

Manual vs. Automatic Work

Consulting Project China Management Design for Bühler Shenzhen



Manual vs. Automatic Work

The Chinese market is of high priority for Buhler Ltd., an innovation and market leader for machine solutions for the flour milling process in the high price segment. In order to keep this excellent position, Buhler commissioned the Consulting Project China to identify the needs of their direct customers, namely the flour mills.

Buhler

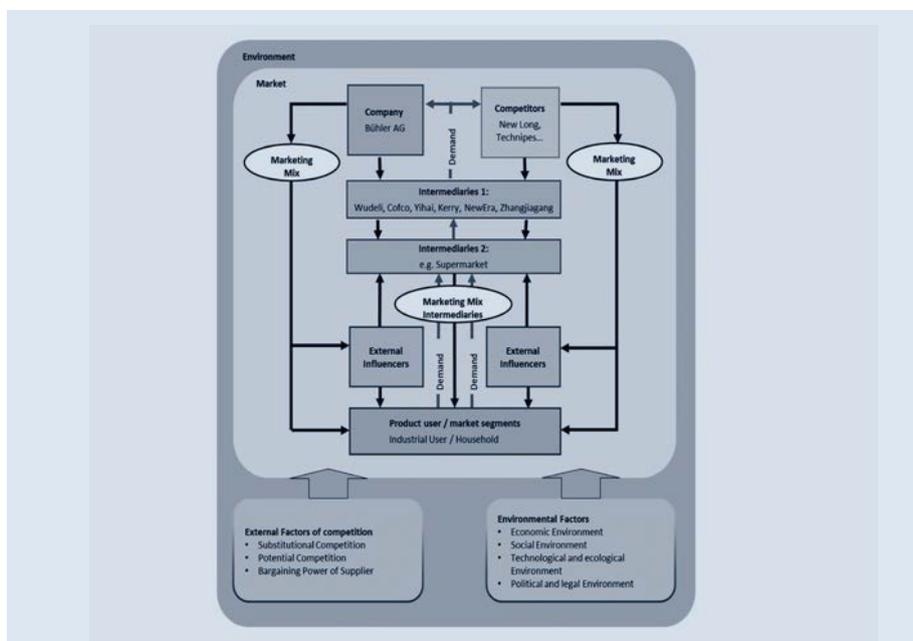
The Chinese market is very important for Buhler Ltd. Since Buhler first started expanding to China in 1982, it has become the innovation and market leader in the high price segment for machine solutions in the milling process. Buhler maintains part of their machine production in Shenzhen, the silicon valley of China. Here, they are specialized in the manufacturing of scales, control units, bag packing machines and optical sorters.

Proceeding

The marketing model Kühn & Pfäffli assured that all views of the market participants are considered. The principle of this model is illustrated in the picture. To gain relevant information, 31 qualitative interviews were made. Managers of Chinese mills and employees of Buhler were consulted. Furthermore, investigations in supermarkets were conducted to obtain facts about intermediaries and end-users. To receive information about the market environment, professors from various universities, an expert in Sinology and the Trade Promotion Director for the Swiss Chinese Business Hub were consulted.

Results

The Chinese are today generally better educated than in the past. Hence, they wish to do more complex jobs than working in a mill. Therefore it has become harder for the mills to find labourers. Furthermore, the rising living standards require stricter food safety regulations and labour protection. These factors force the demand for more automation which is favorable for Buhler. However, in recent years, Buhler's local rivals learnt fast and copied its products and offered them at lower prices. Since Buhler operates in the high-end segment, it cannot compete with low prices. Hence, it is recommended Buhler benefits from one of its main strengths: customer relationships. Customer care should be done more efficiently with a professional key account management as this might give Buhler a competitive edge over other players especially in the relationship-oriented Chinese culture.



CONSULTING PROJECT CHINA

Management Design 2013

Project Team

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Client

- Bühler Shenzhen, China
- Tianxiu Zhang, General Manager of Bühler Shenzhen
- www.buhlergroup.com



The project team actively communicated with Buhler and Buhler Shenzhen, especially when there were any obscurities about technology.

The team consulted mills with distinct questionnaires to analyse the mills processes in China. Furthermore, they looked for strategies, goals and actions which made their suggestions feasible.

FHS-Coach
Prof. Dr. Wilfried Lux

Tongji-Coach
Prof. Ming Yao



The multicultural team worked well together, handled challenges, and delivered practical, hands-on solutions to the benefit of the customer. It was a pleasure working together.