

Write a report of 2,000 words, in which you apply recognised problem-solving tools and techniques to identify and propose solutions to a work-based problem, to include an evaluation of possible solutions. Discuss and agree with your lecturer a suitable problem to be solved which may be drawn from your current or past work experiences or an agreed situation.

**Problem solving and decision making
(BMSW4004)**

“My problems on my workplace”

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Introduction

Pret a manger is a company founded on 1983, in United Kingdom. This company is a fast casual restaurant, and they sell food and drink with good customer service but fast.

The company has over 450 shops around UK and some in France, USA, Switzerland, China, and Singapore. They have a lot of choice between food and drinks, and this is a master for this type of company.

The company is selling sandwiches, salad, hot food, and cold and hot drinks like coffees.

The company here, in UK, is very famous and popular. For example, the food is handmade in their shop kitchens through the day and what is not sold it will to charity; regarding cold and hot drink the company last year, in 2020, created the coffee Subscription which attracted a lot of new customers and is really convenient for the people got this subscription.

Before the pandemic the company was in continuous expansion but after, like almost all the companies around the world, had to stop with the expansion and they had to deal with less income, redundancy and try to survive.

Fortunately, the 2021 was a good year for the company and it starts again to make profit, even if is not the same pre pandemic, but the company could start again to create objective in long term.

I enjoyed the company in 2018 and I was lucky to survive the year after with redundancy and I got promotion now as Assistant manager and this change of role gave me the opportunity to understand see some problems as simple team member and a kind of boss and I will explain above here, and I will give some solution I found with my experience and some that after this course I will apply for other problems.

1° PROBLEM - LABELLING -

When I started to work in this company, we didn't need to print any label for any type of item, like sandwich, baguette or salad and the process during the production was much easier and faster.

After few months I joined, the company started slowly to introduce the labelling.

What is the labelling? The labelling is a process which the employee needs to attach to the packaging a label which is written the name of the product, ingredients, allergen may contain the product, nutrition information. This label at the moment is required by law with the name of Natasha's law.

The company in the past got some problems with some products that may contained some ingredients which could affect some allergies. Unfortunately, they didn't show and displayed enough that some types of sandwiches or baguette may contains one of the 14 food allergens, like nut, sesame, or gluten and for this reason they had 2 people passed away for this reason, like a girl, Natasha, aged 15 has sadly passed away because she ate a baguette contained seed and which she had a sever allergy.

To prevent this horrible situation, they decided to install some screens inside the shops where the customer can go and check by themselves if the product they want, they would like may contains some allergen.

Plus, to avoid other problems, they installed an ingredient label printer, and we need to print every time we make a fresh product, such a sandwich, baguette, or salad to attach to the packaging.

The company invested a lot of money for these two new entries but is good because the health for the customer doesn't have any comparison.

We will analyse the problem through the **SWOT analysis**.

Strength:

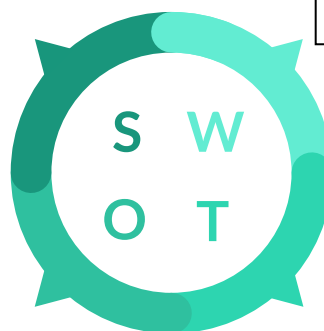
Our company was one of the first of the industry to start to use the labelling and this gave to us the time to get use to add this new process to our production

Weaknesses:

The process, even with some updates, is still slow and this impact negatively our production.

Opportunities:

Improve the labelling process with new machine to have faster production.



Threat:

Even if we started before others to use the labelling, we still might be the last one to update the use of the process.

Evaluate solutions and use PMI

At the moment we need to insert the number of labels we need to print and after that we need to attach manually one by one the label on the packaging which means that our production and productivity will be constantly slow.

- One of the solutions at this problem as already mentioned it can be the introduction of a machine, like in use in the supermarket, to attach the label to the packaging to make faster the process.
- Another solution can be to have already in the packaging the label pre-printed which it means during our process the last step to add the label is already done and we can be faster.

What's good +	What's bad -	What's interesting ?
Faster process +4 Easy to apply to every single product +2	Still need to double check if is applied the right label on the product -2 Is expensive for the company give to all the shops the new machine for the label -5	Easy to training new team member +2

1st solution total = +1

What's good +	What's bad -	What's interesting ?
Faster process +4 Remove one step from production +3	More chance to mislabelling -6 Is difficult to fit in the kitchen all the packaging with different labels (around 20+) -8	Easy to training new team member +2 Process will be smooth +2

2nd solution total = -1

Select best solution

Even if the 2nd solution for a while can be a good solution, we will have the problem to fit all the packaging with different label and this might be difficult as some kitchens are small and there is not space available to fit more than 20 containers, sometimes even 30; another problem is check constantly if the team member, specially new staff, might take from wrong container the right packaging contains the right label and this will create again a mislabelling and so we will have always the problem and create a new one, which is give the wrong information to the product we sell.

The best solution for the company is to buy a machine which we use after make pack the product and attach easily and this make our process easier and faster. It's true that on the beginning can be a bit expensive for the company but on the long term is worth and the risk to have mislabel is very low, which is the objective of the new process of labelling the product. So definitely is the best solution.

Monitoring and control

If the company will buy the new machine for the labels, the staff, after around 1-2 will understand the new process, through same training, and in 5 months' time the new process will be followed smoothly and with not mistake (90%) and in case of mistake is because of staff and not because of the machine.

Communicate with stakeholders

Stakeholder Communication Plan Template



STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION PLAN					
STAKEHOLDER	POWER/INTEREST	KEY INTEREST & ISSUES	COMMUNICATION VEHICLE	FREQUENCY	COMMENTS
Customers	high	safety	Social media	monthly	
Employees	high	Keep updated	Confidential email	weekly	
Government	high	safety	Official communication	When needed	
Supplier	Low	Order ingredients	ordering	When needed	



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Ddrnod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

2° PROBLEM: - INABILITY TO MAKE INCREASE DRINKS -

Another problem I got on my workplace is the new offer the company gave to the customers, the coffee Subscription.

How it works? Basically, is a subscription for the coffees and allows the customer to redeem up to 5 coffees per day, one at least every thirty minutes.

This is actually a very good offer to attract new customers, but the problem is the demand is too high for the staff we have at the moment. First of all, the coffee machines are not so new to make so many coffees and then after the pandemic we are constantly short of staff, and this make difficult for the staff we have to manage the demand and so this gives a lot of stress and overwork.

I analysed the situation through the **PESTLE ANALYSIS**, and this is what realised.

P. Due to covid and Brexit is more difficult to find new employees and the new regulation from the government makes hard to find new staff.

E. The business cycle's stage is suffering in recovery. After Covid pandemic it was hard to come back to the pre Covid income and Brexit makes difficult to receive ingredients and products from oversea

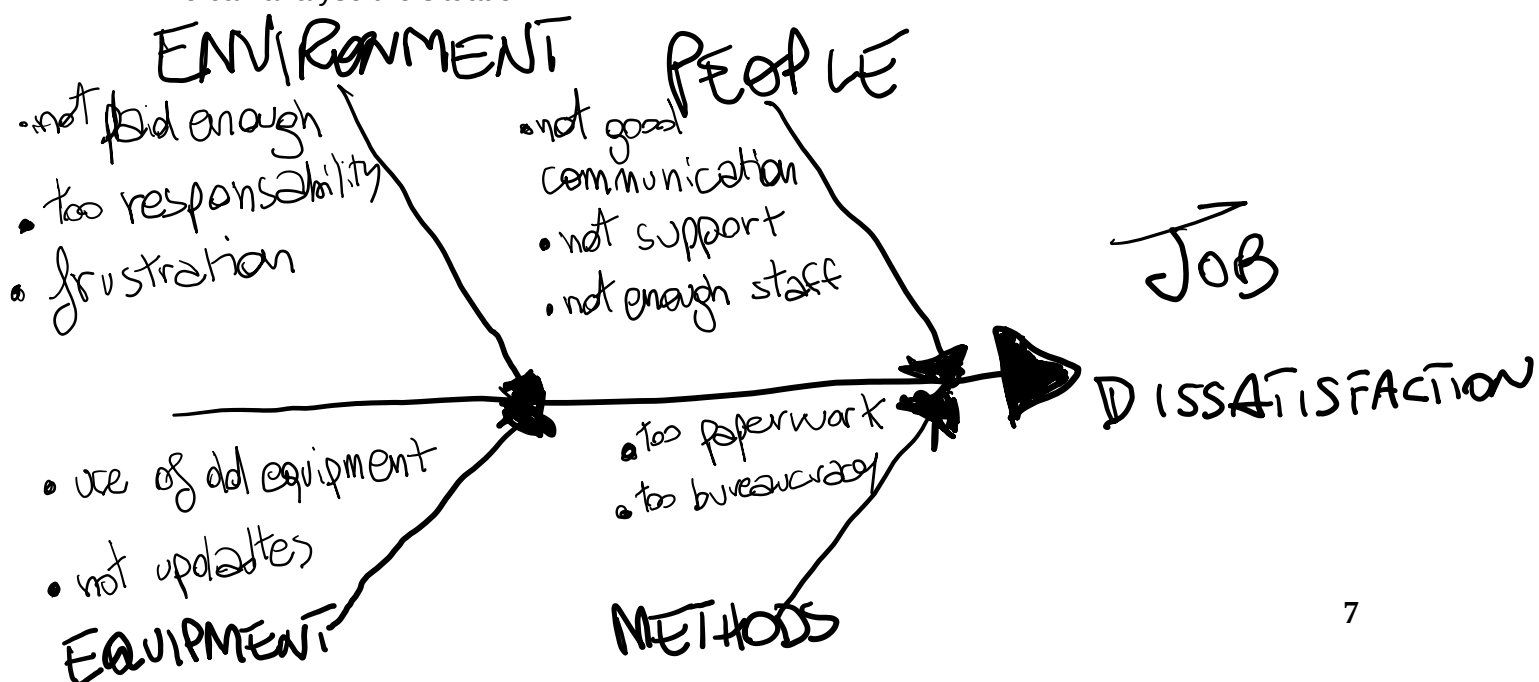
S. As we miss employees, the currently staff is overstressed, and their productivity is not anymore high as pre Covid. Even if we miss staff the demand is still same, or even more than before, and this make difficult to handle the request.

T. still same old system and they don't do any upgrade about this and give us frustration because the company should help us to make our job much easier than possible

L. they still have same old standards to follow and too many and this make for the employees difficult to follow up because some of them are different with the time.

E. The company is still not eco-friendly and is still using plastic. The company is planning to reduce the use of plastic in the next years.

We can analyse the situation



Evaluate solutions and PMI

- One of the solutions that I will suggest is admit less types of coffee subscription. This can make our job easier and smooth, as if we know already that the customer could ask, for example, maximum 5 types of coffee drinks and plus the choice of drink could help us very a lot!
- Another solution can be to accept just a limited coffee subscription per day for every shop. This type of solution can help us as well as after we arrive to the limit this could help us to manage the rest of shift/day to organize better the remaining duties for the next day and focus more about cleaning and health and safety, which is very important too for pour company.

What's good +	What's bad -	What's interesting ?
Staff make the job better and easier +3	Complaints from customer to have less choices but still can use it -8	More time to training new team member +4
Taking care more about cleaning +8	Lost of income due to less customers -8	Shift will be smoother +3
Staff will be more happy and less stressed +4		

1st solution total= +8

What's good +	What's bad -	What's interesting ?
Staff make the job better and easier +3	Complaints from customer to don't use the subscription -8	Easy to training new team member +2
Taking care more about cleaning +3	Lost of income due to less customers -8	Shift will be smoother +2
Staff will be more happy and less stressed +4		Company can focus more about more offes that doesn't include coffee +8

2nd solution total= +6

Select best solution

as PMI can shows, even if both solutions could sound good the first solution is definitely the best solution and this is why because until the end of the day the customer can still redeem the coffee from the subscription, even if with less choices, but at least they can still take the product they are paying for without any limit.

Monitoring and control

If the company will decide to apply the first solution, we could see from the beginning that our staff will just be more happy, less stressed, and probably we could find more new employees. From the other side the customer probably, at the beginning will complain but after a while they will definitely accept the new changes in terms and conditions.

Communicate with stakeholders

Stakeholder Communication Plan Template



STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION PLAN					
STAKEHOLDER	POWER/INTEREST	KEY INTEREST & ISSUES	COMMUNICATION VEHICLE	FREQUENCY	COMMENTS
Customers	high	Changes of terms and conditions	Social media	When needed	
Employees	high	Keep updated	Confidential email	weekly	
Company	high	Changes	Official communication	When needed	
Supplier	Low	Order ingredients	ordering	When needed	

Recommendations and Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning, the company is surviving after the pandemic and if we compare to the other similar companies, we can say that we are on the top with offers and specially with subscription and labelling.

At the same time the company now should focus more about the wellbeing of the employees and give them maybe more rewards of the hard work they are actually doing.

They already started with increase pay rate, apart they usually do when with start the new annual financial year but maybe they need to make the employees more appreciation and review the terms and conditions on the subscription which give us very hard time.

I am happy still to work in this company because at the same time we have a lot of opportunities to grow up even if we don't have any qualification and this a very good chance for all of us.

I hope you enjoyed reading my report and understood my point of view about thid complex problems.

Thank you

References

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