

University of Wales Trinity Saint David



Problem Solving and Decision Making (BMSW4004_LON)

Assessment 2

Roleplay Job Dissatisfaction

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Introduction

This report is centered on one of the dissatisfied employee Paul Ionut Vadan (2018571) who is our Warehouse Manager. Paul has been with the company for 8 years and he is a highly committed individual who is punctual, understands the end-to-end operation, always meets his delivery deadlines with zero failures.

In this report, I am going to reflect on my personal experience working with Paul, the working environment whilst applying recognised problem-solving tools and techniques to identify and evaluate a range of possible solutions to the problems discussed. I will be explaining my experience discussing with Paul, what I have noticed, what helped me build a deep, and meaningful connection with him and conclusions. Lastly, how do I go about applying those solutions not only to retain people like Paul but also to improve efficiencies, visibility to the top decision makers and to reduce costs.

The critical and “decision thinking” I have learned throughout this module is significant to me because it not only encourages me to reflect upon life events but also as a management consultant to make recommendations to any business to help them take it to a new level. In this report, I will continue to combine rationality with behavioural processes when making the final decisions.

Problem

Paul decided to approach me (management consultant) to let me know that he isn't totally happy or like his job anymore. The company underwent several major mergers during recent times. Paul's job description hasn't changed however he has been working consistently long hours, eats most of the time at his desk and had to cancel his plans with friends because he is stuck working late. Maintaining a healthy works-life balance is one of the points that Paul would like to discuss.

He also feels that he is underpaid for the workload he accomplishes and feels undervalued, and his salary doesn't match the work he performs. He feels that the company doesn't provide good rates of pay or at least bonuses or extra vacation days. Also, Paul feels that his career growth prospects are limited and the interest in job will increase when it offers some potential to look forward to.

Impact

As a long-standing member of the team Paul possess an exceptional knowledge of our warehouse operations. Paul is extremely punctual, maintains a cordial relationship with all our suppliers and is a key player of our team who leads his team by example. Over the years, Paul has won a lot of respect from the people who works with him and extremely good at turning around complex distribution problems quickly.

We can't afford to lose Paul at this time. It will have a considerable impact on the delivery pipeline and demotivate the staff who works under him.

Paul has 3 months' notice period however, if he decides to leave it will be extremely difficult and costly exercise to replace him. Someone with good warehouse experience will cost a lot more and to be able to fully functional it will take someone at least 2 -3 months.

Paul's main duties involve processing orders, operating mechanical and IT systems, staff rotas, liaising with transport companies, suppliers and clients, training, staff appraisals, maintaining statistical and finance records; stock control, managing budgets, delivery deadlines, health and safety.

Summary of the problem

- Paul feels that his contribution is undervalued –job description hasn't changed and has been working consistently long hours. The workload has increased but not the salary.
- Feels underpaid and the company doesn't provide good rates of pay or bonuses.
- Issues maintaining a healthy works-life balance, he eats at the desk, no time to socialise

- Feels that his career growth prospects are limited.

Solutions to a work-based problem

Decision making is choosing is one alternative from amongst several. Even though in certain situations decision making and problem solving start out alike but may lead down different paths. Problem solving on the other hand is a special form of decision making in which the issue is unique and it often requires developing and evaluating alternatives.

The key to effective decision making is knowing when to make quick decisions (without a model) vs. considered ones (using the model). This is an important, nonrecurring decision I have to make where the potential outcome is risky or uncertain. Therefore, in this report, I will define the problem, propose a series of alternatives and analyse them, and propose an implementation plan using the PMI thinking tools. (BMSW4004_LON, 2021)

Plus, Minus and Interesting

PMI is an exploration and evaluation tool where we separate out three functions. Plus (all the good points), Minus all the bad or negative points) and Interesting (points that are neither good nor bad but interesting such as questions, observations, comments, or suggestions). It is a deliberate examination of the idea or an issue for the good, bad or interesting points instead of immediate acceptance or the rejection of it. (BMSW4004_LON, 2021)



Image source [here](#)

Define the problem

This involves consulting to find out more about the area of concern through observing, engaging, and empathizing with people to understand their experiences and motivations, as well as immersing yourself in the physical environment so you can gain a deeper personal understanding of the issues involved. Put together the information you have gathered, analyse your observations, and synthesise them to define the core problems that you have identified. Take a step back and look broader and look closer. If you misdiagnose the problem, you will not solve it. I have created a series of questions to (see appendix section) that I have asked from Paul during our meeting.

Objectives

After the problem has been identified, it is important that we set objectives (end result of the decision) to solve the problem. Whilst retaining Paul is my key objective, also I see this as an opportunity to improve productivity by automating certain areas of the business by investing in newer and better technology. Paul knows the business process end-to-end which makes him the best candidate to drive these changes and linking it to his performance appraisal will give him a sense of ownership. This will also help me to build a business case to promote him to the next level up.

Alternatives and Analyse

As a next step, generate possible methods, or potential solutions, for solving the problem through decision making. It is important that we resolve the problem as quickly as possible and propose a plan of action and make sure that Paul agrees. Here I have evaluated a range of alternatives in terms of objectives and criteria, tried to predict the outcome of each alternative.

1. The company spent $\frac{1}{4}$ million during last year as the overtime pay. This money can go towards employing few new people and that will ease the pressure. However, the earnings of hardworking people like Paul will potentially be reduced. Therefore, this is not a viable solution however, bringing this up early in the conversation as a point of negotiation and to set the tone.
2. To begin with, we will streamline training and induction process. For onboarding, we will create a starter pack that covers everything including health and safety. Going forward, we will assign a work friend to anyone joining us and Paul is to identify these champions and monitor them. Delegating some of Paul's work to someone junior whilst giving Paul the responsibility to monitor will relieve Paul from his training responsibilities.
3. As a next step, Paul will be visiting the local Amazon distribution centre where he will learn how the modern automated distribution facilities function. Following the visit, Paul

will document the “key take aways” and identify the scope for automation in our warehouse operations. The aim is to identify the quick winners, prioritise them and push them in to the change management pipeline for the system suppliers to implement within next 3 months.

4. As a management consultant, one of my key objectives is to improve operational efficiency and the visibility across the company. I am planning invest on a simple and easy to use online Staff Rota Software. From my initial research, there are software solutions that offers shift and rota planning, staff clock-in App, staff holiday planner and the ability to track when the staff are working. It is understood that this will cut shift planning time in half further relieving Paul.
5. We will create SMART objectives for Paul (these are specific and measurable goals that are time based) and they will be linked to his appraisal. Paul’s performance will be evaluated during the next appraisal and will be promoted to the next level up if satisfactory. This may seem like an additional burden on Paul but without doubt Paul will not only gradually be relieved from the additional burdens but also will improve his skills, particularly related to business and to boost his chances of employment. i.e. scoping and implementing new software solutions acting as the key liaison with the suppliers.
6. We will allocate a training budget, and would like to offer Paul a fully funded training programme that is relevant to the field he operates in. This will improve Paul’s qualifications and I believe not only it will help retain hardworking people like Paul but also the new knowledge obtained will be contributed towards the company.
7. As a management consultant, I will be putting forward a proposal to the board of directors to give one extra day of holiday for every year if someone has stayed with the company for over 3 years. This will be backdated for people like Paul therefore, in 2022 in additions to the 26 days Paul will get 6 additional days of holiday as a token of appreciation for being with the company for 8 years. The year after, Paul will get 7 extra days. Please note that there are only 4 people qualifying for these extra days presently within the organisation.

Plan

Based on the above decisions, the following plan of action was developed with a schedule for its implementation. The following objectives have been agreed for the next 3 months, 6 months and year:

Objectives agreed	Action required to implement	Target date
1. Streamline training and induction	1. Create a starter pack 2. Health and safety 3. Induction questionnaire & upload it online 4. Identify training champions	08th Feb 2022
2. Visiting Amazon distribution centre and system improvements	1. Identify key take aways 2. Document areas for automation/ improve 4. Key liaison with the system supplier (PM)	TBC
3. Staff Rota Software implementation	1. Select supplier 2. Training, Gap analysis 3. Initial data setup 4. Project management 5. Go Live	TBC
4. Training programme	Identify a course to follow	31 st Jan 2022

Conclusion

- Work-life balance is an important aspect of a healthy work environment. Maintaining work-life balance helps reduce stress and helps prevent burnout in the workplace. Chronic stress is one of the most common health issues in the workplace.
- Recruiting new staff is a long, expensive process, which is why to build a strong, healthy business that is capable of growth and constant improvement, you need to retain staff specially the top talent you've spent years nurturing.
(<https://www.naturalhr.com>, Losing staff? Here's 8 ways to retain your best people, 2021).
- Without a PMI, most decisions are based not on the value of the idea itself but on your emotions at that time. With a PMI, you decide whether or not you like the idea after you have explored it instead of before. (YouTube, Plus Minus Interesting 2020)

References

- Problem Solving and Decision Making (BMSW4004_LON) (online)
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXnBvcuzAOE> [Accessed 20 December 2021]
- Plus Minus Interesting (online)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPOPHKW7TRo> [Accessed 20 December 2021]
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Appendix

Questions to Paul

1. What are the extra jobs that you do now that you didn't do before?
2. Is there any scope to delegate some of Paul's work to someone else in the team?
3. How do we reduce your workload? - identify the repetitive, manual work Paul is doing and identify the scope for automation.
4. Find out from Paul where the efficiencies in the warehouse need to improve?
5. Make sure that Paul does not have any issues working with others/ managers.
6. How many days of holidays Paul has got left for this year? I would like Paul to take a week off (if possible) to give him some time off.
7. Do you think the merger could have contributed to this situation?