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NAME _____
UNIT 6

READING

Walmart profits reach \$1.1bn

Walmart, the world's largest retailer, beat expectations after its US discount stores accounted for about 50 per cent of all US retail growth last year – while its full-year global sales passed \$400bn (£311bn) for the first time and profits hit \$1.1bn.

Mike Duke, Chief Executive, said the fourth quarter and full-year results showed that Walmart had gained 'momentum' during the year in all of its markets, in spite of the tough economic environment. 'We are doing all the right things to continue our momentum and to widen the gap between the competition and us. We finished January strong, and February is off to a good start.'

The results again underlined the retailer's ability to generate cash in a recession and to use the money to invest in its business at a time when most of its rivals are cutting back. Walmart has been able to make acquisitions, concluding a \$2.5bn deal in January for a controlling share of D&S, the largest retailer in Chile.

It is continuing to invest in its stores with a big remodelling programme, called Project Impact, now underway in the US. With this programme, Walmart expects to significantly boost the sales per square foot of its more than 3,000 supercentres and discount stores.

Total net sales at Walmart USA rose 6 per cent on the last quarter to \$71.5bn, although higher than expected expenses, including healthcare costs, led to its operating income growing more slowly than sales, up 2.2 per cent to \$5.4bn.

Internationally, the strong dollar weighed on earnings, with the value of sales down 1.4 per cent from the last quarter to \$24.7bn and operating income down 1.2 per cent to \$1.5bn. At constant currencies, international operating income would have been up 5.1 per cent and net sales up 9 per cent.

The retailer highlighted the performance of its Asda stores in the UK, which gained market share whilst increased customer traffic and average purchases made.

In Japan, Walmart reported that comparable sales at its Seiyu stores fell 0.5 per cent from the last quarter, but were positive in November and December.

1. Match the verbs with the nouns to make expressions from paragraphs 1 to 3.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. beat | a) the gap |
| 2. gain | b) momentum |
| 3. widen | c) momentum |
| 4. generate | d) expectations |
| 5. make | e) cash |
| 6. continue | f) acquisitions |

2. Now match the expressions from Exercise 1 to their meanings as they are used in the article.

- | |
|---|
| a) become more successful |
| b) continue success |
| c) make money |
| d) increase a difference in performance |
| e) buy other companies |
| f) exceed forecasts |



If you are looking for a regional manager's position, you must be ready to answer questions that prove that you are a qualified candidate. But before that, let's start by defining this role and understanding what it entails. 1. What Are The Roles Of A Regional Manager Regional managers supervise work done by other managers whereby they control and organize company operations over a specified geographical area. Some key their key responsibilities include: Overseeing and taking quality control and performance management responsibilities over a specific demographic. Managing and being accountable for large company projects. Handling recruitment and training processes in response to organizational requirements. Assigning and delegating duties to other managers to meet deadlines and company objectives. 2. What Qualities Does A Regional Manager Need To Succeed? Oversight – A regional manager should be able to monitor and guide a process right from the beginning up to its conclusion. The candidate must consult with partners and approach investors to provide grants resulting in expansion and revenue growth. Marketing skills – The right candidate should be able to create workable strategies that turn around regional sales by making recommendations and adjustments. A successful candidate must recommend standardized best practices to improve sales performance and metrics by setting goals for sales teams and motivating workers to achieve them. Financial aptitude – A competent regional manager should ensure the success of projects while working within the set budget. Regional managers must develop strategic plans to increase organizational efficiency, improve operational performance, and generate revenue growth to be a success. Business development skills – A regional manager must be versed in business development involving sales, advertising, networking, negotiations, partnerships, and cost-saving strategies. Problem-solving skills – A successful regional manager should be able to answer questions, fix arising problems, and provide customers excellent service. Coordination skills – To succeed, a regional manager must effectively coordinate with company administration, enforce rules, and recommend new procedures and practices. Have comprehensive knowledge and experience of the business processes – a regional manager must have adequate business process knowledge to ensure employees get proper training and implement safety policies and emergency plans. Having an extensive understanding of the business will help the regional manager recommend the best software and automation procedures. Customer service experience – a regional manager must have experience dealing with customer concerns and sustaining business relationships between the organization, customers, investors, and employees. 3. Why Are You Interested In This Role? I want a regional manager's position because leadership is a gift. If given this opportunity, I believe that I will thrive and help the organization relies on its goals and objectives. 4. What Major Challenges Did You Face In Your Previous Role, And How Did You Handle Them? I got employment as a branch manager in my last role and quickly rose through the ranks to a regional manager. One major setback I faced was coordination between different branches. Coordination was a challenge as the organization had many outlets in far-away counties. To effectively manage, I had to constantly travel from one premise to another, collecting data and ensuring that business processes were going on smoothly. I constantly have to move to get information whereby teams gave inaccurate data in some instances. Being away from family while traveling and experiencing challenges in acquiring data are some of the difficulties a regional manager faces. However, to mitigate this, I had to use technology by integrating modern project management software to help me effectively manage projects. The software management tools enable me to streamline processes while tracking projects in one interface, making it easier to manage multiple tasks simultaneously. 5. Briefly Describe Your Professional Journey And Experience Soon after college, I started my professional career as an intern in a garment manufacturing firm. It was a fantastic learning experience as I moved from one department to learning each business process. Later on, I secured my first job as a supervisor in a pharmaceutical company. My role was to motivate teams in the production department and increase production. This responsibility was an eye-opener as I gained extensive experience handling employees and addressing their concerns. Two years later, I got a promotion and became the branch manager overseeing organizational processes within the firm. My exemplary performance propelled me to a regional manager position quickly, whereby I have gained invaluable skills and experience that I know make me an ideal candidate for this role. 6. What Kind Of Strategies And Outlook Are Required For This Position? My role as a regional manager should always ensure the well-being of staff and customers. I should develop strategies that create a conducive environment for teams to thrive and exercise their skills and talents to better the organization. My goal is to ensure that each branch achieves its goals cost-effectively, increasing production and meeting customer needs. I will create close relationships by improving communication among employees, inter-departmental interaction, customer advocacy, and support to achieve these goals. I will immediately address customer concerns by empowering the customer service department. 7. What Is The Greatest Setback You Foresee In This Role, And How Do You Intend To Overcome It? One significant challenge I foresee is understanding employee strengths and knowing how to organize formidable teams to promptly and successfully deliver on projects. However, with my strong organizational skills, I know I can overcome this challenge by getting to know each individual and how to utilize their skills to the organization's benefit. First, I intend to set up a one-on-one meeting with each staff

member to learn more about their skills and experience. 8. How Do You Stay Motivated At Work? As a regional manager, I am motivated when I see my staff getting better due to the processes that I have put in place to improve efficiency and productivity. Witnessing a junior team utilizing the guidelines that I have developed to rise through the ranks motivates me to continue. 9. Describe A Time You Failed In This Role And The Lesson You Learned? I manage up to 10 branches spread out and strategically located in different parts of the country. It is my responsibility to ensure efficiency in collaboration between other units. Due to the many branches and a large staff involved, I realized that communication was a big challenge. For instance, sending messages to inform teams of system updates somehow never reached some, or they got the information late. This was a severe setback. The staff always missed attending key meetings as they got the news when it was too late. Because of this, the teams' harmony and workflow suffered consistent disruptions. As a team leader, I had to find a solution. I integrated project management software in all the branches to streamline inter-departmental communication and collaboration. By doing this, I was able to pass simultaneously pass information from department to department in real-time, making sure that all branches were aware of any upcoming meetings. 10. Why Do You Feel That You Are Qualified For This Role? Working in different managerial positions has given me enough exposure and abilities to manage staff and customer concerns. I gained invaluable lessons handling many employees in other departments and branches in my previous role at a large organization. My academic qualifications help me to understand the dynamics of this position. I believe that I am an ideal candidate based on my experience and educational qualifications. 11. Share With Us Your Greatest Achievement One of my most outstanding achievements was working as a customer support representative at a new company during my internship. Since I was the first customer support intern, I had no one to learn a lot of processes independently. Most of the techniques were new to me, and I wasn't sure if I was doing things the right way. Most of the other staff had too much to do and could hardly create time to assist me. Since I had the passion and wanted to move up the corporate ladder, I decided to start learning about the products on my own. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, I would talk to other employees and ask them questions. This gave me the assurance and confidence I needed to launch out. After a while, I noticed a trend concerning the questions customers had. To save time, I created a FAQ document for my personal use. On seeing it, the manager adopted it. I headed the customer support department within a year, handling key responsibilities like communication, hiring, and training. 12. How Would You Handle A Difficult Team? An area manager has the responsibility of managing different teams. Given different personalities and preferences, leadership has its challenges. In a previous position as a regional manager, I headed a formidable squad that had constant wrangles that threatened performance. Due to the persistent squabbles, members did not commit to attending meetings. Lack of participation from all interested parties led to delays in decision-making. These quarrels were a contributing factor to missing deadlines. I called the warring parties to a closed-door meeting to solve this challenge to iron out any differences. Then I reshuffled and reorganized the teams to ensure that conflicting parties were in different groupings. I also had to take disciplinary action against those who skipped meetings and deadlines by setting company rules and repercussions. 13. What Is Your Ideal Management Style? I am convinced that delegating duties brings individuality despite working as a team. Delegating helps each person to take responsibility and own the project. I try to be a role model to employees that I mentor by opening lines of communication where they can freely share any concerns. 14. How Do You Manage Stress And Pressure At Work? Occasionally, meeting deadlines and targets can become a challenge. However, I have learned how to manage stressful seasons at work over the years effectively. Working under pressure is uncomfortable, but it motivates me to work hard and reach higher limits. 15. How Do You Delegate Tasks I have learned that delegating is key to saving time and improving efficiency. Having been in leadership for many years, I have learned which responsibilities to delegate. Before entrusting, I prepare a list of all the to-do tasks. Then I categorize employees as per their skills and strengths. While delegating, you need to have clarity on your goals and objectives. 16. Which Management Tools Can A Regional Manager Use To Improve Performance And Maximize Productivity? There are numerous management tools or methodologies that a regional manager can utilize to guarantee success and efficiency, and they include; Communication tools: Communication is a significant component of team productivity, yet many organizations experience losses due to a lack of proper communication. Collaboration tools and video conferencing apps drastically improve internal communication within an organization leading to improved productivity. A few examples include Slack, Zoom, and Teams.Cloud-Based Project tools: if you have ever been inconvenienced while searching for a document or had your computer crash, you understand the frustration of these unavoidable circumstances. Streamlining all your documents and keeping them in sync will help avert some of these problems. Asana or Basecamp can sync all documentation while making them easily accessible online.Time Tracking tools: Poor time management is the most significant setback to productivity. With tools like Toggl and TimeBoy, you can effectively utilize your time to track time. 17. Describe A Situation Where You Had To Make Tough Choices Or Decisions? I once had a manager position in a company that ran into financial difficulties. Though we tried numerous ways to try and salvage things, there was no option but to cut expenses by sacking employees, some of who had been with the company for many years. Having to face loyal and dedicated staff members and bidding them was difficult. 18. Have You Come Across Difficult Employees. How Do You Deal With Them? I had an employee consistently coming to work late in my previous position. I repeatedly reminded her to go to work on time in vain. After numerous failed attempts, I summoned her to a meeting to review her performance. I asked her the reason w=for her lateness and discovered that she was nursing her sick mother. It is from this interaction that I learned the importance of communication. Had she told me about her struggles, I would have asked a colleague to step in and cover for her. On my part, I tried to interact more with employees to encourage them to confide in me. 19. How Would You Motivate A Discouraged Team? I would integrate the SMART method that goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. I would also interact more with employees praising them for their achievements and giving feedback on how to improve on weak areas. Helping employees understand their strengths and weaknesses helps them consistently improve their skills. It is also easier to place staff in appropriate vacant positions. 20. Why Do You Want To Leave Your Current Job For A New One? I am searching for opportunities for more leadership responsibilities. Having worked as an assistant manager for so long, I feel ready for the next step in my career. My professional experience and vast knowledge make me an ideal candidate for this position. 21. How Do You Keep Track Of Daily Operations Across A Region? I utilize management software to virtually track progress in all branches and streamline operations across multiple sites.7. At least a minimum of 3 sentences for each answer. Answer must be in 1st person point of view. 22. How Do You Maintain A Healthy Balance Between Work And Family? I manage my time effectively so that I don't have to work after 7:00 pm or on weekends because I dedicate this time to my precious family. I have set boundaries, so staff members know when to reach me and when I am unavailable. I discipline myself to avoid distractions like social media and entertainment so that my time is well spent and I don't have to work overtime. 23. How Do You Prioritize Tasks? Before I start my day, I have already outlined all the activities for the day. I have a to-do list prioritizing urgent matters or tasks with a short deadline. Every week I set aside time to plan my weekly activities so that each day I know which tasks need my immediate attention. I also use a checklist to organize tasks in the correct order while carefully delegating duties to ensure we meet all our targets. 24. How Do You Develop Strong And Trusting Relationships With Employees In Your Designated Region? As soon as I get to a new posting, I immediately start learning more about my leading teams. I get to know the strengths and weaknesses of teams. I achieve this through listening to employee concerns and getting feedback. 25. Describe A Wrong Business Decision You Made And How You Dealt With The Situation? As a new manager, I once had the challenge of dealing with underperforming staff members. Out of frustration, I sacked a long-serving employee as I had no experience on how to handle the matter. Tempers flared, and things that shouldn't be said were said. After calming down, I realized my mistake, reached out to that employee, and apologized. I reinstated him back to work and tried to salvage a severed relationship. I learned my lesson, and no matter the situation, I always try to control my temper. Conclusion The above questions are some common interview questions that recruiting managers are most likely to ask you during an interview. Make sure you think of unique answers that will impress the interviewer—all the best in your upcoming interviews.

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