H2O Sportswear A/S

H20 Sportswear A/S was established in 1982 by Jens Knud Lind. The company's basic ideas to develop sportswear of exclusive and unique cotton quality to be combined with high functionality and durability. Based on a classic Scandinavian design, H2O Sportswear A/S developed its brand based on colorful and distinctive designs with stripes, unique fit, and innovative designs. The collection evolved through the 1980's and 1990's to include swimwear, rainwear, and popular and recognizable beach sandals.

CASE: H2O Sportswear A/S wants to have its current manual work processes analyzed across the company's departments (purchasing, sales, and SEO) so that the team can then come up with relevant digital implementation initiatives, especially AI, which can strengthen their workflow. Under this, a forward-looking execution strategy in the area must also be drawn up.

GENERAL COMPANY INFORMATONS

Company	H2O Sportswear A/S
Location	Balticagade 10,2., 8000 Aarhus C
Contactperson(s)	Anne Skovrider (E-commerce Manager)

COMPANY PROFILE

H20 Sportswear (hereafter H2O) was established in 1982 by Jens Knud Lind. The basic idea was to develop sportswear of exclusive and unique cotton quality, which had to be combined with high functionality and durability. Based on a classic Scandinavian design, H2O developed its very own colorful and distinctive design with stripes, unique fit, and innovative designs. The collection developed through the 1980s and 1990s to include swimwear, rainwear, and the popular and recognizable beach sandals.

For many Danes, the company's brand is synonymous with the above recognizable collections and bathing sandals, which have adorned Danish wardrobes for several decades. In continuation of this, the company is constantly working to ensure their natural recognition in new collections, which must also accommodate H2O's current quality principles. The company works based on the mantra "quality before quality" across all organizational levels.

H2O has the virtue of securing good relationships between customers, suppliers, influencers, and producers, which is expressed through long partnerships. The partnerships for sales are created in cooperation agreements with selected sports and fashion stores in Denmark, Norway, and Germany. These sales channels account for 90% of the company's earnings, with the remaining 10% coming through its sales via the webshop.

H2O is a smaller company that operates with a flat organizational structure and culture, where there is a lot of room for employee involvement, innovation, and new thinking. Furthermore, the company's employees have a great deal of insight into each other's departments, where several employees can typically also handle several work roles.

In recent years, the company has experienced continuous financial and organizational growth, which has resulted in several strategic projects and operational tasks that must be completed daily. However, H2O has long had a desire to try to analyze the company's internal workflows and structures to optimize the current manual processes via increased involvement of artificial intelligence.

CASE DESCRIPTION

H2O has long had a strategic desire to optimize the current workflows in the company's various departments. In the long term, there must be a greater focus on digital processes, which will replace the company's current manual work processes. This should ensure a more modern and mature workflow, which should free up time that can be spent on new projects and work priorities.

The team must initially map how the work processes of the selected departments in H2O. Here, the team will have to gather understanding, knowledge, and insight which will form the basis for being able to analyze occupational pitfalls e.g. the manual work processes which can be optimized via digital implementations.

In parallel with their analysis, the team must start uncovering possible digital tools, including a focus on possible AI tools that can replace manual processes. Before this uncovering, the team must have clarified some essential criteria against which possible tools must be held such as; complexity of implementation, financial resources, organizational knowledge and onboarding, etc.

Furthermore, in their analysis, the team can focus on making a benchmarking analysis of companies within the same and other industries that have implemented AI in their work processes and see if inspiration could be found through this.

H2O wishes that the team should primarily focus on implementation and improvements within e.g. departments; Purchasing, sales, and SEO. If the team finds other relevant results in their initial analysis from other departments, they can be advantageously added to the project.

For departments would like to have a look at:

- How can the current manual processes in the company's purchasing department be optimized? Here, improvements must be looked at in forecasting, know-how on stock tying, etc.
- How can the company's current sales to customers be strengthened via AI implementations?
- How can AI generate and optimize SEO texts, titles, tags, etc? In the company's marketing department?

Since the area around AI is relatively new, it will be the team's responsibility in this process to find ways in which they can acquire the right and necessary knowledge in the area. It could, among other things, be participating in online seminar meetings, lectures, reading research studies, etc.

Finally, the team prepares a presentation of the most relevant findings as well as an execution plan for the next natural steps in this process toward a possible implementation of new digital tools.

SPECIFIC TASKS

The specific tasks for the case are divided into following phases:

0. **PHASE: Onboarding and determination of overall objectives:**

0.1. The company and the team go through the document "*the right onboarding*" that LEAD THE TALENT sends to the company and the candidates. After this, H2O and the team make a plan for the general onboarding

1. **PHASE: Mapping of the plan for collecting data in selected departments in H2O**
   - 1.1 The team must initially map out the method for how the right amount of data and observations can be gathered from the selected departments, which must be analyzed in the project
     - 1.1.1 This must be used to give H2O the best conditions to enable the team to collect data
   - 1.2 Subsequently, the team must prepare a concrete plan for how they will access the right amount of data and observations to support the analysis
     - 1.2.1 The plan is presented to H2O to reserve relevant employees and their departments for agreed days with observations of their work processes and the use of manual processes
   - 1.3 The team also creates an internal plan for which types of data/observations are useful according to the analysis and how they must be gathered during the process
     - 1.3.1 It is important that during the collection, the team thinks about whether the various departments need to be supported with more knowledge according to the analysis if the current one does not create enough basis for direction and representativeness
   - 1.4 Before phase 2, the team can prepare a benchmarking analysis of companies both within the same industry and other industries that have implemented AI in their work processes for inspiration
     - 1.4.1 What measures have been implemented?
     - 1.4.2 Can they be used in H2O's departments, especially in purchasing, sales, and So-Me?
     - 1.4.3 What does it take to implement them?
       - 1.4.3.1 Complexity
       - 1.4.3.2 Financial resources
       - 1.4.3.3 Organizational resources
       - 1.4.3.4 Other things?
   - 1.5 The team must parallel with the entire analysis, but start it here at the beginning, analyze the market for AI measures that could be possible to use for H2O
     - 1.5.1 There must be a focus on initiatives that can reduce the company's current manual processes toward more digital workflows
   - 1.6 The team presents their prepared plans for H2O before phase 2 begins to ensure the right alignment of expectations

2. **PHASE: Collection of data and observations for the project's analysis**
   - 2.1 The team begins their collection of data and observations across the selected departments in the company. The team must, among other things, watch:
     - 2.1.1 How does the department work?
     - 2.1.2 What manual processes are used?
     - 2.1.3 How do the departments work with each other?
     - 2.1.4 What further pitfalls/optimizations does the team see in the departments' workflows, which can be changed via e.g. AI?

2.1.5 Other things

2.2 The team notes all kinds of possible improvements and optimizations during their analysis

2.2.1 They then assess which areas make the most sense for H2O and the team's analysis to work on based on the principle "Kill your darlings"

2.3 It is the team's responsibility to constantly assess whether more observations/data are needed to strengthen the analysis

2.4 The team must also think "out of the box" in terms of collecting data/observations

2.4.1 It could also be done via qualitative interviews with relevant people from the departments

2.4.2 Inspiration from other companies – How have they succeeded with the implementations?

2.4.3 Expert knowledge from outside

2.4.4 Other things

3. PHASE: Convert data and observations into possible digital AI implementations

3.1 Based on their data and observation sets, the team must assess the current manual processes and pitfalls and see where they can be strengthened by implementing AI

3.1.1 Which analyzed AI implementations can the team see good synergies with implementing based on their data collection?

3.2 The team is welcome to prepare estimates for the possible digital implementations and what significance they will have for the departments' work in the future

3.2.1 Advantages vs. Disadvantages

3.2.2 In addition, the team must be able to inform H2O about what resources it requires to implement possible measures, including:

3.2.2.1 Time resources

3.2.2.2 Financial resources

3.2.2.3 Know-how, knowledge, and onboarding for staff

3.2.2.4 Other things?

3.3 The team presents their observations, implementations, arguments, and solutions to relevant people for H2O

4. Phase: Execution plan for the project work

4.1 Finally, the team prepares an execution plan on which work tasks lie ahead before possible implementations can be carried out

4.1.1 Here, you can focus on creating a strategy that prioritizes which implementations come first. This is coordinated with H2O when presenting the results in phase 3

4.1.1.1 In particular, you can look at the maturity of H2O according to the chosen AI implementations.

4.1.1.1.1 The team must have an understanding that the company is just in its infancy about AI, and therefore has no experience working with this

4.2 Should there be time left over, the team can begin work on phase 4.1

OUTCOME

The company desired outcome after 8 weeks:

- ✓ Analysis of the company's internal workflows with a view to finding optimization points and pitfalls
  - Concretization of the company's current manual work processes. Are there areas they are not familiar with themselves?
- ✓ Concrete implementation proposals for the company's daily work via e.g. artificial intelligence
  - Focus on analyzing and coming up with proposals for several of the departments in the company
- ✓ Forward-looking execution plan for the work involving artificial intelligence

PROFILE PROFESSIONS TO THE CASE

- Project management, project management, iterative approach, proactivity
- Digital trends, AI (understanding/interest)
- Process optimization, workflow analysis
- Anthropology
- Innovation
- Qualitative data collection, qualitative analysis, data handling

TALENTPROFILE

Are you driven and motivated to work with a strategic project, where there is not far from analysis to concrete implementations, and where you also want the opportunity to acquire new and important knowledge in an area that is very popular, this case is of the highest relevance.

H2O is looking for a team that can consist of both national and international candidates who are good at collecting and acquiring knowledge created based on relevant evidence, which can be anchored to strategic initiatives in both the short and long term. You also get the opportunity as a team to be part of an organization where there is a low ceiling and great knowledge sharing.

The team must be able to work dynamically and proactively and be good at running the project independently, albeit with the necessary sparring from the company's side. However, the team must be aware that this area is something that H2O has not dealt with before, which is why you get the opportunity to make an impact on the first strategic thoughts and directions in the area.

The team will be allocated their meeting room, where they can work during the project. If the team wants time for immersion in other settings, the team is welcome to do this as well. This is continuously agreed upon internally with the company.