

Problem Solving and Decision Making

BMSW4004

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Introduction

The process of problem solving involves specific stages such as: problem definition, problem analysis, generating and analysing alternative solutions, electing the best solutions, creating a plan of action and monitoring. This report investigates a work based problem and follows the rationale approach to problem solving. The structure helps the process of problem solving as it enhances all the directions and perspectives that need to be taken in consideration.

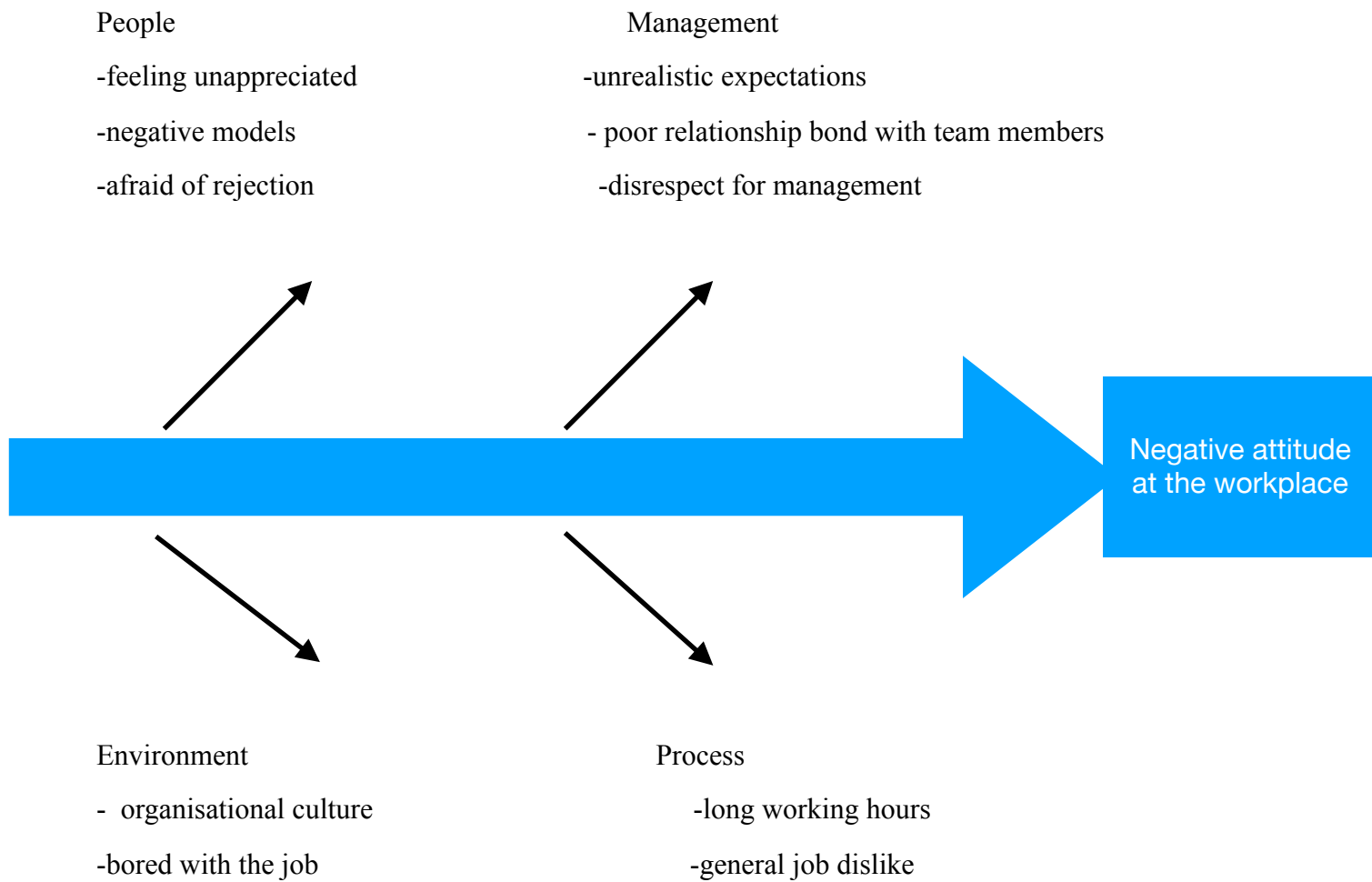
Definition of the problem, scope and impact

The work based problem from the current work experience presented in this report is the communication problems between management and staff. The organisation given as example is Subway. The communication problem debated in this report is the negative attitude of staff towards the management. A negative attitude which is a daily recurrence is a problem that needs to be addressed as it can impact the business performance. Examples of negative attitude can be rudeness, gossiping which can impact the culture of the organisation or laziness, coming late to work, carelessly in doing their job which can affect the business activity and organisational performance. It can be the case where a problem of this type is not addressed, that other employees feel that these attitudes are accepted. In contrast a positive attitude should be promoted by the organisation to have a solid team that performs and a more peaceful work environment (Abun et al, 2021).

Analysis of the information on the problem

Negative attitude is defined as the bad conduct of an employee and with a negative mindset. In a busy working environment it is more difficult to identify this type of behaviour until it has created some sort of noticeable situations. In order to identify negative attitude there are several aspects to look at: non-collaboration, arrogance when performing, stubbornness, laziness, aggressiveness, misusing privileges, using phone for personal purposes, taking credit for someone else's efforts, spreading rumours or even creating rumours, job discrimination, smoking in forbidden places etc. This type of behaviour can generate disruption at the working place, reduce job performance, tension between team members and influence negatively the organisational ethics (Fiorito et al, 2021).

Fishbone diagram



The Fishbone diagram identifies several causes for the negative attitude at the workplace such as feeling unappreciated, negative models, afraid of rejection, unrealistic expectations, poor relationship bond with team members, disrespect for management, organisational culture, bored with the job, long working hours, general job dislike (Palaïou, 2016).

PESTLE analysis for the fast food industry in which Subway operates

Political: Subway is an international brand which operates in many countries and continents. The political situation can differ from country to country and can affect differently the fast food industry. Health and safety and food safety are essential regulations for the fast food industry. In the For example in the United Kingdom it was forbidden the fast food business within five minutes of schools. This was to encourage healthy eating in children and reduce obesity (The Guardian, 2018).

Economical: The economic recession due to pandemic has influenced the fast food industries as many business were closed during lockdowns and were forced to have home deliveries. Spending in fast food has increased due to unemployment or lower income due to pandemic.

Social: The society has developed healthy eating and health awareness lifestyles. That is why the industry adapted to the change in consumer behaviour and introduced variate menus with healthier choices, low-calories or locally sourced ingredients. People working from home during pandemic had increase the number of fast food orders for home deliveries.

Technological: the fast food industry has incorporated technology which helped to improve service, food quality. Also the usage of social media has been adopted by many business to keep in touch with customers, to present menus, to obtain feedback. The development of drive-thru systems during pandemic has incorporated contactless technology and other technologies that facilitate the customer experience.

Legal: The legal requirements in the fast food industry has been changing across the decade. For example the approach to marketing has to be realised in a responsible way to children under 13.

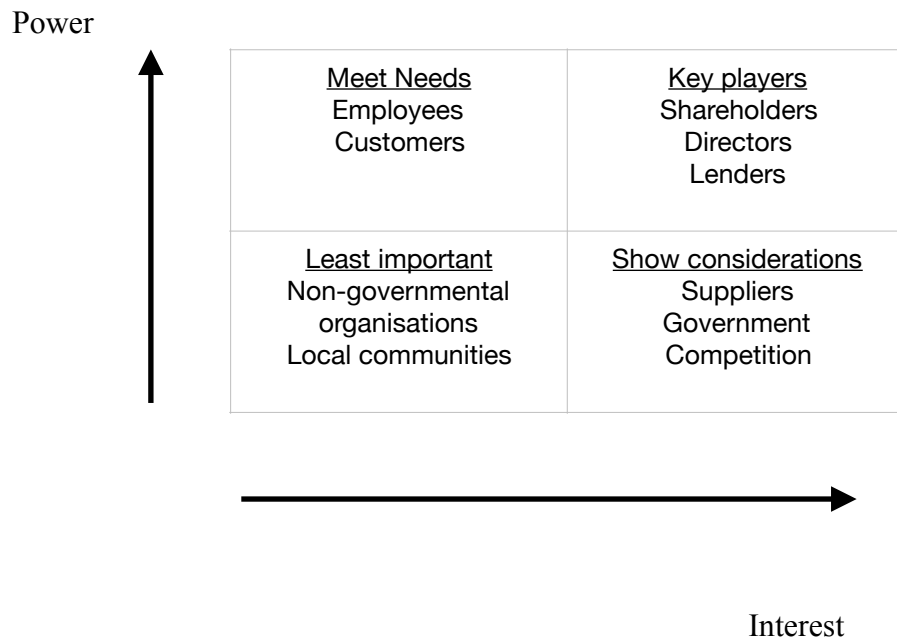
Environmental: Sustainability has been embraced by many industries and fast food business have to follow strict regulations to have a greener activity, therefore the business started recycling, reducing plastic usage, waste management etc. (Notesmatic, 2019).

SWOT analysis for Subway

Strengths	Weaknesses
the large number of outlets; high levels of brand loyalty, brand value Healthy choices, product differentiation, product customisation	No common level of service satisfaction No high online presence Low paid employees Low skilled employees Low performance
Opportunities	Threats
Exploiting healthy eating preference Menu diversification Creating drive-thru services	Competition Saturated market Fast change in consumer trends Pandemic

The SWOT analysis has identified important strengths for Subway, but has also identified many weaknesses which can be associated to the selected problem (Subway, 2021). Factors related to low wages, low skilled employees and low performance can trigger unhappiness and negative attitudes.

Stakeholder map analysis for Subway



The stakeholder map analysis identifies the key players for Subway which are shareholders, directors board, lenders, having high power and high interest. Opposite are the least important stakeholders: non-governmental organisations, local communities who have low power and low interest. This analysis illustrates what levels of attention and information needs to be attributed.

Generating alternative solutions to the problem

The identified problem in Subway is the negative attitude of employees. It was analysed that causes of this problem are feeling unappreciated, negative models, afraid of rejection, unrealistic expectations, poor relationship bond with team members, disrespect for management, organisational culture, bored with the job, long working hours, general job dislike (Fishbone diagram). Also it has been found that factors related to low wages, low skilled employees and low performance can trigger unhappiness and negative attitudes (SWOT analysis). Elements from the PESTLE analysis has emphasised the continuous challenges that the industry faced such as the economic recession due to pandemic has influenced the fast food industries as many business were closed during lockdowns and were forced to have home deliveries. This changed the way

business operated and routinised the job or increased the volume of work and long hours shifts due to staff shortage due to pandemic.

Therefore the solutions needs to address aspects highlighted in the analysis and focus on reducing negative attitude at work. An alternative solution is to develop and increase the communication within the organisations. The change would involve the organisation of meetings every six months were the management would enhance the importance of workplace values, positiveness and organisational standards and policies. Managers should lead by example and abide the expected standards of conduct (Small Business, 2019). This meetings should allow open communication, making the employees comfortable to give feedback and encourage informal discussions in order to release stress form performance appraisals. Another solution would be the creation of an informative video about the organisations expectations and about ways to be your best at the work place. This would be realised by outsourcing professionals such as human resources and psychologists that would create attractive and interactive material. This video would be incorporated in a training session were staff would be watching together once a year and presented by an employee from Human Resources. This video would have the purpose of explaining work ethics, but also presenting role plays and practical examples from the organisation activity. This video would involve a feedback session at the end to check with the employees on any concerns.

Selecting the most appropriate solution

The selection of the best solution can be realised using a set of criteria that evaluates the effectiveness, efficiency, equity and objectives achievement. The first solution comes as an extra meeting, separated from appraisal performance meetings. As it is realised individually and involves a specific structure to follow it can be time consuming. Also it could not be as effective as management style differences could impact the desired results of the meetings and could not achieve the desired objectives. Also an employee who does not have respect for management will not listen to what is told or could get in an argument to defend himself (Husset HR, 2020).

When evaluating the second option it can be observed that it can be more effective and efficient as it is not realised by a manager, it is realised by Human Resources enforcing the expected standard and the organisations work ethics. This would be less time consuming as it could be delivered in the form of group training. The format of the video with interactive elements would

be less rigid and deliver a standard message in an attractive way that would get the attention of the employees. The feedback section would be a valuable source of information completed by employees after the training in their own pace and delivered through email. This would ensure the employee allocates more time to reflect on the experience. Despite the fact that would involve a certain cost to create the video it would be used for all the organisation and would only need update if organisation considers like. Based on the SWOT analysis the organisation has the resources to implement this solution. Therefore the second solution is considered to be the most appropriate for the problem solving of negative attitudes at the work place.

Developing a plan of action

For developing the plan of action it will be used the ADKAR change model that help with the understanding of the change. The model has five elements: awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, reinforcement (Jeffrey, 2006).

Awareness: it has to be communicated the need for change, the pattern of recurrent negative attitude and the identified causes presented in the analysis. It should also be highlighted the negative impact on the business activity and performance, on the culture and work ethics, on the dynamism of the team.

Desire: this involves a more complex approach as people can not be ordered how to feel about the change. Emphasising the benefits of the change and listening to the employee would increase the desire element. This would involve multiple management levels within the organisation as it involves resources usage to create the video and ensure it is approved by the high management.

Knowledge: the learning process has to be encouraged and accommodated by the organisation. This would be realised by shop managers who would check in regularly with staff and enforce the organisation standards.

Ability: this is essential in finding the best way to execute change and getting people to participate and involve in the change.

Reinforcement: is the continuous work on maintaining the change and addressing obstacles and issues that can occur. The feedback section from the video is way to identify issues and obstacles to the change. Shop managers play an important role in reinforcement.

Communicating to stakeholders

According to the stakeholder map analysis the solution has to be communicated to the key players and board of directors or senior managers would need to be made aware of the problem and of the solution in order to obtain finance approval to put it in action. This would be communicated in a formal way through an elaborated document that would present the problem description, analysis, solutions and plan of action.

The stakeholders that have to meet their needs are the employees and the change has to help reduce the effects of the problem on the team work and general work environment. The change will be communicated through email and posting on the informational board in the staff room.

Monitoring and reviewing the success of the solution

The monitoring and reviewing of the solution would be realised by shop managers in collaboration with Human Resources. This would ensure an internal evaluation through shop managers and external by Human Resources.

The managers would observe if negative attitude persists in daily activity and Human Resources would assess the feedback from the training session.

Conclusion

The problem solving process in this report has followed the structure specific and it has provided complex information and knowledge for the analysis. This was essential in order to have a clear picture of the situation and to evaluate which solution will have more benefits for the organisation.

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