

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

MODULE:
PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

This report addressed a complex problem in a depot on one of the biggest delivery companies in UK (In reasons of discretion, the name of the company will not be mentioned in this report). The information included in this report is based on opinion of friend of mine, who works at that depot last three years and has a good vision to the organisation of the working process there. In this report will be identified the problem, and the solutions, which could be taken to resolve the problem. Analysis of the problems in the delivery industry at all, also are included. Some alternative solutions are given, together with explanation of the impacts for the company and to the employees. Decision-making tools and techniques, used in this report are for better understanding the whole process from identifying a problem, via generating solutions, choosing the best solution, and why it is important for the future of the company. Implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the chosen solution are also important parts of that process. Part of this report is about the stakeholders, who are they and why the communication to them is important.

DEFINING OF THE PROBLEM

In fact, too many employees leave their jobs in one of the depots (and maybe not only) on delivery company in UK. In last 6 months at least 10 warehouse operative workers and at least 6 drivers left their job in that depot. The reasons for that are: low payment and untrained staff. The scope of the problem is increasing, as the company meets difficulties to find new workers, and pushed the other workers to cover the gaps without extra payment or other motivation to them. The impacts of that are unsatisfied and demotivated employees, delays of the deliveries and unhappy customers. The company needs to take some urgent solutions to resolve that complex problem as soon as possible.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE DELIVERY INDUSTRY

There are plenty of challenges in the delivery industry today, which could make some difficulties or problems to the delivery companies:

- High level of competition- Last few years there is increasing amount of new delivery companies across the UK. That makes difficulties to the delivery companies to find (for new ones) or keep (for old ones) their position on the market. All of them need great marketing and logistics management.
- Fuel costs- Delivery companies always are striving to provide low cost and high-quality service in the competitive market. In last few months the fuel price increased to a very high level. This makes difficulties to the delivery industry and affects the final price of their service to the public.
- Improving of the business process- For a leading business, the business process must be constantly updated. This includes all aspects on a business: marketing, logistics, transport, management, etc.
- Improving customer service- The customer expectations have increased, and the companies need to be more creative to meet this challenge.
- Government Regulations- As every business in UK, the delivery business should follow all government regulations, including any updates. Usually, the big companies use a third party to manage the required documentation.

- Economy- The world economic is unstable, and that reflects to the economic in United Kingdom. For example, the high fuel prices make a greater credit crisis and rising inflation. That pressures the industry by increasing compliance regulations.
- Technology Strategy & Implementation- Delivery industry supports many of the benefits of the new technologies and introduces them wherever it is possible to increase the productivity.
- Brexit- After Brexit many companies met some difficulties and expenses, because of the new government restrictions. This is including new licences and many new paperwork to import and export goods.
- Pandemic- Covid-19 force many companies to make redundancy. This includes finances, employees, investments, etc.

(Neves, 2021), DDC FPO (2017)

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

Creating alternative solutions for any problem on the workplace is a key to resolve the problem. Looking at the problem at different ways, could generate great range of alternative solutions. It is important to be generated as many alternatives as possible. That gives opportunity to be chosen the most effective solution to the problem. The alternative solutions for the problem, mentioned above, could be:

1. Improving the working process by:
 - Better management of the working process- That gives better feeling to the employees, that they do exactly what they were hired for, or taking payment for.
 - Hiring new employees by test- This could help the company to choose the right people for the positions, they have opened.
 - Good training to the new employees- It is very important for a company to make good training to the new hired people, where they can learn in detail, what are the expectations from them, and how to do their job properly.
 - Regular training to all employees- When the company has introduced some innovation, it is necessary the company to make training to all affected employees
 - Improving the working environment- A good and friendly environment at the workplace is a great way for every employee to feel well and significant. Team-building events, could build great relationships between the employees.
 - Motivation for the employees- The motivation could be in different ways- by bonuses, be encouragement, by awards, etc.
2. Increasing the salaries and additional payment- Increasing salaries is always good motivation for the employees to feel satisfied on their workplace. Additional payment for additional job, or additional time, stimulate the employees to give their best at the workplace.
3. On- going positions- The company could motivate and support the employees in their career development within the company.

(Kanagwa, 2018)

DECISION- MAKING TECHNIQUES TO EVALUATE THE SOLUTION

To find the best solutions for the problems in the company, could be used different techniques. For the presented case I recommended to be used the next two techniques:

- Consultation- Consultation is a decision-making technique for take on long-term decisions. This decision-making method involves the opinions of multiple people and more in-depth evaluation and discussions. That makes the employees satisfied and loyalty, as they could feel engaged in the decision-making process.
- Brainstorming- This decision- making technique, brings together all team members to find options through discussion and debate. This is a process of decision-making where there are plenty of different opinions and could create great new ideas and solutions.

Using these decision- making techniques, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to say what is going well or wrong in the company, what are their vision for the future of the company, what they think for the offered solutions, and to propose their own solutions. (Harappa, 2020)

PMI TABLE

PMI or Plus, Minus and Implication, is a table, which is helps to be seen all options, before taka a decision. It gives scores to positives, negatives and affecting factors. At the end of the process, the final score shows whether the decision is a good idea or not. (Dumitrascu, 2021),

PLUS	MINUS	IMPLICATION
- Well trained employees - Motivated employees - Satisfied employees - Increasing productivity - Satisfied customers	- Expenses for the company	- Changes in the management of the company - Good working environment - Good performance of the business
5	1	3

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	PRIORITY	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	NOTES
<u>Action 1</u> Define the problems in the company	All management staff	Urgent	In progress	01/09/22	15/09/2022	A study among all stakeholders
<u>Action 2</u> Analyse and report the results	All management staff	Urgent	In progress	15/09/2022	25/09/2022	Questionnaire/ conversation to every stakeholder

<u>Action 3</u> Organise the meeting	Manager Human resources	Not urgent	Waiting to finish Actions 1 and 2	20/09/2022	27/09/2022	Inform all stakeholders for the date and time of the meeting
<u>Action 4</u> Conducting of the meeting	All stakeholders	Not urgent	Waiting to finish Actions 1,2 and 3	07/10/2022	07/10/2022	Generate alternative solutions
<u>Action 5</u> Evaluate the solutions	All management staff	Not urgent	Waiting	07/10/2022	17/10/2022	Select the best solution
<u>Action 6</u> Implement the solution	Main management staff	Not urgent	Waiting	27/10/2022	27/12/2022	Implementing the solution in the best way
<u>Action 7</u> Monitoring on the implementation of the solution	Main management staff and all stakeholders	Not urgent	Waiting	27/10/2022	27/12/2022	Regular discussions, analysis, and reports
<u>Action 8</u> Evaluation on the implemented solution	Stakeholders	Not urgent	Waiting	27/10/2022	27/01/2023	Meeting with all stakeholders

COMMUNICATION TO STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders in a company are all people or organisation that have an interest in a company and can affect or be affected by the business. This is including the owners, investors, employees, customers, suppliers, stockholders, partners, creditors, government, etc. Stakeholders are important, as they provide the business with support and contribution. Communicate to stakeholders also is important as it helps everyone understand the needs, goals, and plans of the business. Stakeholder communication could be made by regular meetings via video or in person, emails or phone calls, presentations, newsletters, notice boards, annual or monthly progress reports, website portals, informal meetings, such as dinners, social media, etc.

There are many benefits to communicating effectively with your stakeholders, including:

- Trust building - Communicate to the stakeholders lets them know you concern their prospects, which can help built trust.
- Decision-making - The stakeholders have different backgrounds and qualifications that they can use to present insightful solutions.

- Cost efficiency - Regular communication to the stakeholders could help keep the business projects within the framework of the targets and the budget.
- Accountability - By regular meetings, such as short daily team meetings, stakeholders can hold each other liable for their work.

(Indeed Editorial Team, 2021), (Kimberley, 2021)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

When the decision- making process is completed and the right solution is taken, the following step is to make an Action plan to implement the solution. The action plan should include all steps of implementing the solution. Monitoring of that Action plan is very important, so the solution is implemented as expected. To monitor the plan, the following questions should be asked: Has each step been implemented correctly and on time? Is more time or resources are required? Was the plan realistic? What action/s needs to be taken? Does the plan need any change?

When the solution has been implemented its success needs to be evaluated. To evaluating the solution the monitoring team should answer the following questions: Where were we before the solution? Where are we now? Where are we meant to be? Did we reach the desired state? Did we progress or regress from the problem state? Regardless of its success or failure evaluating the solution allows lessons to be learned that can be used in a similar problem in future.

(Owen, 2018)

REVIEW TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOLUTION

For successful implementation of the solution, could be used different tools and techniques such as GANTT Charts, PERT Charts, SWOT Analysis or SMART Goals.

GANTT Charts are used for planning, scheduling, and reviewing activities. GANTT Charts could be used for monitoring the implementation of the solution and to keep the stakeholders informed of the project progress.

PERT Charts are like GANTT Charts but structured differently. It also is a tool, used to schedule, organize, and work out tasks within a project. PERT could be used for monitoring, program evaluation and review technique. It provides a visual representation of a project's timeline and breaks down individual tasks.

SMART Goals set up for success by making goals specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. The SMART Metod could be used for achieving the goals of implementing the solution as well as for monitoring of that process.

SWOT Analysis could help for outlining the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats of the chosen solution and how that will help for increasing the productivity of the company.

(CFI Team, 2022), (Owen, 2018)

CONCLUSION

Problems at the workplace always happen. Implementing good decision-making process is very important to solve the problems. There are plenty of tools and techniques, which could support this process. Defining the problems and generate alternative solutions, help the company to find the best solution. Implementing of the chosen solution takes time, needs monitoring and evaluation, but is a secure way to increase the productivity of the business.

Good working environment, well organised management, good payment, can make the employees to feel more motivated and satisfied at the workplace. Happy employees at the workplace is one of the factors for a great business performance.

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APENDIX 1: Role play

Elena- Management Consultant

Fady- Warehouse operative

Fady: - Hi Elena! Can I talk to you?

Elena: - Yes, sure. Come in. How can I help you?

Fady: - As you know, I am working in this warehouse last 5 years. When I started to work here, I had not any experience in this job. This company gave me good training and I thank you for that. I worked very hard to learn everything I needed, so to do my job properly. I always do my best and always was happy to do some additional things, so the job to be done on time and in the best way. But to be honest I am feeling unsatisfied.

Elena: - What happened?

Fady: - My life becomes more expensive- the rent, the bills, the food, ... everything is going up. My salary is the same as when I started this work 5 years ago. Unfortunately, it is not enough to cover my expenses. So, I would like to ask you if there is any chance to increase it?

Elena: - I am sorry to hear that you are feeling unsatisfied. We know you are good worker and do great job for us last 5 years. But as you know in the last couple of years many things were changed. After Brexit our company met some difficulties and expenses too. We should make many changes in all departments in the company, because of the new government restrictions after Brexit. This is including new licences and many new paperwork to import and export the goods from and to the country.

As you know, we changed our computer system last year, and we invested in new technologies, as we need to be up to date with the new challenges.

Also, the Covid-19 situation, made a big mess everywhere, including in our company. As you know, we should close the company, during the Lockdowns, and for that time the company made losses.

The situation last months getting worst, as everything is going up - fuel, bills, food...

I fully understand your worries, but unfortunately at this moment we can't increase your salary.

Fady: - Yes, I understand that, but is there any other options. Please understand me correctly- I have a family, little children to look after... Every day I come to work, but I feel demotivated and that makes me unhappy.

Elena: - That what we can do for you now, is to offer you another position. The position is for Supervisor in our other warehouse. As you work for us 5 years, we well know you and we are sure that you will perfectly fit to that position. Of course, there is some training as well... and the salary is good. What do you think?

Fady: - Yes, this sounds good. I'll need to think about that.

Elena: - If you interested, you could apply for that position at any time. But hurry up, as there are other candidates as well, and the closing day is soon.

Fady: - Ok. I will. Thanks.