi Fields, a young mother with no business experience, opened her first cookie store in Palo Alto, California in 1977. Humble beginnings launched Mrs. Fields into a worldwide celebrity and made her company the premier chain of cookie and baked goods stores.” www.MrsFields.com. In order to become one of the premier chain of cookies and baked good companies, Mrs. Fields could not rely on cookie dough alone. Mrs. Fields, along with her husband, Randy, who just happened to be a computer programmer with IBM, designed and implemented an Information Technology system to serve the vast managerial needs of the organization.

“The system created by Ms. Fields is a Paper-less Management System; this system is currently being used at other franchise operations, including Burger King.” (Senn, 1998, p.650). The computer system of Mrs. Fields is extremely streamlined and centralized throughout the company. The system accounts for a large percentage of Mrs. Fields success. “Sales information is immediately processed by the computers and is available for the managers’ use. The system has the ability to track the volume of sales, the amount of cookies that need to be baked, and sales quotas, among other things, so that waste is educed, time is used efficiently, and immediate and future plans can be made by Mrs. Fields headquarters.” www.MrsFields.com. The system also has the capabilities of linking in store personal computers, and is made up of 20 software modules – the five most important being: #1) Daily Production Planner, #2) Sales and Reporting Analysis, #3) Labor Scheduler, #4) Interviewing, and #5) Skills Assessment and Computer-aided Instruction

The Daily Production Planner is a “to-do-lists” and forecasting system. The system monitors the daily progress and transactions of Ms. Fields franchise locations and suggests alternative approaches should sales fall below target. The Sales Reporting and Analysis System is a actual to budget comparison, and suggests corrections should the organization fall behind. The Labor Scheduler provides employee work schedules and assists in the minimization of overtime and maximizes schedule alternatives. The Interviewing System provides an unbiased ? hour interview, which is provided to every applicant of Mrs. Fields, and The Skills Assessment and Computer Aided Instruction Program, detects employee weaknesses and supports those weaknesses with corrective training. All of this, along with the management techniques of Ms. Fields, supports the success of the organization.

The Managers of Mrs. Fields, which currently employees 5,000 employees within 700 stores-and only 130 head-quarter employees, are freed from the constraints of doing paperwork and therefore have more time to manage both the operational efficiency of Mrs. Fields and the employees therein. The result is a maximum amount of freshly baked cookies with a minimum amount of waste. This proves that companies that use a system, whether the Paper-less Management System or a similar system, can operate in a more flat-lined organization. It also allows companies, such as Mrs. Fields, to have a stronger grasp on the operations of the company.

The saying that backs Debbie Fields is, “One Smart Cookie.” This statement supports this paper and “details how she (Debbi) and her husband (Randy), built their cookie empire.”

Senn, James, A., Information Technology in Business — Principles, Practices, and Opportunities, Prentice Hall Publishing, New Jersey, 1998.