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Introduction

A large part of managers' activities are constantly related to problem solving and decision making. Often, decisions are made under pressure, under stress and in a very short time. Therefore, when they are put in a position to solve a new problem or make a decision, they react on the basis of information that seemed to work before, but without taking into account the whole context in which the new problem arose.

This decision-making model based exclusively on past events, in which the decisions taken may have been appropriate, in the absence of a problem-solving and decision-making process, is often the cause of an erroneous decision taken in an attempt to solve a new problem through the same past solutions. It is necessary that before making a decision the issue that requires the decision to be passed through an evaluation process for better results.

This paper aims to be an example on how to solve problems and make decisions right, therefore I will present a work based problem and its structured analysis in order to obtain relevant data that will lead to optimal solutions.

For a professional analysis I will use specific problem solving tools such as SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces model and also a Fishbone diagram, which will also help me to draw up an appropriate action plan.

Complex Problem Summary

I selected the following hypothetical situation: in a warehouse of a courier company several employees reported that since the installation of the pandemic, they are facing the lack of work-life balance and vacation time poor distribution.

Employees are very dissatisfied and frustrated that for over a year their demands regarding the legal right to vacation are violated or affected by all kinds of conditions.

They manage to take days off only if there is less activity at that time but they never know in advance. They are informed at the last minute, what deprives them of being able to make plans with their family, to make reservations in a certain place, to organize their holidays with their partners.

The days off are served as decided by the management and it causes stress and health problems in terms of burnout because the company gets to decide when they are supposed to feel tired and in need of a day off. For this situation, the management blames the pandemic situation.

These grievances are liable to affect the quality of the activity performed and implicitly the reputation of the company.

SWOT Analysis

Common ingredient of any strategic analysis tool kit (Koenig, 2009), a SWOT Analysis will be helpful to investigate and analyse the given situation and support decision making process. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

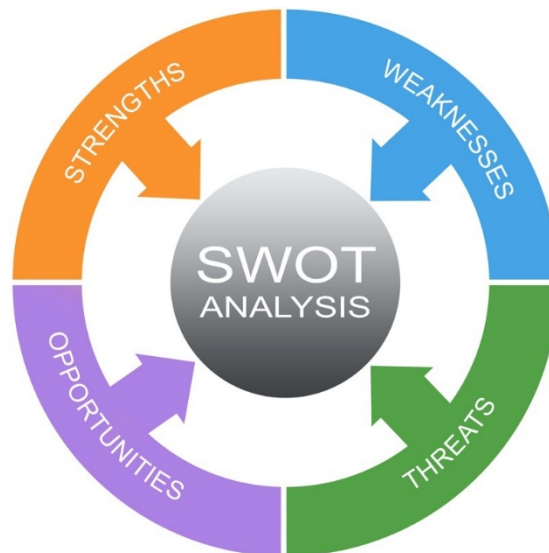


Fig. 1 SWOT Analysis

Strenghts:	Weaknesses:
hardworking employees devotion and passion for the job proactivity loyal staff good client relationships	lack of a well-defined professional direction understaffing work – life overlapping rest time allocated unfairly and inconsistently frustrated employees
Opportunities:	Threats:
stable work place able and serious working team technology hobby and leisure activity	employees burn out career crisis; economic crisis; restructuring.

SWOT analysis can help validate the career or find the best way to overcome weaknesses and turn threats into opportunities.

Any spotted weakness is an opportunity for improvement and any strenght and opportunity represents ways to keep threats at bay.

Fishbone diagram

To quiqly analyse the cause and effect of the issue under discussion I draw the following Fishbone Diagram, also known by `Cause and Effect` Diagram.

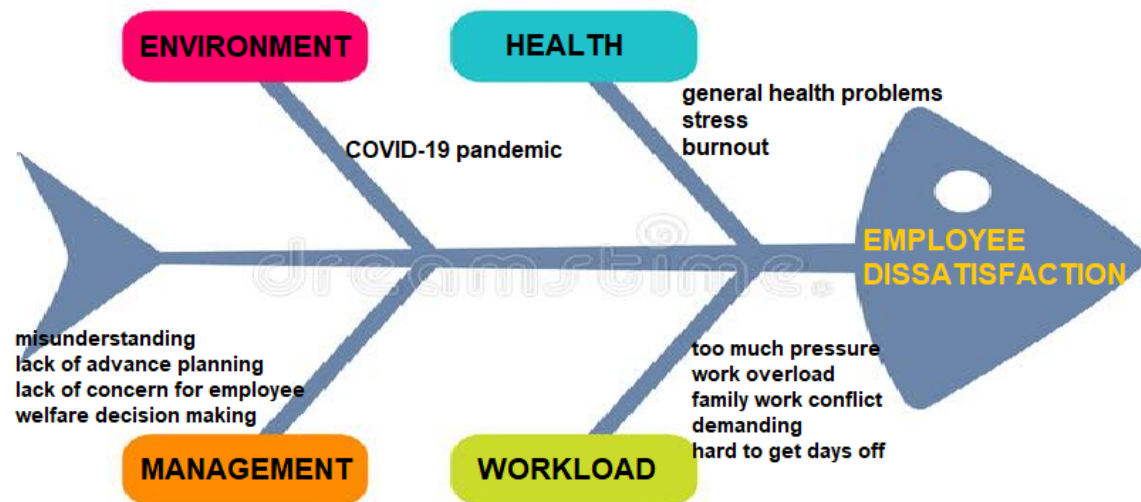


Fig. 2 Fishbone diagram on employee dissatisfaction

Time seems to be the most important resource, but is this the reality or is it just a detail that we try to make true? When it comes to professional activity, obviously, the time allocated to the job is one that supports few or no changes, but it rarely happens that our days are fully occupied by the work schedule. Even the most productive employee feels the need to rejuvenate by having some time away from work.

Although it does not seem to be a major problem of our life, the time of relaxation, rest and physical, mental and emotional recovery is decisive for a higher quality of life and therefore a better job performance and satisfaction.

It is equally important for employees to take breaks during the day to maintain good physical and mental health. It can be very tiring to stay engaged in an activity for a large number of hours in a row. A pause refreshes them, making them come back feeling more focused.

Nowadays it is important that companies encourage employee work life balance, which not only will attract valuable candidates during hiring process, but it will also produce a higher employee retention rate.

PEST Analysis

I conducted a PEST analysis to show the external factors which impact our situation.

Political	Lord Mark Price, founder of Engaging Works, said for The Times Newspaper "In a post- Brexit, free- market, open- trading world, improving our productivity through having a more engaged and happier workforce will become even more vital if we are to become globally competitive. The more the government can do to promote the happiness and wellbeing of the workforce, the richer we will be as a country".
Economic	UK businesses could lose up to £195 million a day, according to new research released on 11 Nov by leading UK job board, Totaljobs, and global employer brand specialists, Universum. With more than half of us (54%) looking to change jobs in the next 12 months, employees are spending an average of 1 hour 24 minutes a day being unproductive – costing up to £195 million each day to the UK economy in wages, as job-hopping Brits hunt for new work. The research also found that 38% of workers are hoping to make a move in the next six months, with only one in ten of (10%) expecting to still work for the same employer in four years' time (Total Jobs, 2019).
Socio- cultural	Sociocultural values (SCV) which a society maintains continue to remain strong among workers in spite of all its conflicting values with organizational culture. These SCV remain part of individuals wherever they find themselves including the workplace. Generally, culture has been identified to influence various organizational outcomes directly or indirectly (Mensah, 2019).
Technological	"Workplace technology is much more than just the computer or phone you have in front of you. Technology has the power to shape the wider experience in the workplace, removing the friction and frustration employees face while trying to get their jobs done. If done properly technology offers huge boosts to both job satisfaction and employee retention, so it's critical to get it right," Gerry Brennan, CEO of Cloudbooking, for Commsbusiness.co.uk

Fig. 3 PEST Analysis

Evaluation of Possible Solutions and Action Plan

For the concrete situation presented in the section dedicated to the summary of the problem, possible solutions could be:

Once a year employees can plan ahead a week off with at least 2 months in advance so they would be able to make plans with friends, family etc.

Equally important is that the days off they take from time to time to be respected according to their request when possible, without them having to justify the reason they need it.

The company could also make an employment plan that will bring new human resources with the help of which the employees will not feel in such difficulty when planning taking vacations and days off, nor the volume of work.

Depending on the value the employee brought to the company and his performance, it could be considered to offer paid vacation to them, so they will come back in a better form to deal with the work pressures of their job, thus enhancing their work life balance.

The main steps towards drawing up an action plan have already been completed with the preparation of this report.

Now the decision must be made on the most appropriate solution to the situation, which would be to organize a recruitment session to increase the number of employees and distribute the workload and to make it easier to offer days off and holidays without other conditions.

For an employer, the work- life balance of his employees should be as important as his own, because it directly influences the business by the possibility to impair personal health, jeopardize safety and increase stress and job performance as well.

Work- life balance is also about creating a productive work culture where the potential for tensions between work and other parts of people's lives is minimised. This means having appropriate employment provisions in place, and organisational systems and supportive management underpinning them.

Conclusion

The increased workload during this period, the stress accumulated by the constant pressure from bosses can easily put employees in a state of burnout, a notion that translates into exhaustion, fatigue, anxiety, depression, decreased strength, concentration and productivity.

Psychosocial risks and stress at work are among the biggest challenges in occupational safety and health. They have a significant impact on the health of people, organizations and national economies.

About half of European workers believe that stress is a common factor at work and that it is the cause of almost half of all lost working days. Like other aspects of mental health, stress is often misunderstood. However, when viewed at the organizational level and not as an individual issue, psychosocial risks and stress can be managed to the same extent as any other occupational health and safety risk and smart decisions have to be made.

The tools that formed the basis of this report showed the importance of a strong work-life balance, meaning that a person has to equilibrate the work for which gets paid with the personal commitments in her life. They do impact one another but it is up to us to find a suitable balance between work and daily living. It is a challenge that all workers face.

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