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INTRODUCTION

In February 2023 term, we had to study two modules, one is this one, of which is Developing Workplace Critical Thinking, and for the report, we needed to do two different tasks.

In task number one we must talk about an organization we worked in, or if we have not worked for one, we will need to talk about one we know about and use management theories and critical thinking when we talk about the organization.

In task number two, we must write a reflective journal about what we did and understood each week of this term.

TASK 1 Report

Background of Apple Company (According to Alexander Joe; 2014 & according to Steven Levy; 2023)

Apple was founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne. The first product they created was a computer, called the Apple I and it went on sale in July 1976. In 1977 they released the Apple II; it was almost totally invented by Wozniak alone. Apple II had some integrated features: a keyboard, a plastic case, and eight internal expansion slots. During that time, it was the only computer with a spreadsheet program called VisiCalc and it is often said to be the first killer app.

During the first five years, the company had revenues doubling almost every four months.

Apple made a controversial move when they started producing consumer products (like CD players, digital cameras, and video consoles) and because of this move, their market shares and stock value declined drastically. In 2001, when Apple released its Mac OS X and the iPod (a portable device to listen to music), they started to make very important profits. Apple with the iPod sold over a hundred million units in under

six years. In 2007, Apple introduced their first smartphone, the iPhone, and with it, it entered the market of smartphones. After their first iPhone, they started to release the iPhones every year until today in 2023 with their iPhone 14 line-up. (According to Alexander Joe; 2014)

In 1998, they released the iMac computer, it was a more affordable type of computer.

In 2010, they released their iPad. The iPad is a device with a size between a smartphone and a laptop computer. After their first iPad, they made a mini version called iPad Mini, which came out in 2012.

In 2015, they released a larger version of the iPad called iPad Pro. It is a larger version of the iPad, and it is intended for business use.

In 2015, they released their first smartwatch called Apple Watch.

In 2016, they released their first wireless earphones called AirPods. They became a top seller in that market because it was one of the first true wireless earphones that did not cover all your ears.

In 2020, Apple introduced its microprocessor, called M1, they first released it for their MacBook computers which had previously the Intel processor chips. (According to Steven Levy; 2023)

How Covid Affected Apple

(According to Lucas Downey; 2021) During the pandemic, Apple delayed the staff's return to the office until 2022, because they wanted to have all their staff member safe with no risk. Covid affected the economy of many businesses (restaurants, clothing shops, and many others). But tech companies like Apple benefitted from it with the services they offer (Apple Music, iCloud, Apple TV, and all their other services).

Difference Between Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes

What is a Belief? (According to Immigration Advisers Authority; 2018)

A belief is an idea that a person holds as being true. Belief can come from different sources, like:

- Own experience or experiments
- The acceptance of a religion
- What other people say

What is a Personal Value? (According to Immigration Advisers Authority; 2018)

When a person's commitment to a belief grows it will develop into a value, because a person sees it as an important thing. Beliefs can be categorized into different types of values (family, religion, and many others).

What is an Attitude?

Attitudes are the mental dispositions people have towards others and the current circumstances before making decisions that result in behaviour. People form their attitudes from values and beliefs.

Apple Core Values (According to MSA; 2019)

Apple Core Values are six:

- **Accessibility:** Apple has ensured that its products work well for people with and without physical limitations.
- **Education:** since 2014, through a partnership with ConnectED, Apple has provided their devices across schools in the United States. Until now they still work together teaching them how to use their devices for learning experiences and everyday life.
- **Environment:** They focus on taking care of the environment just like when they come up with their new products. They want to create products that are safe for the people and for the environment.

- **Inclusion and Diversity:** Apple has employees from everywhere in the world. Not only that, but they are also making progress by bringing people different ways of thinking, beliefs, and experiences.
- **Privacy:** Every device in the world contains sensitive user information, Apple believes that privacy is a fundamental human right. That is why they let you choose with whom you want to share your sensitive information.
- **Supplier Responsibility:** Apple thinks that its users always come first, which is why they hold its suppliers and partners responsible for creating quality products. They also hold their suppliers accountable for making sure that their employees work in a safe place and can work without any type of discrimination.

The Human Relations Behind Apple

According to Patrick Ward, Human Relations Approach originated between 1924 and 1932 in Cicero, Illinois. It has four different categories that influence employee motivation:

- Treat Employees Well as Individuals
- Promote Positive Group Values and Relationship
- Ensure Effective Management and Supervision
- Establish Effective Organisational Conditions

According to Reagan Wheeler, Apple does not train their employees providing them a training schedule to follow. So, they do not have created a program to train their employees. They want their employees to develop their skills independently. Apple encourages its employees to do this by rewarding them financially. Apple wants every employee to have agility because they are always going from one project to another one and must be able to focus rapidly on the new project they started to do. Apple has many teams working on one project at a time. Every team is competing to win with their idea or product. They do two meetings:

- The first one they talk about the ideas they have in general for the project.
- The second one is for everyone to say if they got new ideas or have to say anything about the project.

This training aspect of Apple works well with their employees because it pushes them to do the best, they can do by themselves. It also helps them to bring out their creativity.

Apple SWOT Analysis (According to Daniel Pereira; 2023)

Apple's Strengths

- **Strong Brand Recognition and Loyal Customers:** Apple is one of the most known brands in the world. Their loyal customers continue to grow every day with their products. Because for some of them when they start using an Apple product, they tend to stick with it.
- **Innovative Products and Services:** Apple is known for creating innovative products and services that often revolutionize industries. One example could be when they realized their first iPod, with it they started the era of digital music players. Another example could be the iPhone, it was one of the first smartphones to allow access to internet streaming services.
- **Financial Strength and Profitability:** In 2018, Apple had a market capitalization worth over one trillion dollars, making it the first American technology company to reach it. And since then, their annual net income has exceeded 50 billion dollars. This means that they have a solid network with their partners, suppliers, and customers.

Apple's Weaknesses

- **Expensive Products and Services:** Apple offers high-quality products and services, but they are more expensive than its competitors. That means that not many people will have the money to purchase their products or to use their services.
- **Lack of New Innovative Products in Recent Years:** In those last years, Apple has not introduced innovative products as they did a few years ago with the iPhone X. Their recent releases tended to have the same features as the previous models.
- **High Degree of Litigation:** The highly competitive environment in which Apple operates often leads them into legal battles against other tech companies (like Qualcomm Inc.).
- **Complacency in the Face of Growing Competition:** If Apple wishes to continue dominating the industry, they need to invest more in research and development. Because other competitors like Samsung, Oppo, and Xiaomi are investing to create new products like foldable smartphones.
- **Limited Customization Options:** While this may seem like a good thing for most users, people that like customizing their devices may find themselves restricted and cannot customize every aspect of their device.
- **Dependence on iPhone:** In Q4 2020, over two-thirds of Apple's revenue was generated by the iPhone. That means that Apple's finances could suffer if they fail to sustain strong sales on the iPhones.
- **Closed Ecosystem:** Apple's reliance on a proprietary operating system and closed ecosystem have been both a strength and a weakness. Because it restricts compatibility with other devices. So, if someone wants to make the most of their device, they need to purchase Apple products.

Apple's Opportunities

- **Leveraging its Strong Image to Enter Emerging Markets:** Apple is working to expand its markets worldwide and enter new ones. This happens because they have a high reputation worldwide thanks to their customer base and highly successful marketing campaigns.
- **Incorporation of New Products like Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Devices:** Rumours are saying that Apple is working on VR and AR. Both these technologies could help Apple grow even more because these two new technologies will be implemented everywhere soon.
- **Increased Focus on Content Streaming Services:** Recently, Apple started to focus more on its streaming service (Apple Music; iCloud; Apple TV; Apple Podcasts). They started focusing more on streaming services because the customers started using this type of service more. This is why Apple is focusing on creating or improving its services, so customers use them and rely on them instead of using other platforms.
- **Utilize Artificial Intelligence:** Apple already has its own AI platform called Siri. The improvement Apple can make is to let Siri understand the needs and the intentions of the user better.
- **Developing Innovative Technologies and Products to Stay Ahead of Competitors:** If Apple wants to stay on top of its competitors, they need to continue investing heavily to develop new technologies, research, and development.

Apple's Threats

- **Battle Against Counterfeit Products:** Unfortunately, counterfeit products are getting better every day. This is not good for Apple, because it means that people that are buying a product with a lower price think that they are buying an Apple product. Because now even counterfeit products use the same serial numbers Apple offers, it is not easy to recognize a fake product from an original one. Customers may end up having a bad experience using one of these products thinking that Apple products' quality is bad. They are fighting against this problem, but counterfeiters are getting better every day.

- **Increasing Competition in their Various Industries:** Apple has competition from a lot of different companies. From Samsung, Google, Xiaomi, and any other company that produces smartphones with the Android operating system. Spotify, Tidal, and Soundcloud for music in streaming. HP, Dell, or Acer for their computers. They need to be careful because those companies may offer the same thing or even better than what Apple offers for a lower price.
- **The threat of Reduction in Demand Due to Economic Downturns:** Due to the inflation rates, job losses, and pay cuts everyone is experiencing these times, Apple will probably face reduced demand for their products due to the high price they have.
- **Backdoor Mechanism:** The Government is trying to force Apple to give them access to the users' private information through a backdoor mechanism. Apple refused to provide this backdoor mechanism. By not providing it they seek to ensure that customers' sensitive data remain secure against prying eyes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Apple for their Human Approach has training that might work well for employees that maybe had some previous experience doing this job for another company or an extroverted person. but for someone who does not have experience in this field of work, it could be hard, especially if he/she is an introverted person. I would suggest offering at least some training to overcome the emotions that an introverted person tends to have (for example shyness).

For the SWOT Analysis part, for the weaknesses and the threats, I would like them to make their devices compatible with other devices that are not from Apple (for example the iPhone with a computer running Windows, it works but it is not easy as connecting an Android device to a Windows computer or an iPhone with a MacBook). And because the iPhone is their most purchased product, focus on doing more innovation without augmenting the price of it too much. Because in most countries their product price has increased, even those released last year had a price change (for example the iPads that came out last year, or even the MacBooks). This is not good if they want to gain new customers or keep the old ones because, in most countries of the world, the price has increased too much due to currency fluctuation (for example, an iPad 9th generation, costs more than £50 more than last year, and it is the same product). For the backdoor mechanism, I hope that Apple continues to protect its user's data and to not give them to anyone. This is something that other companies should do because in this way they will receive in exchange more loyal, happier, and satisfied customers. For the counterfeit products it is becoming harder because they started to put the same chips Apple use on their AirPods and other devices. I would recommend them to check not only the stores that you can find online but even the small phone shops. Because maybe even the seller in a small phone shop doesn't know that he bought a fake product (and maybe they paid for it the same price as the original one).

CONCLUSIONS

In this report, I talked about the background of Apple, how they reacted during the Covid 19 Pandemic, Apple Core Values, The Human Relations Behind Apple, and Apple's Swot Analysis. I also talked about my recommendations for Apple based on my report.

TASK 2 REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

In this reflective journal, we are going to see what we learned in Developing Workplace Critical Thinking (DWC) from week 1 to week 10 and analyse each week one by one.

Week 1

In week 1, the teacher introduced us to the module that we are going to study this term.

The teacher talked about:

- The module descriptor and assessment descriptor of this module.
- Discussed the workplace context and change.
- Discussed Management Theories.
- Discussed Logic (reasoning).

In the Module Descriptor and Assessment Descriptor, the teacher explained to us what we need to do for task one of this module and how to do it.

In Workplace Context and Change, the teacher explained to us the beliefs, attitudes, values, and emotions that a company or an employee can have in the workplace.

In Management Theories, the teacher explained to us how management theories are implemented to help increase organizational productivity and service quality.

According to Indeed Editorial Team, management theories are sets of rules meant to manage an organization, business, or any other group. Even if these theories can vary in how you apply them, real-world leaders apply concepts from different theories simultaneously.

The benefits of using theories (according to the Indeed Editorial Team) can be:

- Increased Productivity
- Simplified decision-making
- Increased Collaboration
- Increased Objectivity

There are five types of important theories regarding management to enhance productivity. These theories are:

- Scientific Management Theory
- Bureaucratic Management Theory
- Human Relations Theory
- System Management Theory
- Contingency Management Theory

In Logic, the teacher explained to us that there are two main logic reasoning types, deductive and inductive reasoning.

The main difference (According to Raimo Streefkerk) between them is that inductive reasoning aims at developing a theory, while deductive reasoning aims at testing an existing theory.

Inductive reasoning consists of three stages:

- Observation.
- Observe a Pattern.
- Develop a theory or general conclusion.

A conclusion drawn based on an inductive method can never be proven, but it can be invalidated.

Deductive Reasoning consists of five stages:

Start with an existing Theory (and create a problem statement).

Formulate a falsifiable hypothesis based on existing theory.

Collect data to test the hypothesis.

Analyse and test the data.

Decide whether you can reject the null hypothesis.

The conclusion of deductive reasoning can only be true if all the premises set in the inductive study are true and the terms are clear.

Week 2

In week 2, the teacher did a recap of what we have done in week 1 and then talked about some important terms, critical thinking, and some exercise about critical thinking.

The important terms are:

- **Beliefs:** a feeling that someone can have, even if it is an unproven belief.
- **Values:** are a measure of the worth we attach to something or the way we live our lives.
- **Attitudes:** is the way people express their beliefs and values, through words and behaviours.
- **Emotions:** emotions can be intense, and you have them for a short time.

Critical Thinking (According to Eoghan Ryan) is the ability to effectively analyse information and form a judgment. It is important for making judgments about sources of information and forming your arguments. It can help you to emphasize a rational, objective, and self-aware approach that can help you to identify credible sources and strengthen your conclusions.

The teacher, after explaining to us the important terms and Critical Thinking made us do some exercises and case studies.

Week 3

In week 3, the teacher did a recap of what we have done in week 2 and then talked about the importance of Critical Thinking; Management Theory: Human Relations Approach, and some exercises.

The Importance of Critical Thinking

According to CircleDNA Critical Thinking is important in our society because it is a universal concept that applies to anyone, regardless of race, culture, economic status, or religion. Our societies and economies need it to solve problems effectively and efficiently. Critical Thinking is a skill that helps you to develop with:

- Analyse information.
- Solve problems with creative solutions.
- Make a systematic plan.
- Think outside of the box.

Management Theory: Human Relations Approach

According to Patrick Ward, it originated between 1924 and 1932 during experiments conducted at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Cicero, Illinois.

During the Hawthorne Experiments, researchers discovered that employee motivation is influenced by many factors. Four different categories of actors influence employee motivation:

- **Treat Employees Well as Individuals:** every person's motivation is different from the others. It can be their personality, experience, and many other factors. One of the most important principles of Human Relations is for organizations to consider individual factors and how they can be influenced to increase motivation.
- **Promote Positive Group Values and Relationships:** One of the most important principles of Human Relations in an organization is to promote positive group values and relationships so that social pressure will produce teamwork and positive employee attitudes and behaviours.
- **Ensure Effective Management and Supervision:** besides individual and group influences, managers and supervisors also impact employee motivation. Another important principle is that an organization must ensure that managers and supervisors:
 1. Understand psychology (including motivation and behaviour).
 2. Are sensitive to employees' individual and group needs.
 3. Communicate Effectively.
 4. Are supportive and motivating.
 5. Empower employees and allow for some degree of autonomy/control.
- **Establish Effective Organisational Conditions:** as we saw in the three previous categories, we understand that the organization is at the centre of Human Relations. A key principle of Human Relations is that the organization must create working conditions that allow increased individual and group attitudes toward work. An organization must ensure that:
 1. Physical working conditions are safe and favourable to employee performance.
 2. Social and any other related working conditions promote employee productivity.
 3. Employee compensation and benefits are appropriate and effective.
 4. Managers and Supervisors have and use appropriate leadership skills.
 5. Input from managers, supervisors, and employees is incorporated into the organization's policies and procedures.
 6. All parties' interests are aligned.

After the teacher showed and explained to us Critical Thinking and Human Relations, we did an exercise related to it.

Week 4

In week 4, the teacher talked about:

Skills people can develop in the changing business environment:

There are many essential skills a person can develop in this always-changing business environment, and here are six skills that any person will need to develop (According to Kristen Hicks; Zendesk Blog; 2020):

- **Communication:** effective communication skills are very important; communication is the key to clarifying what you want the change to accomplish.
- **Active Listening:** good communication is a two-way process; you need to devote as much time to listening to employees as you do to giving them updates.
- **Research:** knowing how to do research can go a long way to ensure you develop a more effective strategy for meeting your goals.
- **Strategic Thinking:** it is the skill that helps you to reach a goal by creating a list with steps to follow. To turn good ideas into reality you will need strategic thinking.
- **Leadership:** in leadership, you need to learn how to motivate your team to care about the change and how they are properly equipped to succeed in their role.
- **Measurement and Analysis:** it is the ability to measure progress and make sure the change accomplishes the results.

How can people learn to think creatively and critically? How creative and critical thinking can help people make better business decisions?

Creative thinking is often contrasted with critical thinking. Thinking Creatively often requires unconventional solutions, new possibilities, and many other things.

Critical Thinking is focused on a more logical and rational way to find solutions. Sometimes, a combination of the two can be helpful to find solutions. (According to Fran; 2021)

What are the logical stages of problem-solving and decision-making?

The logical stages are:

- Analyse the problem with critical thinking.
- Identify all the possible alternatives.
- Choose the best alternative.

The Scientific Management Theory: (According to Villanova University; 2022) It was invented in the 20th century by Frederick Winslow Taylor. It is a method that uses scientific methods to assess work processes. It consists of three steps: observation, experimentation, and analysis. When implemented properly, it improves productivity. There are four principles of Taylorism:

- Choose methods based on science.
- Assign workers to tasks based on their natural skillset.
- Monitor your workers' performance.
- Divide workloads appropriately between workers and managers.

Week 5

In week 5, the teacher talked about different conceptual tools to enhance critical thinking, which is:

Six Bono Thinking Hats: (According to Jacob and after being reviewed and approved by the psychologist Valeria Saber; 2021) the six thinking hats technique, developed by Edward de Bono in the 1980s, is a communicating and reasoning tool. This technique is helpful for better decision-making strategies, and it is composed of six different hats:

- **The White Hat:** will help you to see things from an objective and neutral, point of view. It looks for concrete facts and does not make judgments.
- **The Black Hat:** will help you to see things from a logically negative perspective and see the negative side of things and not fall into the same mistakes that you made in the past.
- **The Green Hat:** it demands originality, creativity, and making possible the impossible, it helps you take other roads or alternatives.
- **The Red Hat:** is passionate and emotional, so it is the opposite of the white hat because you put emotions when you use it.
- **The Yellow Hat:** it is the opposite of the black hat, it will show you things in a logical positive way, but you need to be careful to not put your emotions in the way because then it will be the red hat.
- **The Blue Hat:** it is always there, and it controls everything, it transmits calm, balance, and self-control. You use it at the beginning to decide which hat you are going to put on and in which order, and then you use it at the end to decide.

The teacher asked us if we ever had an experience using this model and everyone who had it talked about it.

Before Bureaucratic Management: before bureaucracy, people were not treated equally. Only the king and people near the king had the power to control everything.

The function of Public Activities: it helps you resolve problems that cannot be resolved by yourself with the help of the law and the government.

Bureaucracy Management by Max Weber: (According to Sean Peek; 2020) Weber believed that bureaucracy was the most efficient way to set up and manage an organization and necessary for larger companies to achieve maximum productivity with many employees and tasks. In an ideal bureaucracy, everyone is treated equally, and work responsibilities are divided by each team's areas of expertise. It is based on two fundamental principles:

- Rule-Based Power
- Hierarchy

Appraisal of Bureaucratic Management: it has its advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages: Checks and Balance (rule of law and transparency)

Disadvantages are:

- It leads to inflexibility (no adaption to external influences).
- Lack of customer orientation (customer needs get neglected).

Week 6

In week 6, the teacher talked about:

Decision-Making and Critical Thinking:

Here in this part, the teacher explained to us that with good critical thinking will come good decision-making.

The Contingency Management Theory: (According to Sujun; 2022) was developed in 1960 by Tom Burns and GM Stalker in the UK and Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch in the USA. This theory holds the belief that the best management practice is situational. No principle fits every situation.

Week 7

In week 7, the teacher talked about:

Critical Thinking Summarized: basically, the teacher did to us a recap of what we did about critical thinking in the last weeks and asked us what we understand when we hear the words Critical Thinking.

Systems Theory: (According to Yes, therapy helps; n.d.) This theory was proposed in 1928 by the German biologist Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy and this theory could be shared by many different sciences. Since it was created it has been applied to many social sciences (like mathematics, economics, and many others). The concept of the system according to him, can be defined as a set of elements that interact with each other (like humans, animals, neurons, and many other things).

The characteristics of system types are four:

- **System, Supersystem, and Subsystem:** these three systems are dependent on each other, and they are divided by their level of complexity.
- **Reals, Ideals, and Models:** the real systems are the ones that exist physically and can be observed; the ideals come from the thoughts and language of a person; the model represents real and ideal.

- **Natural, Artificial, and Compound:** when a system depends only on nature (like the human body), it is called a natural system. Artificial is the consequence of human actions. Compound systems combine natural and artificial.
- **Closed and Open:** the closed system is a system with minimal feedback and is highly structured. Open system exchange information with the surrounding environment, adapting to it and influencing it. The open systems are more relevant to social sciences and are composed of 8 properties:
- **Totality or Synergy:** according to this principle, the interaction between the elements generates a different result.
- **Circular Causality or Reciprocal Codetermination:** the action of different members of a system influences the rest, so their behaviour of them is not independent of the system.
- **Equifinality:** refers to the fact that several systems can reach the same final stage even if their initial conditions are different.
- **Equicausality:** refers to the fact that systems can start with the same conditions but end up with different development.
- **Relationship Rule:** determines the interactions between the components and which ones should be avoided.
- **Limitation of Stochastic Process:** this is when the system tends to develop certain sequences of operation and interaction between members because when it happens, different responses to those that are already consolidated decrease.
- **Hierarchical Ordering:** the principles of hierarchical ordering apply to members of the system and certain behaviours. This means that some elements weigh more than others.
- **Teleology:** the teleological process occurs from the opposition of homeostatic forces and morphogenetics.

Week 8

In week 8, the teacher talked about:

Managing Innovation and Creativity Changing Work/Business Environment:

What is innovation? (According to McKinsey & Company; 2022)

Innovation is the systematic practice of developing and marketing products and services for customers.

Some of the characteristics they need are:

- Good teamwork
- Employees Creativity
- Employees Motivation

Week 9

In week 9, the teacher talked about:

The relation between beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviour: We already discussed it during week two of this term and they are all important in a workplace context and during our everyday life.

The relation between values and Sustainable Development and Future Proofing

What is Sustainable Development? (According to Monash University; 2022)

It is defined as development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Development and Future Proofing are important because we need to care about development and profit, not only about one of them.

Week 10

In week 10, the teacher revised what we studied during this term with him and explained to us what we did not understand about the assignment, theories, and critical thinking.

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