

PADELLA

RESTAURANT

Problem Solving

And

Decision Making

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Introduction

This report will study 3 different complex problems at my workplace, a restaurant business called "PADELLA". Right now, I am a supervisor there, part of the junior management team. The restaurant is focus on cooking fresh pasta with seasonal products. Is in the heart of London, at the entrance of the famous and local Borough Market, in front of the London Bridge underground station. I will be showing problems after the Covid-19 hit the country, and which problem-solving tools and techniques the business have applied. The body of the report will be supported with solutions to those complex problems and an evaluation of the best alternatives in each case. The end of the report will show the implementation, monitoring and control of the solutions applied, to finish with a brief conclusion.

Identification of Complex Problems

First, I am going to introduce a little bit of "PADELLA" restaurant as a business in order to understand its problems. The business employs 44 people, with sales every week of +£50K average and 450 customers a day waiting for their pasta dish to be served. The restaurant has 2 floors, the first floor is the ground floor where they can accommodate 36 people and the second floor is downstairs what accommodates 39 people making a total of 75 customers with the restaurant full seating. To picture you the space room all this people manage to fit, you need to imagine each floor is the size of a house ground floor, and that is without counting the staff working during each shift. Everything was working smooth for the business until last year Covid-19 virus started to shatter the world as we knew it, bringing changes to the global economy, the social and cultural life, and also political decisions made to try to stop the pandemic virus. The World went into quarantine, businesses had to shut, people had to stay at home only aloud out when basics needs were required such as shopping. Employees who could work from home was recommended to do so, and the rest when into furlough or got fired.

"PADELLA" restaurant had to shut due the pandemic too, and they sent all employees into furlough until further notice. Quarantine was fun at the beginning, not having to wakeup everyday early to go to work, or to deal with the angry customer who has been waiting in the queue for 3 hours to have a meal. It was 5 long months locked up at home, before the Government announced the reopening of some business by 4th of July. In order to reopen the establishments had to follow a new guideline of social distancing and health and safety policy. Once we reopened my workplace, not everyone was ready to be back on board as some went back home, out of the country and some left the company for good. The people who came back had lot of questions including myself as the business is not going to operate the same as before.

Now we were facing 3 major problems:

- 1- Sales in the company are down as we cannot fit the same number of customers as before in the building due new social distancing rules and health and safety policy.

- 2- Employees who returned at work are working long shifts because some staff did not come back from furlough or left the company.
- 3- Summer is gone now, and a long winter is coming ahead this year.

Problem solving tools and techniques

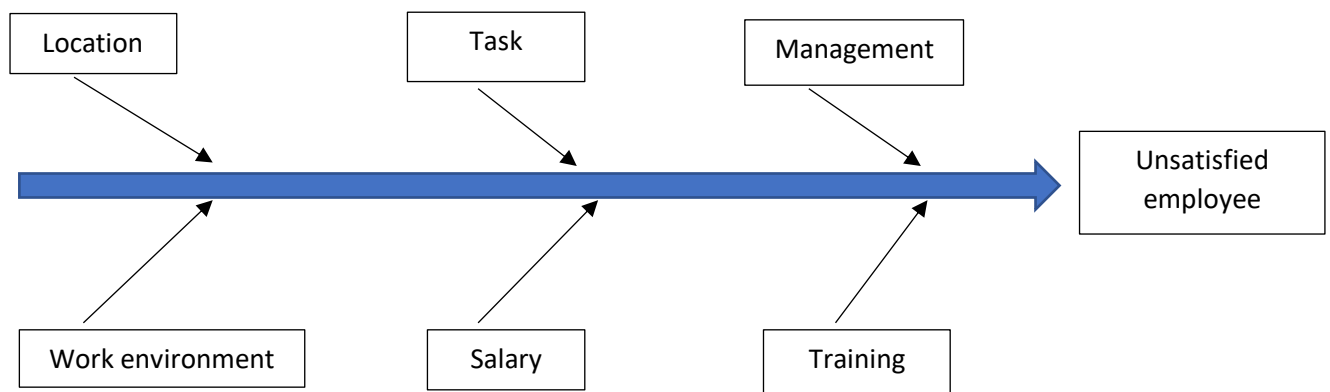
- 1- Sales in the company are down, as we cannot fit the same amount of customers as before in the building due new social distancing rules and health and safety policy.
- 2- Employees who returned at work are working long shifts because some staff did not come back from furlough or left the company.
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The first problem shows an important difference on weekly sales as the restaurant size is not big enough to fit all 75 customers without keeping social distance rules. A SWOT analysis will be conducted to help to find a solution.

Wisneski (2020) defines SWOT analysis as “a simple way to examine a firm’s current situation by accounting for a firm’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It provides a means to account for internal and external factors plus positive and negative factors confronting a firm, thereby providing a balanced perspective of strategic issues.”

STRENGTHS - Excellent location - Good reputation - Seasonal menu - Strong values and an ethical mission statement	WEAKNESS - Lack of staff - Small business space - Only dine in at the restaurant - Overcrowded
OPPORTUNITIES - Take away options for meals - New local suppliers - Opening of outside terrace - Join Eat Out To Help Out scheme (EOTH0)	THREATS - Covid 19 - Rise of price on the menu - Suppliers from outside the country

In the second problem we can observed unsatisfied staff due long hours shifts, affecting their performance at workplace. To see the cause-effect a fishbone diagram will help to identify the root of an unsatisfied employee.

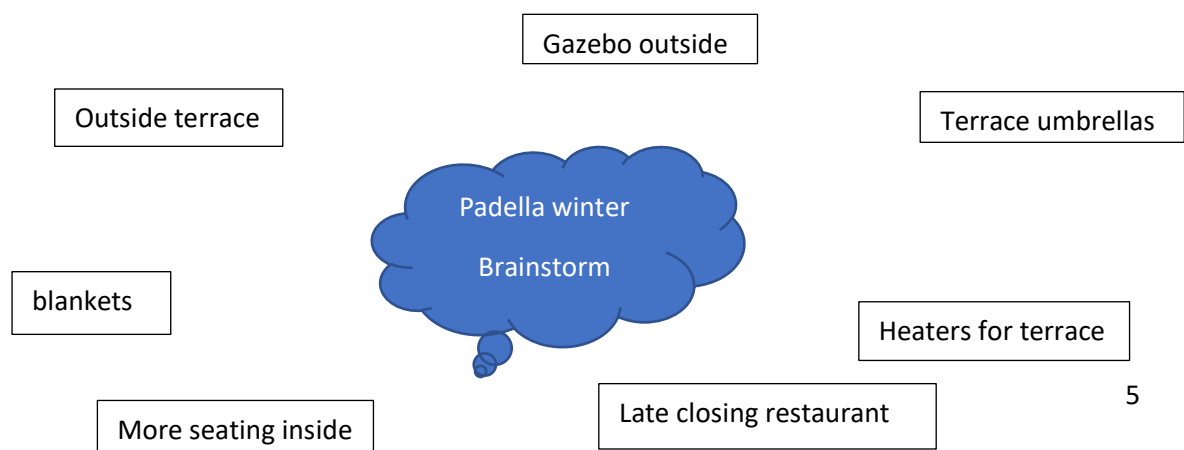


“Fishbone diagram, also called as ‘cause-and-effect’ diagram, is a tool used to identify the root cause of problems which represents the effect and the factors or causes influencing it. The tool is a template for brainstorming possible causes of an effect.” (Shinde, Ahirrao and Prasad, 2018).

The location of the business made of the restaurant a busy place, even after quarantine people just keep coming for a delicious and fresh pasta dish. As per the task, now the restaurant has more cleaning things to do, due new rules implanted by the Government in order to keep the doors open and tackle the Covid-19 virus. With the salary remaining the same and the hours been prolonged, staff are having trouble to keep up the same level of performance. New training calendar it has been provided but it is too long and complex for some staff to understand as English is not their first language, also as they are used to the old rules and regulations at the workplace. Management team is finding hard to motivate the staff to stick with the business as there is no rewards for the employees for their hard work. Referring to a work environment, staff is having stress problems after being quarantined at home for 5 months, distancing from people and suddenly having to come back to a busy environment place.

For the last problem we will see how customers numbers are narrow down and what are the measures and options available to tackle the long winter coming ahead. For this last problem I will use a brainstorming technique

“Brainstorming is often followed by a convergence activity where teams extract the most promising ideas on a useful level of detail from the brainstorming results”. Seeber, Isabella et al., (2018)



These are some of the ideas to help out during winter season as the restaurant is going to be facing a critical situation to keep up the sales for the cold season entering the month of September.

Solutions to the problems

To the first problem, to go up on sales, the restaurant is opening a new terrace space inside the market allowing more seats for customers while keeping social distance rules, a take away service is available for the customers who does not want to wait for a table inside the restaurant. Joining the EOTHO scheme to gain more customers during weekdays is a good strategy to put the sales up from Monday to Wednesday. Providing more training to the staff related to food and service style like taste the dishes, and notes of how the dish is made, wear a mask and visa protection during service to make sure customers and employees feel safe from the virus, training on service due Covid-19 new rules applied to hospitality.

The second problem on unsatisfied staff, we need to hire more people in order to give some rest to those who have been on the restaurant since reopening after quarantine, in order to do that we need to solve the first problem and as sales go up the budget for labour will increase allowing the company the extra hands needed for shifts. Management team should make sure that the team feels comfortable at work, giving rewards such as providing drinks after work or a free meal in the restaurant for the staff.

The third and last problem, will be conditioned by the weather what is out of our control, but we can provide solutions as heaters for outside terrace seating and blankets of single use to be washed by the laundry company every day. If the weathers get cold or windy a setting of a big gazebo should be studied in order to keep the same number of tables and customers at warm with heaters inside. For the staff winter uniform should be provided such as jumper for the cold weather, right now the uniform is a white or grey t-shirt with the PADELLA logo on it.

Implementation, monitoring and Control

Problem 1

To implement a solution here, a previous investment on new tables and chairs should be made in order to open the outside terrace and increase the number of customers. Joining the EOTHO scheme proposed by the Government should help the restaurant to attract more customers during weekdays To monitor if the sales went up or not, a handover and a cash up report at the end of day should be done by management team and to keep a count of the covers is been done that day. Control all of these by emailing the report every night to all management team every day for the next 2 months and a managers meeting should be held

once a week to study and discuss the sales from previous week in order to move forward and to know if the solution is working.

Problem 2

The solution here would be followed by the success of the first problem on sales. Having the sales up, gives more room on a budget for labour, so the hiring of new people would be possible. New training scheme should help the new staff to be ready to join the team, what will decrease the hours for everyone allowing more rest and less stress. To monitor and control this solution, a staff meeting should be held at the end of the week for at least 3 months, to get a feedback from the employees on how is it going and what it can be done to improve the team performance, management team should take the feedback on board and discuss it later on the managers meeting.

Problem 3

Again, on this solution a previous investment on materials such as heaters for the outside terrace or jumpers for staff uniform must be done before to implement the solution. The way to monitor and control the solution here would be reflected on sales, customers reviews and on staff feedback. The solution here would last the whole cold season of the year.

Conclusion

The problems exposed in the report are with no precedents and new to the whole hospitality businesses. After this report, I realize how hard are the times after quarantine for everyone, including business, staff and customers. These are only three problems that most of the restaurant would be facing now, and the solutions implemented so far, it seems to be working for "PADELLA" Restaurant, our sales went up during last month, staff and managers meeting seems to work very good improving the work environment a lot. Still, we need to keep an eye on monitoring and controlling the solutions as this could change any time soon.

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