

Problem Solving and Decision Making

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Introduction

This report investigates one of the fundamental problems from the work place and uses different tools for decision making process in order to identify the best solution. The selected problem is the lack of engagement and motivation at the workplace.

A definition of the decision making process illustrates the stages of decision identification, prior information and data collection and alternative solutions assessment. There are two approaches to decision making, rationally or creatively. The rational approach is realised in a precise order problem definition, gathering information, assessment of alternatives and selection of the most appropriate one, taking action and review and evaluation of the decision towards the identified needs. The creative approach gives more flexibility and uses imagination and creativity (MSG, 2015). This report is using a rationale approach to problem solving and follows the specific theoretical framework.

Overview of problems in the workplace

Work occupies an important place in adult life and is connected with personal choices, personal identity, financial security, meaning and purpose. Individuals in full time jobs will spend a significant amount of time at work. There are different problems that can occur in the workplace with negative effects on the business performance. Factors related to problems at the workplace are: conflicts and disputes, stress, time management, working conditions, lack of training, lack of communication, discrimination, lack of engagement and motivation, organisation, management (ResearchGate, 2018).

Defining the work-based problem

The selected problem is the lack of engagement and motivation at the workplace during pandemic. It is important that employees are motivated and are feeling engaged with the business activity as it influences the performance levels. When looking at the meaning of engagement in an organisation the individual presents characteristics such as happiness, fulfilment, healthy and motivation. Further that it was identified that engagement is positively correlated to other business metrics such as employee retention, productivity, efficiency, innovation.

Motivation can derived from internal springs such as self motivation or from organisational policies and management practices. Organisations aim to motivate and keep engaged their employees through monetary rewards, job diversification, time off or overtime policies, empowerment.

Therefore a lack of engagement and motivation could only generate issues and disruptions overall (Beck, 2000).

Collecting information

Research has found that employees motivation and employee engagement is important for the business activity. The usage of motivation towards employee satisfaction contributes to increase in performance and engagement. Employees needs can vary due to the uniqueness of each individual, of different motivators. The process of selecting the best motivators can be challenging and involves a elements such as leadership, culture, organisational dynamism. The knowledge to motivate in an organisation requires analysis and interest to identify the general needs within the organisation (Hewitt, 2011). Nowadays organisations promote socialisation and bonding between team members which helps to obtain an equilibrium towards the organisational culture and talent retention. Pandemic has generated major disruptions and many organisations adapted more slowly than others.

Some organisations had major disruptions I their activity and that contributed to job loses or reduced number of shifts and less payment. The most at risks were occupations such as cleaners, restaurant staff, kitchen assistants in contrast with other professions that they had a reduced risk. The occupational picture in the United Kingdom the largest job families at risk are those in customer service, sales, and food services (Office for National Statistics, 2020).

Pandemic has affected workplaces and continues to do it. That is why some issues developed such as employees feeling unengaged and demotivated at work.

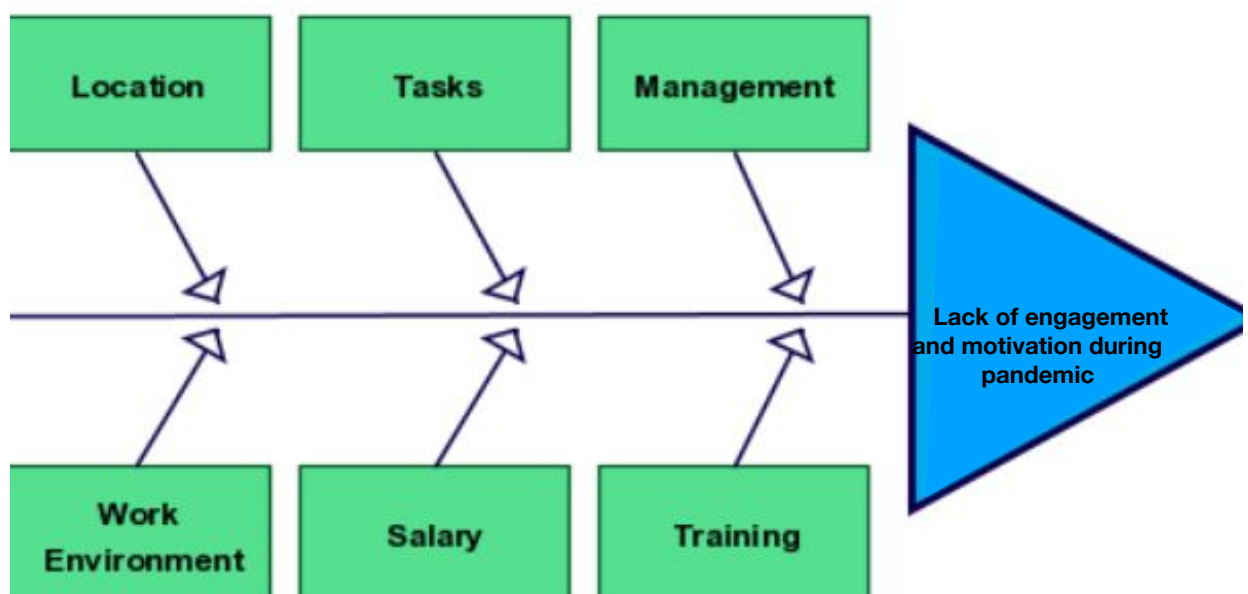
Figure 1 Stakeholder Map analysis

Interest of stakeholders	<u>Keep completely informed</u>	<u>Manage most thoroughly</u>
	<i>Shareholders</i>	<i>Suppliers</i>
	<i>Government</i>	
	<u>Regular minimal contact</u>	<u>Anticipate and meet needs</u>
	<i>Trade Union</i>	<i>Employees</i>
	<i>Influence of</i>	<i>stakeholders</i>

Figure 1 Stakeholder Map analysis highlights the importance levels of stakeholders, regarding their interest and power within the organisation. The decision making process has to prioritise who needs to be informed, who needs to give approval and what type of attention is required. The stakeholders in an organisation have various levels of power and interest. The impact of the identified problem on the stakeholders can have negative effects as it can reflect on the performance levels of employees. People are at the heart of organisations and employees as stakeholders have an important role. That is why organisations put great effort into motivation process in order to increase performance and retain talent.

The Fishbone diagram is used to identify the cause and effects and it helps with the evaluation of the problem. The diagram in Figure 2 Fishbone diagram identifies that the lack of engagement and motivation can be the effect of location, tasks, management, work environment, salary and training. The motivational theories identify that the motivation is interrelated with a variety of factors that determine the outcome of the process. *The location* refers to the workplace position, if is close to public transportation, if is accessible to other types of transportation. *The tasks* relate to the individual ability to do and accomplish the required work, the complexity or the routinised processes. *The management* relates to the management styles if is participative, authoritative. The work environment refers to the direct relations with colleagues, managers, organisation's policies. *The salary* is part of monetary rewards offered by the organisation. *Lack of training* can many times be demotivating as it involves more work volume, more difficulties and unpreparedness (Dartey-Baah, 2010).

Figure 2 Fishbone diagram



PESTLE analysis

Political

There are different political factors that can lead to disengagement and demotivation such as taxation policy, regulation trends, levels of corruption. During the current pandemic the political interfered in majority of business and organisations. Some of the actions had direct influence on employees engagement and motivation. Having to work from home was an imposed change that not many found it most rewarding. On the other side others who could not work from home due to the business type were frustrated by the work volume or of the direct exposure to the virus.

Economic

The latest economic disruptions due to the pandemic has influenced the rate of employment, even monetary policies, inflation. This elements are in direct relation to the employee engagement and motivation levels as it affects the financial security.

Social factors

Working from home during pandemic has been challenging as employees found it difficult to cope with the routine or to separate family life from work. The change in lifestyle has had different effects and employees had different perceptions (CIPD, 2020).

Technological

Technology was the tool to facilitate working from home, employee interaction with the management. The pandemic affected the work environment with social distancing and working from home and technology played a great role in this process.

Legal

The employment laws are interconnected with employee motivation and engagement as it sets the requirements for the working systems. Regulation such as lockdowns had direct influence too.

Environmental

Corporate Social Responsibility is an element that can influence the employee to work for a company, to be engaged and connected with its purposes and aims (Senkus et al.,2017).

Generating alternative solutions to the problem

The assessment of the problem has identified the spreader impact on organisations and its employees. The identified problem requires adaptive decisions as the alternative solutions are partially understood and due to pandemic are somewhat unusual. In order to address the problem it

has to be evaluated modalities to keep the employees engaged and motivated. One of the solutions should focus on the communication between management and employees. The lack of direct contact during pandemic has reduced the daily interaction and social aspects from the working environment. Management should organise organisational social events that would aim to address the problem, but also to enhance and strengthen the relationship between employer and employees. This events would involve awards and recognition of efforts, but it will also be an opportunity to socialise and reconnect with colleagues. Another solution would be to offer monetary incentives for employees that consider that have been affected by pandemic financially. Te organisation would email the employees a form that could be completed by anyone who would want to benefit of the monetary incentive. It would be a standard amount set out by the financial department.

Implementing solutions

In order to select the most appropriate solution it has to be applied a the set of criteria on effectiveness, efficiency, equity and objectives achievement. The social events solution motivates intrinsically will benefit the organisation to solve the problem, but involves a variety of resources such as time, cost and a designated team to organise the event. The second solution motivates in a different way through monetary incentives and for employees affected financially is more efficient as it helps with their struggles and reduce stress from this perspective. This could be seen as a motivating factor and appreciate the organisation involvement.

Implementation of the change using the ADKAR model applies different elements related to the change management: awareness of the need of a change, desire to support it, knowledge how to realise the change, ability to implement the change and reinforcement for the change sustainment. In order to implement the solution there are several stakeholders that need to be informed and have their permission from the high management. Further that the Finances would have to establish the details regarding the amount of money offered. Then the Human Resources would have to communicate the decision to employees. It will be sent a form through email that would describe the organisation position towards the financial struggles of the employees. It will explain the procedure and the deadline for applications. Then the employees who want to make the application will reply to the email.

Monitoring and evaluation of the change

The monitoring will be realised by the Human Resource department in collaboration with the Finances department. The high management level will be informed on the progress of the change, on the number of the employees who applied and the result of the change.

The Human Resources will then evaluate the success of the solution and it will ask for feedback to see if the employees consider that the organisation actions has contributed in any way to make them feel more motivated at work.

Conclusion

This report has presented the problems in the workplace and has selected and defined a complex problem related to employee engagement and motivation. It has been collected data and information related to the topic in order to have the knowledge and understanding over the problem. It has been evaluated using different tools of analysis such as stakeholder map, fishbone diagram, PESTLE analysis in order to generate solutions. The generation of the solutions highlighted two different types of solutions towards monetary rewards and non-monetary rewards. Following the weighting of the solutions it has been decided that it will be more benefiting for the organisation and for the employees to implement a change related to financial incentives. This solution would be more stringent due to the pandemic effects.

The decision making process has illustrated the stages that occur and it has been followed a rational approach. The adaptive type of solution defines its character of a single application of the change and it is imperative to obtain feedback on the solution in order to assess if it was a successful decision.

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