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Creating & Maintaining Multiple Divisions Within One Firm

With Cybertech Group of Companies

By Lisa Ryan

Build business through cross-pollination of different divisions

1 Cybertech's three divisions operate as separate entities, though business sometimes overlaps. "The work each company does is quite different and involves people with different skills, education, and training - essentially engineering versus field electrical services and panels. Our objective is for the divisions to be self-reliant yet available for mutual opportunities and sharing of resources," says Cybertech's director, Mike Palamarek.

Cybertech's clients are often able to utilize the different services and products offered by the respective divisions in their individual projects. "As a systems integrator, Cybertech is vendor neutral for our clients," Palamarek explains. "In some cases, we provide recommendations about vendors and products to clients, and this was one of the reasons that drove the decision to split the products business to Cybertech Electric and i-GEN."

MEET CYBERTECH

Cybertech, a three-tiered organization, was founded in 1994 by four entrepreneurs who left a large firm in the hopes of creating one that focused on engineering industrial-control systems, an area that they felt wasn't properly supported at the time. It began with just two divisions: Cybertech Automation, a full-service systems integration company, and Cybertech Electric, an electrical contractor with a focus in electrical control system commissioning. "It was a logical division of products and services," says **Mike Palamarek**, Cybertech's director. "This also drove the creation of our third division, i-GEN Solutions, when the scope of our business grew to include industrial IT services."

Utilize a flat organizational structure

2 Cybertech's executives - a common board of directors that represents the whole group - operate under a clearly outlined organizational structure, overseeing the multiple branches and delegating to individual division managers when necessary.

"With a very flat organizational structure, it is less complicated and more efficient for management." Palamarek says. "For day-to-day decisions, there is a lot of autonomy."

Larger strategies and cross-company or oversight decisions are made in partnership by the respective divisions' tight-knit management teams and Cybertech's directors. Together, they discuss the potential impact that these big decisions will have on the entire organization rather than focusing on each division separately.

Opt for horizontal, rather than vertical, growth

3 Palamarek explains that, by creating the divisions, Cybertech was able to utilize a strategy of horizontal growth as opposed to growing a large, centralized company. By doing so, Cybertech's divisions are able to maintain the mind-set of a small company - with personal customer service and attention to detail - in addition to avoiding a large overhead. "Each company has the ability to execute very small projects in less than a day, in addition to large, multiyear, multimillion-dollar capital projects," Palamarek says.

Attract and maintain repeat business

4 When it comes to growing and maintaining business, each division is dedicated to attracting repeat customers - something that doesn't happen overnight. Instead, each division has spent years building great relationships, understanding its clients, and providing high-quality services and products. "It's important to recognize the power of repeat business," Palamarek says. "We believe in maintaining a strong corporate identity and culture. This helps retain and recruit top talent and provides a great work environment."

Allow for success and expansion

5 By utilizing these strategies, Cybertech has grown from a small start-up to Alberta's premiere engineering services and products organization. As each division continues to flourish, it wouldn't be surprising if Cybertech added an additional company in the coming years.

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- Mike Palamarek, Director