

Assessment Task 2 – Individual report

Problem Solving and Decision Making – BMSW4004

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Abstract

This report is based on a problem of an unsatisfied employee on his workplace, moreover, aims to investigate on which are the causes and finally find the most suitable solutions to solve the problem.

The report is structured in few parts. The first focuses on the problem identification. The second part consists of a descriptive analysis of which are its causes. As every problem, this one has its final solution as well. In fact, to analyse every solution, decision making techniques, as SWOT and PEST analysis will be used to reach a method of solving the employee's problem. Additionally, the founded results will be introduced into an action plan which will be communicated to all the stakeholders of the company. To assure that there is a peaceful work environment the action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the management of the company.

Therefore, this report by using an employee's problem will focus as well on the decision-making tools and problem solving.

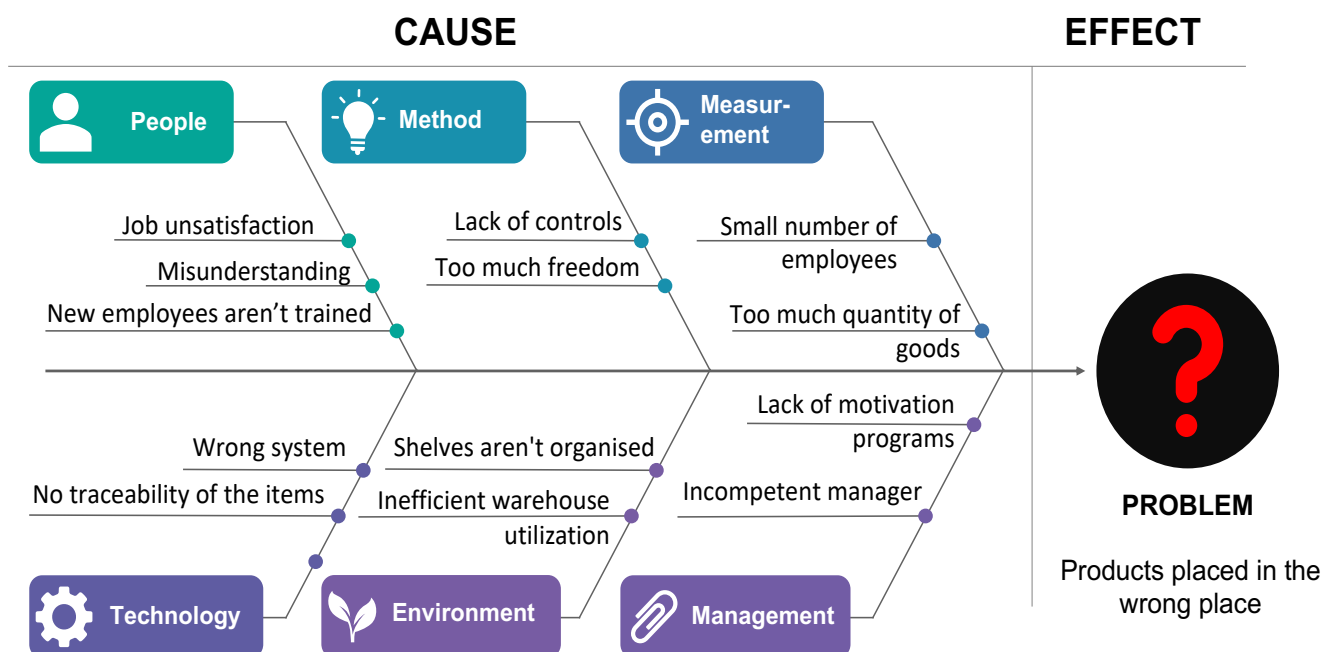
DEFINE A PROBLEM IN THE WORKPLACE INCLUDING ITS IMPACT

The main problem that the employee complained is about the disorganisation on the shelves in the warehouse she works. The main reason of this problem, she states is that her colleagues do not follow the rules and place the items in the wrong place, this affect her work because when she is picking, a cause this kind of errors, can pick the wrong item, as well this make her loose the time as she must replace the items where they should be. Furthermore, the employee presented her problem to the supervisors and managers, but unfortunately nothing has changed. Subsequently, all these factors mentioned before bought to an impact on the employee, in fact now is unsatisfied and consider her workplace unpleasant.

ANALYSE THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEM

In order to find a solution for the presented problem, it is necessary to find the underlying causes, the method that will used will be a fishbone analysis.

The fishbone diagram is a helpful tool known for its structure that resembles the skeleton of a fish. The process of problem solving involves identifying factors that can be related to an investigation problem, and then using that information to solve it. The fishbone diagram is also known as cause-and-effect diagram. (Dahlgard-Park, 2015)



The first that has to be considered is people category. In a warehouse there is a very big number of employees, consequently, the most common is misunderstanding, as humans, our communication is always imperfect, and the time we spend listening to a communication can influence the way we interpret it. (Howatt, 2019)

Beside the listening skills, misunderstanding may happen also because of the language barrier, which is an important point to consider.

Equally important is the presence of the training courses, the problem presented may arise because the employees need more experience offered by the company. Many workers would like more opportunities to learn new skills; this could be done by providing optional training for those workers who want to expand their knowledge. This could enrich employees and help warehouses run more efficiently. (Anon., 2020)

A big importance has the method of work, specifically in this case one of the reasons may be the fact that there are few controls and the employees, therefore, have too much freedom, it seems that because of this they do not work in an effective way putting thus, the products on the wrong shelves.

It should be noted as well, that if all items aren't verified, if they are in proper shelves/aisles and properly labelled also affects the problem in a small part. This means that there is no traceability of the products in the warehouse, and this issue may be due to the wrong system of the used devices.

Last two categories to consider are the environment and management. The first one is mostly about the organisation in such a big place with thousand or even more of products, therefore a very good organisation on the shelves and in all that work environment is vital.

In order to run a warehouse efficiently, a lot of organizational and management skills are required. (Ladel, 2022) Unfortunately, in this case the manager did only few meetings with the staff, but nothing has changed. These inconvenient situations may happen because maybe of the incompetence of the managers which can be at the beginning of their career, or just because the company do not care so much if the employees' thoughts and needs. Moreover, in management section, as a cause, can be included the lack of motivational programs as well. Employee motivation is crucial to business success. Without it, poor performance can occur, unsatisfactory

customer service can appear, revenue may decrease, and brand reputation would spiral downward. (PageUp, 2020)

A RANGE OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

Identifying and developing options is a crucial part of solving problems and making decisions, so brainstorming is a useful technique when it comes to identifying and developing options.

First Solution – Additional training

An order's profitability can be reduced by 13% by a single picking error. As a result, businesses are more motivated to reduce warehouse picking errors by implementing best practices. Therefore, the first solution is to provide more training for the new employees. Providing warehouse workers with the appropriate training should be more than simply teaching them how to perform the various tasks required to do their job successfully.

Second Solution – Track the items

It is widely believed that adopting the right technology can significantly improve warehouse profitability, as well as reduce order fulfilment errors.

Equally important to control the handling of goods in the warehouse can be the use of labels and barcodes, which are essential to reduce errors. Thanks to the labels, the aisles and shelves will be divided, thus assigning each product a precise indicated position.

Third Solution – ID for every employee

It is common for warehouse workers to make mistakes due to fatigue or stress. Identifying problems and tracking errors can be achieved through assigning IDs to the company's associates.

Fourth Solution – Daily checks

It is important that warehouse associates, for instance supervisors or also managers, conduct regular inventory checks so that incorrectly stored items can be discovered. The employees in this way will also feel that they have the responsibility when working, and this can influence them to be more careful when they are completing a task.

Fifth Solution – Extra space used in a useful way

Warehouse owners often complain about the lack of space in their warehouses as one of their greatest challenges. However, this is not due to the small size of the warehouses, but rather to the inefficient use of space within them. It is therefore necessary to find a layout which maximizes vertical space which will also allow employees enough space to move around.

Sixth Solution – Motivational program

An employee's performance will be enhanced when they have productive relationships with their managers, work in a positive environment, and receive a couple of extra incentives to stay motivated.

Related to the main problem, a solution may also be to arrange a one-on-one meeting between managers and the staff, is a good way to ensure issues can be addressed before they become into major problems.

EVALUATE SOLUTIONS TO IDENTIFY THE MOST APPROPRIATE OPTIONS

A problem requires critical thinking which means to generate new ideas, so the solutions. When the more solutions are founded, it is necessary to make a decision and the process usually involves choosing between several options. The last step is problem solving, hence, is about to have a final choice and solve the problem. (Adair, 2019) The next paragraph will include the SWOT and PEST analysis of two solutions.

SWOT analysis – ADDITIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

In order to facilitate the decision-making process, a SWOT analysis can be used as a tool that takes into account all the important information. This will help to clarify all the criteria that need to be considered in choosing a solution. It can be one of the efficient methods of making decisions. (Hatami-Marbini, 2013)

- Strengths that will derive from training programmes for employees mainly, will be the improvements of the skills, acquire of more knowledge and therefore employees will have a better understanding of their work.

- Weaknesses that need to be considered are first resources, software used to work are not easy to explain and the last one, employees may not be interested and so, do not attend the course.
- Among the opportunities, is the fact that employees will discover an effective way of working together because of the better relationship that they will create.
- Threats as well are important, the most important are the obstacles that the company may occur, for instance the change of circumstances or the company may face problems related to the place where to carry out the trainings.

PEST analysis – NEW SOFTWARE OR DEVICES

PESTEL, this acronym refers to a tool used to identify the external forces affecting an organization. (Oxford College of Marketing, n.d.)

To find out if this solution is a good idea to adopt in the company, PESTEL analysis will be used and political, economic, social, and technological factors will be considered.

- By adopting new devices and software, as a political factor is important to consider the changes of government regulations and, that new contracts must be developed with the organisations which will provide the machinery.
- Changes will happen in the economic environment, in fact company profit may be affected. Additionally, by the time the devices price can increase and as a result this can affect the company as well.
- Social effects can happen because of the new employees which will be hired, so the growth rate of the new employees will make the company provide to them new devices.
- The last factor to consider is technological, it is necessary to consider the impact of the new machinery on the employees and the company. And, is vital to consider that the new employees may have difficulty in using the devices, so lack of knowledge affects as well.

ACTION PLAN, MONITORING AND REVIEW TECHNIQUES

An action plan is a document that lists the action steps needed to achieve the goals and objectives, in this report the action plan will use the founded solutions, for a period, to solve the employee's problem.

The reason for this action plan is the employee's problem, thus, wrong products on the wrong shelves and for this she cannot work effectively. The previous disciplinary actions were to announce the manager and, she asked kindly her colleagues to pay more attention when working, both actions were unsuccessful as the problem have not been solved.

Consequently, new solutions will be implemented. The three best solutions for this problem, therefore, are more training program for the employees, daily check by supervisors to make sure that the rules are followed and finally, track the items by using labels or barcodes and as well, follow the activity of each worker by giving to each one an ID number.

As a result, if the solutions will be well used on the workplace will not happen anymore mistakes and the warehouse will be very organised. This action plan must be followed for three months and every week a person in charge has to verify if the plan is respected.

STAKEHOLDER TEMPLATE

STAKEHOLDERS DETAILS		STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATION			
STAKEHOLDER TYPE	JOB TITLE	INFLUENCE IN COMPANY	LEVEL OF SUPPORT	CHANNEL	RESPONSABILITY
Team Member	Warehouse assistant	HIGH	HIGH	-Meetings -121 reviews	Participate at the trainings
Department Head	Stocker	HIGH	HIGH	-Meetings -121 reviews	Organise better the space in warehouse
Supervisor	Distribution supervisor	HIGH	MID	-Personal meetings -Email notifications	Daily checks and support the employees

When in a company are applied new rules or changes, it is necessary to inform the stakeholders regarding the business. Stakeholders are any individuals or groups whose interests are affected positively or negatively by a business. It is possible for them to be internal or external.

In the table below is represented the stakeholder's communication plan, furthermore, in this case the stakeholders are all internal. All the warehouse assistants, stockers, and supervisor, have a big influence in the company and these new solutions regard them as well. The used channel to communicate the changes are meetings, 121 review every month and finally personal meeting and email notifications for the supervisors. Each of them has responsibilities that will be communicated through the decided channels.

CONCLUSION

To make a good decision especially when it is about big companies or related to many people, it is essential to follow all the steps enumerated in this report. Subsequently, all the solutions to the problem will be much easier to identify and the action plan to follow, will be clearer to understand. Finally, having all the important points in clear the communication plan for the stakeholders even if they will be external, any misunderstanding cannot happen.

REFLECTION ON THE PRESENTATION IN CLASS

Reflecting on our actions it is, in my opinion, one of the best methods to learn from our mistakes. For this reason, by using Gibbs' reflective model, I will analyse my presentation in class.

Saturday 20th of August, our class presented the assessment task 1 of the module Problem Solving and Decision Making. While each one was presenting all the class and the lecturer, listened by after gave us feedback.

Starting with my emotions and feelings before presenting I can surely say that I was nervous, but anyway I wanted to give the best of myself by also demonstrating my knowledge about the topics that we learned. Nevertheless, I was very confident with the information I had to speak about, I was worried about my performance in front of the class, as I have to improve my public speaking skills. Moreover, I knew that the PESTEL analysis did not contain all the necessary and related to the solution points.

As a general evaluation and analysis of the presentation I was agree with the lecturer about the social factor of the PEST analysis, which is not related to the solution proposed. Overall, this was a point to improve, undoubtedly, I tried to research and also, I applied the critical thinking to find out more factors to include. Personally, at the end I was satisfied with how I presented the problem and the steps to solve it. During the presentation, I was confident because I know that one of my strengths is the presentation skills, however as mentioned before, I have to overcome the fear of speak in public. Along with this, I tried to approach this presentation very professionally, by also using the body language. On the other hand, I observed that I have to improve the eye contact with the interlocutor.

All things considered, the negatives and positives points are clear thus, an action plan or SMART targets can be implemented. Thanks to the targets, by applying deadlines as well, I will improve my weaknesses and the next time when I will have a similar presentation will be assured that I will not repeat anymore these mistakes. Hence, the first target will be to improve eye contact, this can be done by only repeating in a mirror and trying to do not move the eyes from myself. And the next target is to improve public speaking skills, by trying to speak more in class, do not be afraid of say something wrong and be also active in more student projects, and not only, where I can express myself and my thoughts.

In conclusion, I can say that I am very happy because of this presentation I have discovered also new abilities and a new weakness point. I hope that following the targets will help me to be the best of myself to the next assessment. Additionally, I can definitely say that thanks to this module, I acquired new skills and techniques when is about to solve a problem and also knowledge.

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APPENDIX A – POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Assessment Component 2

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Module Code: BMSW4004_LON

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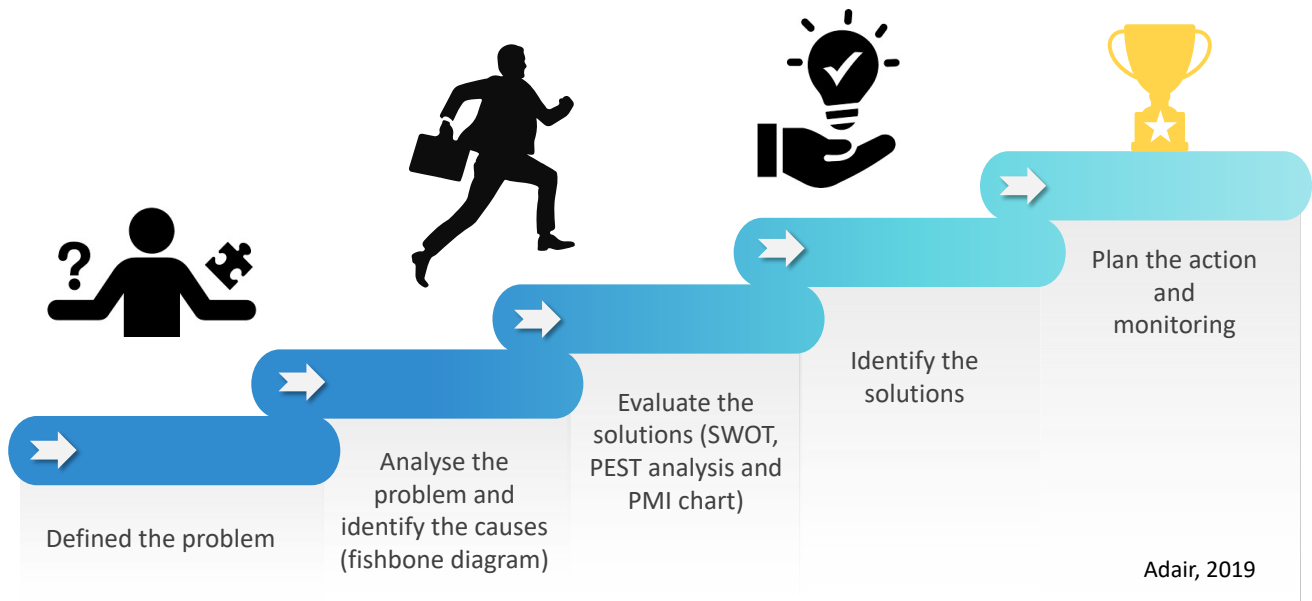


PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

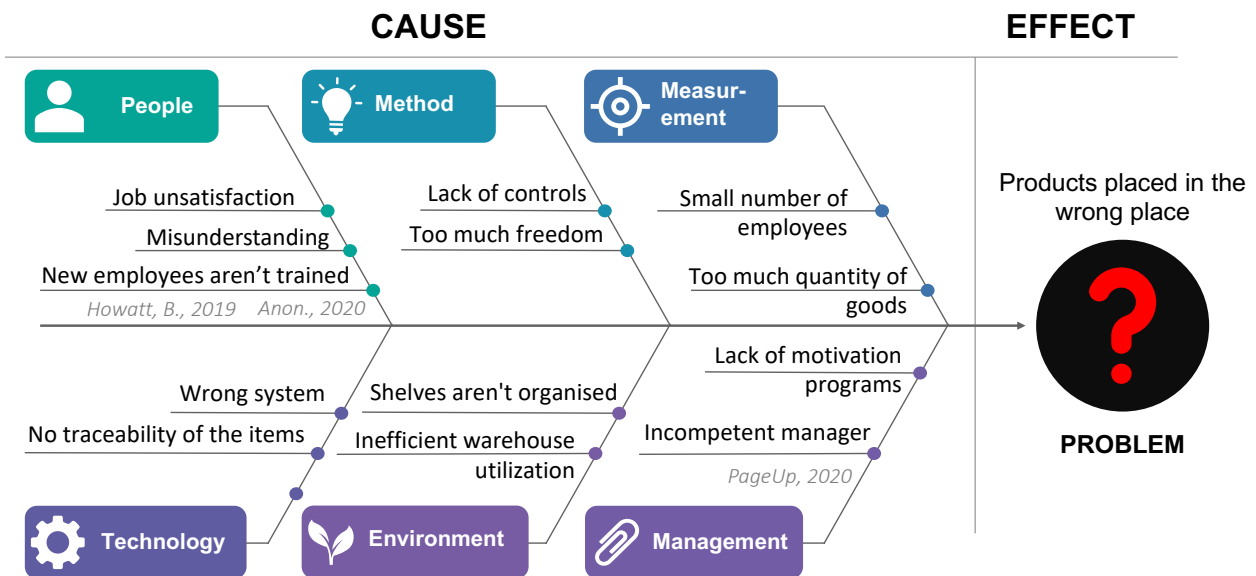
- ✓ Products are not stocked correctly
- ✓ Waste of time of the employee
- ✓ Colleagues do not follow the rules or did not understand their task
- ✓ The manager was warned but nothing has changed



PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING



CAUSE AND EFFECT DIAGRAM

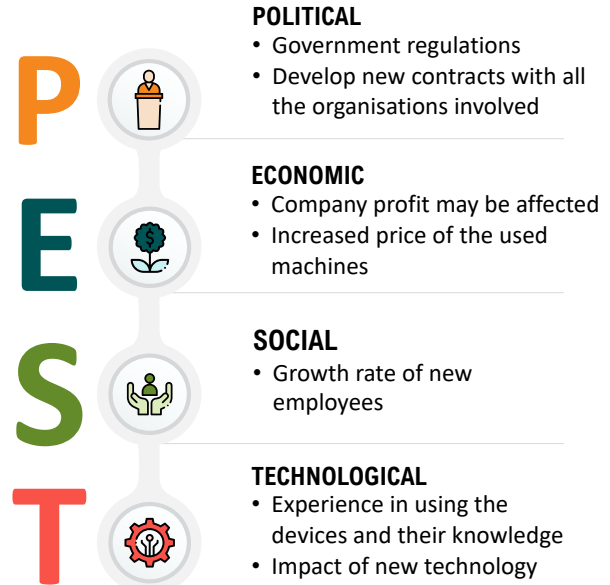


SWOT and PEST Analysis

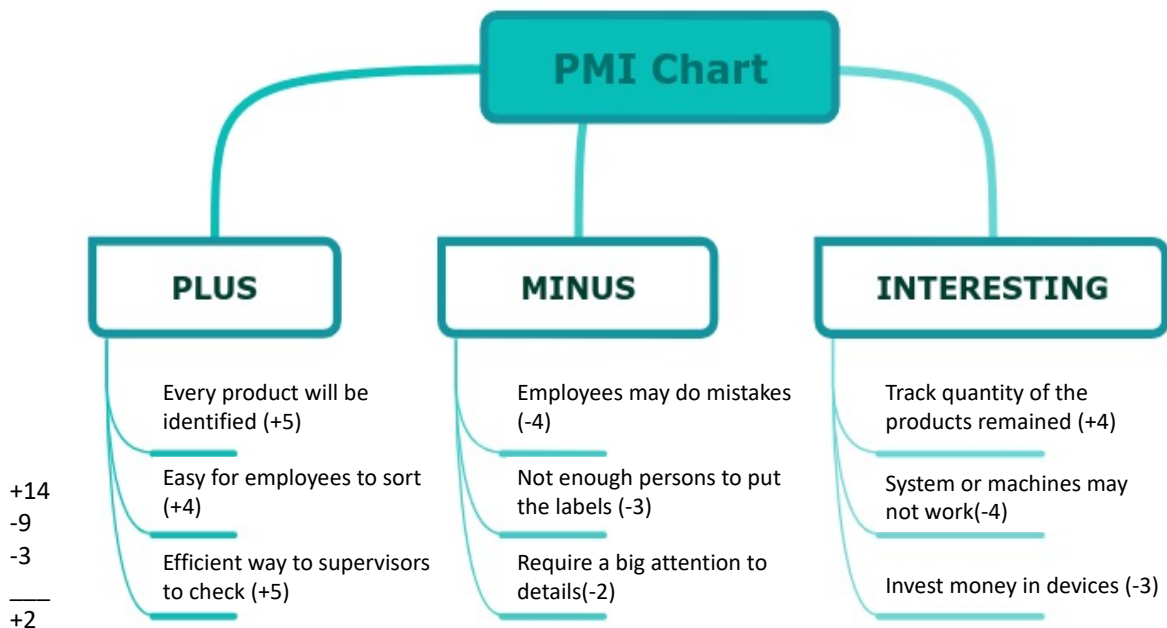
1. TRAINING PROGRAM



2. NEW SOFTWARE/DEVICES



TRACEABILITY OF THE ITEMS



SOLUTIONS



Action Plan and Monitoring

Reason for Action plan:	• Wrong products on the wrong shelves • Employee cannot work effectively
Previous Disciplinary Actions:	• Manager was announced • Colleagues asked to pay more attention
Steps for Improvement:	• Multiple training programs for the employees • Daily check by supervisors • Track products using barcodes/labels
Required Result :	• A very organised warehouse • No more mistakes

Improvement Plan in Effect for:	☐ 1 month	☐ 2 months	☒ 3 months	☐ 6 months
Evaluations Every:	☒ week	☐ 2 week	☐ month	☐ 2 months



Thank
you



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