TOP 5 CHALLENGES OF GROWING COMPANIES

...and how we faced them at Future Processing
CHALLENGES

Regardless of the industry or country, dynamically growing companies struggle with similar challenges.

Those must be addressed to maintain company’s growth and build something that’s above the value of money. Below we present a couple of challenges that relate to nearly every business. Read on to learn how Future Processing tackled them.

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1. MAINTAINING COMPANY’S CULTURE

When the company is growing dynamically, it is crucial to maintain its culture because that is what makes your company unique, and what gives its identity. Apart from additional facilities or salary, it is actually the intangible that is most desired.

Millennials are the people, who primarily work for experience rather than money. They want to co-create something important and keep developing their skills. The times of cushy job pursuit are long gone. People want to be actively engaged at work, and this should be accounted for while building a team.

Team spirit, friendly atmosphere, and the sense of unity – those are the qualities Future Processing has been built upon. Today we are over a 700 people team, but we still strive to be the place where every individual is appreciated and no one feels like a cog in the machine.

Bearing that in mind, we’ve created the Culture department to work on maintaining and strengthening our company culture.

THE CULTURE DEPARTMENT:
- manages the internal communication based on openness and mutual trust,
- organises company-wide events such as FP Olympics in which as much as 60% of employees take part,
- prepares monthly surveys to monitor trends in the satisfaction level among employees,
- supports ideas and interests of employees via the IDEA FP contest and special interest clubs (e.g. board games, volleyball, football)
- manages the onboarding process,
- strongly supports knowledge management including knowledge exchange,
- organises CSR activities.

After discovering the sources of unhappiness, the department tries to act on them to make things better.
The place of work is where people spend majority of a day. It’s a MUST to build a place where one feels at home. We strive to be the company where our team can socialise and relax too. The collective work is also visible on every possible facet. For instance, thanks to many contributors, we could create FP Mythology. This is a 150-page long book, which is a collection of funny and memorable situations that happened at Future Processing – we just couldn’t let it be forgotten.

As a result of all the efforts in building the friendly workplace, we observe continuous engagement, motivation, and loyalty increase, which are best reflected in low employee attrition rates. Companies want to do business with us not only because of the products and services we provide, but also because of our philosophy.

I think that, while developing dynamically, the biggest challenge was to find the right balance in aiming at two seemingly contradictory goals. On the one hand, when the company grows fast, there appears the need for more regulations, procedures, systems, and subordinating information. On the other hand, it is vital for us to maintain the company culture based on openness and trust, with an atmosphere of a family business. This is why, while designing the systems, we always considered two perspectives so that we don’t lose the team’s engagement while subordinating.

AGNIESZKA ZIMOŃCZYK
Head of the Culture department
2. POLISHING UP INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

When the company is small, it’s not a challenge to have daily face to face company meetings. When it grows though, there have to be appropriate communication channels worked out, so that the team’s engagement doesn’t drop.

At Future Processing, the central source of information is MyFuture, a dashboard with a user-friendly interface. We believe that, apart from easy access to vital information on the company life, people should have a possibility of active participation in it, by communicating their thoughts freely, exchanging their ideas, etc. They should have a chance of not only learning what’s on, but also cocreating the company.

We encourage active participation of people because their thoughts are important! Besides, why a handful of people (or worse – only one!) should decide what’s good and what’s bad if there are over 700 of them in the company?

Idea FP is one of our communication tools thanks to which people can express their views and ideas for a simple improvement or even a total revolution. People eagerly do it because they know they will be listened to.

So far, we have realised many brilliant ideas such as our own Kudo Box, thanks to which you can send a card to someone at FP to say thank you or good job. The texts are the choice of people based on our culture code. Other ideas are, for instance, bicycle stands or stability balls instead of chairs in rooms. Questions such as “What to give to CEO for Christmas?” are answered for in collaboration, by proposing ideas and then voting on them. In 2014 we decided to build a Lego version of our company building. Click below to see how it looked like.

Above all – tools are useful, but there isn’t a single thing that would ever replace a real face to face conversation. As a company that follows agile project development approach, we believe in Agile Manifesto and its idea of “Individuals and interactions over processes and tools”.

Therefore, we believe that every person should have a possibility of communicating with anyone, regardless of the seniority level and role. This is why, there are no separate offices for the Chief Executives at Future Processing; hence it’s easy to maintain direct communication, exchange ideas or just chat.

A variety of tools intertwined with our philosophy, based on team spirit and transparency of communication enabled us to build a team that is engaged and committed. What’s more, we believe that effective internal communication enables flawless external communication.

WATCH THE VIDEO: LEGO FP BUILDING MODEL

Click below to see how the Lego version of our company building looked like.
3. REGULAR AND FAIR EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

When the organisation is growing dynamically and the number of employees is increasing, it is important not to treat them collectively, but individually as well.

Every person is different, and their career paths can take various directions. The employer should act accordingly, by supporting employees’ interests and expectations. Also, everyone’s work and commitment should be noticed, appreciated, and rewarded.

Many recent studies have shown that people change their workplace because they don’t see any development opportunities and the company policies block them instead of pushing them forward. Companies need a transparent and just system of evaluating their employees to prevent high employee turnover.

The evaluation should be regular and frequent, but first and foremost, it should be fair.

As a technology company, we love to utilise everything the technology offers, to make life easier. With hundreds of employees, the evaluation process became quite time consuming, and we don’t mean the meetings, but the staggering number of emails and reports that were sent back and forth. We came up with creating a simple workflow based on SharePoint that guides every person involved in the evaluation process. It is also the place for storing historical data regarding one’s evaluation.

As a result of conducting regular employee performance evaluations, we observe higher engagement. Although at a certain point our process became supported with software tools, we still keep in mind that face to face conversations are of key importance.
4. THE RIGHT TOOLS

Regardless of the company size, it is always crucial that an organisation manages its growing volume of information wisely and using right systems.

When companies speed up, many of them endlessly put off the investment in the IT infrastructure.

It is common knowledge that the cobbler's kids go barefoot, and here's another living proof. While being a small company, Jarosław Czaja, our CEO, always carried a piece of paper with the bubbles drawn on it. Each bubble pictured the company team along with its members and their roles. When, in 2009, the company experienced rapid growth, the bubbles stopped suffice.

We started lacking a central base of information on people’s assignments to teams and projects, as a result of which, we were not able to control such issues as who and when is available to be assigned to another project or how many people we should employ basing on the current project pipeline. This had financial repercussions at a certain point.

Having 400 people on board, we quickly realised that it was high time to invest in the right systems and this is how our internal team called “Systems” was born.

We’ve introduced new systems for customer relationship management, training management, and employees’ evaluation system, just to name a few. Also, quite recently, we have developed a mobile application, called Future Office, for managing the meeting rooms’ reservations and reporting the IT and non-IT related issues on the go.

We also needed the right systems for analysing and storing the data. Historical data is of key importance and it cannot be kept by individuals, for instance, in the departments dealing with customers. Financial records have to be stored for a couple of years, and since no company can afford data loss, the right data management systems are essential.
5. WELL-BALANCED RECRUITMENT POLICY

People are most important, they are the spinning wheel of every business. When companies develop, they need to hire more and more experts.

Bearing in mind that a dynamically growing company observes fluctuations in finances and pipeline, the management needs to make the right decisions to ensure that newly hired people will be retained.

When companies aren’t sure of their hiring decisions, they can use certain alternatives, such as independent contractors, temporary employment options, and so on. But these are not always the best solutions because of Challenge #1 – maintaining company culture.

Businesses need to know when to slow down. It’s relatively easy to hire, but what if it turns out that it won’t be possible to retain those new employees when the workload peak disappears? No one wants to sit on a bench or get laid off. Besides, high turnover causes employees’ morale to drop, and along with that the efficiency drops as well.

Hiring mistakes cost a lot but there is no single recipe for all the businesses. The most important is to make considerate decisions.
WE HOPE WE HAVE HELPED YOU SORT OUT YOUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

If you want any more advice, contact us and let us show you HOW we can help you face challenges in your company.

I’M INTERESTED

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