

# *PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING*

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## Introduction

It is nearly impossible to have a work environment where everyone's expectations, roles and personalities work together without conflict since people often have different perspectives, needs, and ways of communicating and interacting with others. It is natural for these differences to lead to conflicts or misunderstandings from time to time. These conflicts can be particularly challenging to navigate in a work setting because they can impact productivity and morale. While it may be difficult to eliminate conflicts in the workplace, individuals and organizations need to create a positive and respectful work environment where conflicts can be effectively managed and resolved. Low employee morale is among the most common problems in any workplace and can significantly negatively impact the company. It can lead to high staff turnover, decreased productivity, and negative company culture. In this report, I will identify and propose solutions to a work-based problem of low employee morale at Gather&Gather, a medium-sized business in the catering industry.

## Overview of the Problem

Low employee morale is a workplace problem when employees feel disengaged, unfulfilled, or disconnected from their work and the company. At Gather&Gather, different factors have resulted in low employee morale, which has then affected the smooth running of the company's activities. One of the major causes of reduced employee morale at the company has been a lack of recognition. Employees at the organization tend to feel undervalued or unappreciated if they do not receive adequate praise or rewards for their contributions. Secondly, there is a lack of proper communication strategies within the company. Employees are not kept informed about company news, goals, or changes, making them feel disconnected and disengaged. Some employees feel they are not supported as per their workplace needs. As a result, they tend to feel overwhelmed or unsupported since they do not have the resources or guidance to complete their work effectively. Other factors that may have resulted in low employee morale at the organization are unclear expectations and poor leadership. Employees may feel uncertain and frustrated if they are unclear about their roles, responsibilities, or performance standards. Besides, employees may lose confidence and motivation if they do not feel that their managers are supportive, fair, or transparent.

## Scope and Impact of the problem

Gather&Gather has approximately 1153 employees and is a medium-sized business in the catering industry. The scope and impact of low employee morale at Gather&Gather have been widespread and significant. Since many employees have been experiencing low morale, the problem has significantly impacted the company's overall culture and created a negative work environment. This has led to decreased productivity, higher turnover rates, and difficulty attracting and retaining top talent. Low employee morale has negatively impacted customer service and satisfaction. Since employees are not motivated or engaged in their work, they tend to be less likely

to provide high-quality service, resulting in poor customer reviews, decreased customer loyalty, and, ultimately, a decline in company profits. Additionally, low employee morale has affected the company's reputation within the industry. Since employees are unhappy with their job or the company culture, they tend to share their experiences with others, potentially damaging the company's reputation and making it more difficult for the company to attract top talent and may impact its ability to compete in the market. Generally, low employee morale at Gather&Gather can impact the company's financial performance, customer satisfaction, and reputation within the industry. The company must address this issue to create a positive work environment and maintain a competitive advantage.

### Aspects of the Problem That Can Help In Making Informed Decisions

Different aspects need to be considered when making informed decisions about low employee morale as a complex workplace problem. One of these aspects is the scope and impacts of the problem. Understanding the extent to which low employee morale affects the organization is crucial for informing the decision-making process, such as how low employee morale impacts productivity, customer satisfaction, and overall organizational efficiency. It is also important to consider the root causes of the problem. Identifying the root causes of low employee morale in the workplace can help inform the decision-making process. The approach may entail understanding whether there are skills or knowledge gaps among employees, language barriers, cultural differences, or a lack of transparency and open communication from leadership (Campbell et al., 2020). The potential solutions to the problem are yet another important aspect to consider. There are a variety of solutions that can be considered to address low employee morale in the workplace, for instance, providing communication training and resources for employees, implementing new communication tools and technologies, or fostering a culture of transparency and open communication within the organization (Maneerutt, 2021). Other than just identifying the possible solutions, the costs and benefits of each potential solution are also key during the decision-making process. It is important to consider the costs and benefits of each potential solution to make an informed decision by evaluating the costs of implementing new communication tools or training and the potential benefits of increased productivity, customer satisfaction, and overall organizational efficiency.

### Proposed Solutions

To address low employee morale at Gather&Gather, some potential solutions may include ensuring improved communication. A weekly staff meeting should be implemented in which management will provide updates on company goals and progress and open the floor for employee feedback and ideas. In addition, a company-wide newsletter will be created to keep employees informed about company news and events. The company should also ensure increased employee support by providing more employee training and development opportunities, including leadership training and skill-building workshops. In addition, a mentorship program will be implemented to provide support and guidance to employees (Riyanto et al., 2021). There also needs to be a

workable employee recognition program within the company. A monthly employee recognition program should be implemented in which employees can nominate their peers for awards based on their contributions to the company.

Since most employees at Gather&Gather tend to experience poor workload management, the company needs to review the workload of each employee and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that employees are not overburdened. In addition, the company should also implement a flexible work schedule to give employees more control over their time. The company should also consider investing in leadership training for managers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to lead and support their teams effectively; offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible scheduling, to allow employees to balance their work and personal lives better; and conducting regular surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and identify areas for improvement (Mohanty et al., 2019). The feedback from these surveys can then be used to make changes and address concerns.

### Decision-Making Technique

The decision-making technique of cost-benefit analysis can be used to identify the most appropriate option for addressing low employee morale at Gather&Gather. This involves weighing the costs and benefits of each potential solution to determine which option offers the greatest overall value (Mishan & Quah, 2020). For example, implementing regular meetings and feedback sessions may involve some initial costs in terms of time and resources. Still, the benefits of improved communication and employee engagement may outweigh these costs. Similarly, investing in leadership development may have upfront costs, but the long-term benefits of improved leadership skills and a more positive work environment may make this a worthwhile investment. On the other hand, implementing employee recognition programs may have relatively low costs in terms of time and resources, but the benefits of improved morale and employee engagement may make this a highly effective solution. Similarly, offering flexible work arrangements may have minimal costs, but increased employee satisfaction and retention benefits may make this a valuable option. By weighing the costs and benefits of each potential solution, Gather&Gather can make informed decisions about the best approach to addressing low employee morale.

### Implementation Plan

This plan outlines the steps for implementing an employee recognition program at Gather&Gather. By following this plan, the company can effectively address low employee morale and improve overall employee satisfaction and engagement. The following steps may be necessary for implementing recognition programs at Gather&Gather as a solution to low employee morale at the company:

- Identify the goals and objectives of the employee recognition program: Determine what the company hopes to achieve through this program, such as improved employee morale, retention, or productivity.

- Determine the criteria for recognition: Decide what actions or behaviours will be recognized through the program, such as meeting performance targets, going above and beyond in customer service, or contributing to company success.
- Choose the types of recognition: Determine what recognition will be offered, such as monetary rewards, promotions, or public recognition.
- Communicate the program: Inform employees about the program and how they can be recognized. This can be done through company-wide emails, meetings, or internal communications.
- Implement the program: Begin recognizing employees for their contributions per the criteria and types of recognition determined.
- Monitor and assess the program: Regularly review the program to ensure it meets its goals and objectives and make adjustments as needed.

## Communicating the plan to Stakeholders

Most change leaders tend to believe that it is important for them to develop an effective, workable plan for change. However, they, in most cases, overlook the need or essence of actively involving key stakeholders in the entire process. In most cases, if these stakeholders do not have a clear rationale for change, they will be more likely to resist. For any successful change implementation, organizational leaders must communicate the same to the relevant stakeholders (Abbas, 2022). In the case of low employee morale as a workplace challenge, different steps may be followed to communicate the possible solution of implementing a recognition program to the relevant stakeholders as a solution to the problem.

To effectively communicate the plan for implementing an employee recognition program at Gather&Gather to stakeholders, the following steps can be taken:

- Prepare a presentation: Create a presentation that outlines the goals and objectives of the program, the criteria for recognition, the types of recognition offered, and the implementation plan.
- Schedule a meeting: Set up a meeting with key stakeholders, including management, employees, and any relevant outside parties, to present the plan.
- Share the presentation: Present the plan using the prepared presentation, highlighting the program's benefits and addressing any questions or concerns during the meeting.
- Follow up with written communication: Send a plan summary to all stakeholders via email or internal communication channels after the meeting. This can serve as a reference point and ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the details of the program.
- Monitor and update stakeholders: Regularly update stakeholders on the progress of the program and any changes or adjustments. This can be done through email updates, meetings, or internal communications.

## Monitoring and Review

To ensure the successful implementation of the solution of implementing a recognition program, it is important to assess appropriate monitoring and review techniques. One of the potential techniques to consider is the use of employee feedback. Collecting employee feedback about the program can help determine the solution's effectiveness. The process may entail surveying employees or holding focus groups to gather insights about the program experience and its impact on their work performance (Andriotis, 2019). Another aspect that can be used in the review process is the performance metrics. Monitoring performance metrics, such as productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction, can help determine the program's impact on the organization. For example, if productivity and efficiency improve after the program has been implemented, it may indicate that it has successfully improved communication skills.

## Conclusion

Low employee morale is a common workplace problem that can significantly negatively impact a company. By identifying the causes of low morale at Gather&Gather and implementing solutions such as improved communication, increased support, a recognition program, and workload management, it is possible to address this problem and create a positive work environment for employees. Regular monitoring and review will be key to ensuring the successful implementation of these solutions and improving overall employee morale at the company.

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