

Problem Solving & Decision Making



Module: Problem Solving & Decision Making

Lecture: Molly Jeck

Student: Skarlin Salazar 1917558

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Introduction

As adults, we spend more than a third of our lives at work. In which there are many situations that can be comfortable or uncomfortable. Normally we look for a job in which you can feel comfortable enough to work, but sometimes problems arise with external people or in which you are involved. For example bullying, harassment, rumors or simply a lack of communication between the boss and the employee. These situations can lead to stress, anxiety and even psychological problems that influence physical and mental health.

At work you meet many people of different nationalities, different personalities and languages, so having minor conflicts between colleagues is normal. But when it becomes a constant problem it carries with it greater measures and consequences.

That is where the tools of problem solving and decision making are required, that is, knowing how to identify the problem and be able to find the right situation

Workplace

I am 19 years old and I work in a cafeteria of a company called Pret a manger. It is a very large company with origins in Victoria in London. In November of last year I went to the Victoria Station job recruitment branch where they chose a store that accepted my flexible hours due to my study.

In which my position is as a team member, in which I started in the kitchen because I did not know English very well since my first language is Spanish. When I could speak better English I have been promoted at work to be in the till, customer service and I am learning how to do coffees so in the future could be a barista.

My store is very busy due to it is Marble Arch location, it is surrounded by offices. Most of our customers are regulars. We are a big store and a considerable team made up of people of all ages and countries. We all speak different languages and the only way to communicate is English. In our store there are not usually many problems but as in all workplaces sometimes conflicts occur.

Issues in my workplace.

However, many of my colleagues are Italian and on several occasions speak in their language. Obviously they feel more comfortable speaking in their first language, but when they are around part of the team that cannot understand that language, it becomes a problem and they may think that they are speaking about them that this causes misunderstandings and a situation of discomfort. The problem worsens when they perform their first language suo in front of the clients they speak. On several occasions they have complained because when communicating in Italian the client feels excluded and it is a lack of respect. Despite the fact that there are several Spaniards in my store and it is true that in private we communicate in our language but out of respect for our colleagues who speak English even if it is harder for us.

Another problem that occurs very often is the struggle for working hours. We have a contract with the hours that correspond to us, I am part-time, so 20 hours correspond to me and full-time corresponds to 35 hours. But due to the global pandemic situation we are in, the company has reduced the hours, the breaks are not paid. To which the entire team is affected from manager to team member. The full time corresponds to 28 hours and that is where the problems arise. Several people complain that they are few, and the store leaders have 30 hours even though their contracts are 28 hours.

This conflict begins since this coronavirus situation affects the hospitality industry and we depend on customers who buy our products. In recent weeks we have been super busy. Therefore our manager does not respect our breaks because we cannot lose clients or make them wait. That makes the whole team very angry because seven hours without break is not healthy for anyone.

Consequences

The consequences of all these problems in the work environment. It is poor communication between manager and employees. That the workers go to work unwillingly and the results of the products are not good. More calls come from people who are sick or have trouble getting to work.

Analysis

→ Working language

The problem arises from the manager to the team members, so the Top manager should be notified to take a measure in the face of the situation since resorting to the manager is involved. Pret rules dictate that the only language to be spoken is English during established work hours.

→ Work hours

The manager should find a balance to be able to provide the whole team with proportionate and fair hours for all.

→ Break time

Everyone has the right to a break after having done several hours of work. Regardless of which clients come, breaks must be respected.

Decision-making

Decision making is the option used to find an effective and fast solution. In which various techniques are used.

For example SWOT is an analysis technique that stands for strengths, weakness opportunities and threats. This is the first analysis that should be done in order to find the most suitable option to solve this problem, as it helps to see the situation in a more comprehensive and positive way. And knowing how to identify strengths and weaknesses to be able to use it in an advantageous way for the team.

There is another technique formed by the following acronyms PESTLE that stand for Political factors, Economic factors, Sociological factors Technological factors Legal (Legislation that affects the business) and Environmental. There are several ways to express this theory such as PESTLIED, PEST or STEPLE, however I consider that this theory is not the most adequate to solve these types of problems so I decide on SWOT although it helps to identify the problem.

In addition to these theories to have a good solution several techniques are used. Of which I am going to use the tool that is related to problems in the psychological environment. To which I am going to use each problem that I have mentioned before in order to develop a solution.

In the first problem, the strengths are how beneficial it is for the entire team to speak in English since it is not only a rule that should be met but also helps to improve the English of all people. However, the weaknesses are that the manager himself makes no effort to ensure that it is fulfilled in the store since he is the first to speak in their language. By speaking in the same language, you would be giving the entire team the same opportunities to interact. The threats in this case is that the team's complaint will reach the large offices, so a solution would have to be decided as soon as possible.

The second problem according to the SWOT analysis, the strengths are the desire of people to work, the weaknesses are that the employees, seeing the injustice in the hours compared to other people, come to complain and even look for a store transfer in which they can provide more hours that would be a threat.

The third problem, the threat is that the workers are dedicated by not working what the store could not produce the products. And it would have to close for an agreement to be reached with the workers.

Solutions

These problems are reported in writing to the top manager who will create the solution and make sure that the solutions are successful and put into action. To which he will work a month in the store.

The top manager should speak with the manager in the first line to be able to talk about the matter since this problem is affecting the efficiency of the company. And it questions the efficiency of the manager. A complaint should be given to the manager so that he becomes aware and organizes his team and treats them equally and not with preference for those who speak their first language. A meeting should also be held with the entire team in which the top manager takes note of what happened and how the team feels about this situation. The top manager will be in charge of this store for a month to ensure that the only language spoken in the store is English and that there is no preference between employees.

The top manager will do the breaks for the next four weeks to teach the manager that the entire team can be organized to have the same hours. And that no one is more important to have more hours than someone else. For example, you have three baristas on your team and it is not fair that one works 50 hours and the other 28 hours.

In the following rotation, the name of the employee will be specified with the hours that correspond to the week and the minutes that correspond to the break employee. With this new organizations the breaks will be able to be taken for everyone. The third problem about breaks would be solved. And the top manager teaches how to organize that all the employees have their break even when the store is very busy and has enough people working so that they can face the situation.

Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is based on applying the solutions following a few steps that will help to achieve the objective. There is no true implementation plan that is successful so it is based on observing problems and being flexible with future decisions.

In the following plan we will designate responsibilities to the employees so that the results are satisfactory. The first step, the manager will be in charge of making the new breaks for three weeks with the top manager, which will give him organizational knowledge. Leaders will have to associate SOS hours. This means the hours in which the store has a large clientele, this being able to organize to give breaks to all of the team members and have enough people attending. The leaders will also be of great help to the manager in organizing the entire store so they will also be trained with the top manager on the timetables.

In a customer service store, the working team is very important so a meeting will be held with the top manager and the employees for feedback every Friday.

The top manager has used the PERT tool which stands for Program Evaluation and Review Techniques. Which consists of creating a plan which we have mentioned before. He has made some timetables that will be applied to employee breaks. The top manager will teach the manager how to use the ADKAR system which consists of identifying problems, looking for the reason why the problems are arising and supporting change. So that the manager can solve problems that may arise in the future.

Finally, if these solutions do not work, it would be necessary to choose to question the effectiveness and efficiency of the manager. If he will not improve despite all the techniques that the top manager has taught him, he will choose to substitute another qualified person to be the new manager of the store.

Stakeholders

In this case stakeholders are the customers to whom we will survey how the situation has improved since the top manager has imposed the new rules and thus consider the benefits.

Conclusion

The problems that have been explained are internal problems caused by the organization and the manager's lack of professionalism when acting with preference between employees. For this he has been taught a series of techniques that in the future he can apply and act professionally.

With the customers we will do some surveys as I mentioned above to see if they feel comfortable with the new customer service.

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