

Problem Solving and Decision Making

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Introduction

Every organisation in the world, despite its differentiation from other organisations, at some point or other might face problems which need to be solved. In many cases, such problems can be connected to workforce conflict, inability to understand new implemented software, high workforce turnover and many others. Once a company is met by a problem, it requires quick and efficient resolution which will not affect negatively the operations of the company in the short and long term. Therefore, it's necessary for the company to either hire a problem resolution expert or to resolve the issue in-house. Whichever path a company chooses to go on, there is one key aspect which is required and that is *collaboration*. "Collaboration is required at every level of every organization— be it a corporation, small business, nonprofit organization, educational institution, government agency, or legislative body." (Straus, 2002, p.13) It's through the support and agreement of all sides, that the best resolution to a problem can be taken. In this manner, companies stay successful and sustainable, as if there is a lack of collaboration that means there is a lack of understanding of the main goals and objectives of the company. This work will look closely at the organisational issues within Fam.Social LLP – a small digital marketing agency, with little number of employees, but many issues to be resolved.

Analysis

Whilst many company executives believe that the heart of the problem starts outside of the organisation, which is affected by a variety of impact, others would argue that the problem starts within. Once a company, such as Fam.Social LLP comes to the realisation that continuous issues exist, which are stopping the best outcomes from happening, it's necessary for the organisation to go through a series of analysis. This can include SWOT analysis, which is the way to "to facilitate a realistic, fact-based, data-driven look at the strengths and weaknesses of an organization, its initiatives, or an industry." (Investopedia, 2020) Through the conduction of a SWOT analysis, Fam.Social LLP could understand further what the organisation is good at, as well as in which aspects it might be failing. Furthermore, this allows company executives to create a sustainable and useful strategy which will make use of the existing opportunities and work in such a way, that it wouldn't be affected by any threats. Through this analysis, Fam.Social LLP can find out whether the issues are based on the companies' structure, culture, managerial strategy, the use of certain tools and systems or anything else. "In the classical view of organization theory, structure involves division of labor, unity of command, authority and responsibility, span of control, and departmentalization." (Ziegenfuss, 2001, p.102) Many businesses experience serious issues, due to their inability to divide responsibility, whilst at the same time making all employees feel empowered and useful within an organisation. Moreover, there is a considerable existing issue in the 21st century organisation, with motivating employees and helping them stay productive in the long-term. This means, that for the workers within Fam.Social LLP to be productive and produce the best quality of work, there is a necessity for a focus on motivational and organisational strategy.

Once the company has built knowledge of what works and what doesn't within the organisation, it's necessary and useful, to gain knowledge of what the external impacts are on the company's operations. The analysis of the outside, is most often done by the undertaking of a PESTLE analysis - "a framework to analyse the key factors (Political, Economic, Sociological,

Technological, Legal and Environmental) influencing an organisation from the outside.”

(Morrison, 2020) Such analysis is necessary, due to the numerous ways in which the outside world can impact an organisation. For example, legal impact for Fam.Social LLP can be the everchanging legislation within the country of operations – once a law is changed or introduced, each business is required to follow the law and adjust operations accordingly. On the other hand, the sociological impact on a company is closely related to the needs and wants of the consumers – if the company wishes to be on top of the product or service being offered, they need to best understand the requirements from the public. Similarly, to the internal SWOT analysis, the external PESTLE analysis is a tactic of finding the most recent and useful data and facts, that will allow the company to analyse the workability of their current strategy. There is a difference between gathering data and gathering information – the data is raw and unorganised, therefore it cannot be used to make a future decision, whilst the information is a set of data, which has been processed in the necessary way, for the requirement of the company.

For the company to resolve the issues and existing problems, it first needs to gather all necessary information which will be used in the resolution. Some companies, like Fam.Social LLP choose to hire a consultant, who will be able to see the issues from an objective point of view and use their professional knowledge in coming up with a resolution. In the following role-play between a Fam.Social employee and the hired managerial consultant, one can find and understand the current problems within the company and the strategy for resolution.

Role Play Between Dissatisfied Employee and Management Consultant

Employee: Hi, thank you for taking the time to see me! It's lovely to meet you, my name is Mariela and we're glad to have you here at Fam.Social LLP.

Consultant: Glad to be here! Thank you for your warm welcome!

Employee: I don't mean to rush, but time is of the essence! Fam.Social LLP is a digital marketing agency which works with people across the world. We have a large database full of knowledge about the market and current and past trends and we try to train our employees and interns with a mindset of unlimited possibility. However, we seem to have a problem, as none of the interns wants to stay and many of our long-term employees have been leaving. As managers we are struggling to find a solution, so we thought you might help.

Consultant: Tell me about your **workplace relationships**?

Employee: Well, we have some communication, however due to the current environment, most of us must work from home, which seems to affect **productivity**.

Consultant: Does Fam.Social LLP **empower** employees in any way?

Employee: We want to empower them, however we aren't sure how to exactly.

Consultant: Do you feel like you have a healthy **work-life balance**?

Employee: As manager I work even when I'm sleeping, I aim for growth and top performance.

Consultant: Do you believe employees feel there is a possibility for growth in Fam.Social LLP.

Employee: We can't seem to manage the workload, so there is a necessity for more senior members, however nobody seems to be ready to take on the challenge.

Consultant: For you personally, is there any joy in your job?

Employee: It's all about ambition, I don't feel like there is time for joy at the current time. I like the job, it's just a lot of responsibilities and expectations to achieve.

Consultant: Is it your belief that employees here feel appreciated and cherished?

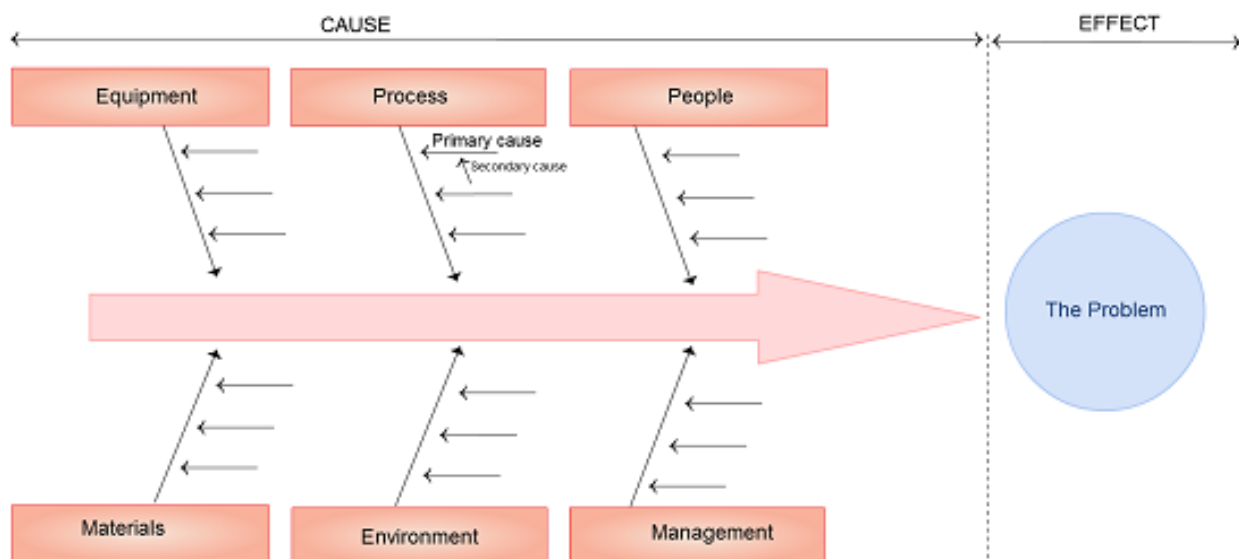
Employee: I try to remind myself and everyone else that everything is a small achievement on the path to big success, but that doesn't seem satisfactory when I say it now.

Consultant: Mariela, I feel like you have shared some very valuable information about your work here at Fam.Social LLP. I have a few suggestions which might help you resolve your existing problems.

Employee: Sounds fantastic! I am so glad an objective perspective of the organisation can be given! Can I suggest some tea or coffee? All naturally sourced!

Consultant: Thank you Mariela, but as you said time is of the essence, so I'll get straight to the point! I'm going to start by showing you the Fishbone Diagram also called the Ishikawa Diagram. The diagram is a tool used for problem solution, like the one you stated, by measuring what are the causes for, in your case, dissatisfied employees.

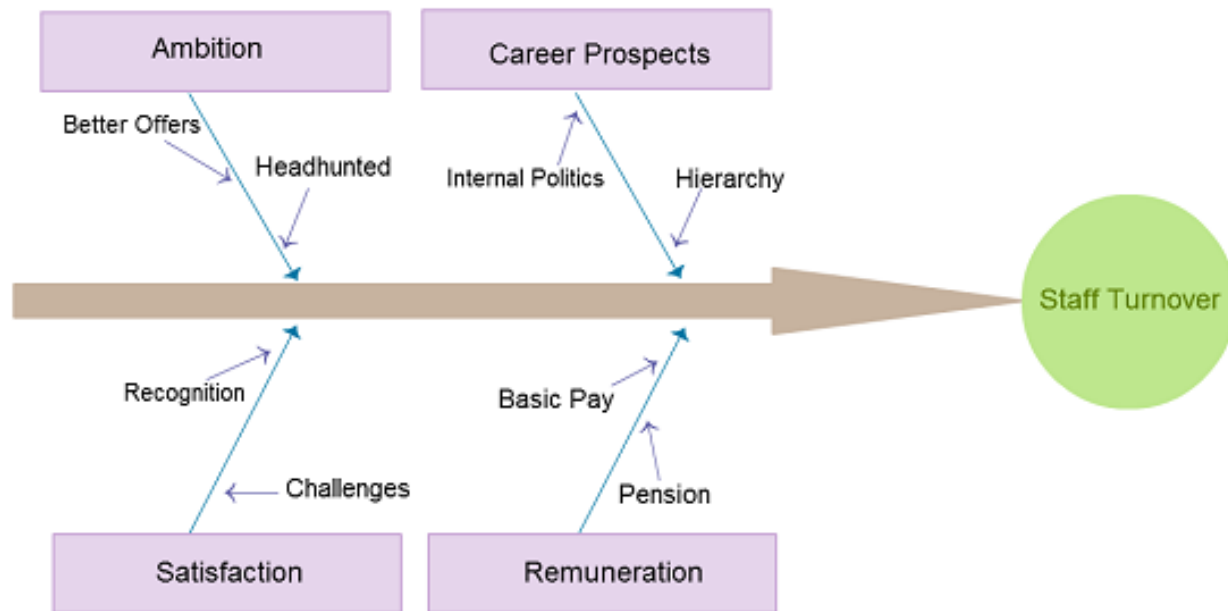
Figure 1.



Now, from Figure 1 you can see that the problem is the effect, and the cause for the problem is everything that takes place in the operations, so the people, the process, the environment, etc.

There are primary causes and there are secondary causes. Now let's look at the diagram, with your problem in mind.

Figure 2.



Let's discuss the main causes for your problem at Fam.Social LLP:

1. **Employee Satisfaction** – It's my understanding that your company challenges employees daily, however it's also important that you recognise all their achievements, no matter how big or small. That's done with the occasional 'Well done', as well as with considerable communication between team members and a family-like relationship.
2. **Empowerment of Employees** – In the changing world of business, it's important to give everyone an equal opportunity to share an opinion and feel heard within the company. However, you should be aware that not all employees have the same potential and you should personalise your attitude – they are people, not technology.
3. **Work-Life Balance** – A workplace should be a place where people are happy to do their responsibilities. And you as a manager and leader must set an example – this means taking regular breaks, where work is not discussed and leaving work responsibilities at the office. It would be well to advise all employees who work from home, to have a space for work, and a space for relaxation. That should take away some of the worries and tensions and improve productivity.

4. **Don't Overload Employees** – Especially in intellectual work it's important, to have a set of work which is to be done and not too many responsibilities for a single person. If you overload employees and yourself the work done won't be as efficient as it could be.
5. **Don't Forget Organisational Culture** – The mission and culture of the organisation is what employees follow and cherish and if they aren't fully satisfied with the internal politics, they won't be motivated to work. Don't let personal issues interfere with business, as this may leave a long-term imprint on the organisational culture.
6. **Give Appropriate Work** – All employees are interested in different aspects of the job, so when delegating workload, you need to take in account their personal strengths and not offer them tasks which they don't enjoy. That's a main reason for high staff turnover in a workplace – the lack of joy in what an employee does.

PESTLE Analysis (Dissatisfied Employees at Fam.Social LLP)

Political – Brexit may affect employees and the culture of the working environment.

Economic – The change in policies of international trade may affect number of abroad customers, which can in turns lower amount of workload.

Social – Current Corona Virus Pandemic may influence employees and workability.

Technologic – Increase in homeworking may affect productivity.

Legal – Change in law can be unexpected and affect business organisation and their functions.

Environmental – A broader focus on the environment and organisational impact can be of benefit to the company.

PMI (Plus, Minus and Interest)

Plus	Minus	Interesting
1. Diversity of Work Tasks (+4)	Poor Work Relationships (-3)	Wide variety of work opportunities (+3)
2. Creativity (+5)	Lack of Empowerment (-2)	Work Travel Team Building and Others (+3)
3. Freedom and Empowerment (+3)	No Work-Life Balance (-3)	Positive Mindset (+3)
4. Additional Learning Opportunities (+4)	Delegation of Personalised Tasks (-3)	Environment Friendly (+3)
5. Personal Development (+4)	Departmental Diversity (-2)	Opportunity for Certification (+4)
6. Salary and Incentives (+4)	Team Feeling Unappreciated (-3)	Overcoming Problems (+5)
Total: +24	Total: -15	Total: +21
Overall: 45-15 = +30		

Conclusion

To conclude, each problem within a company must be met with the adequate solution. For the solution to be created, a thorough understanding of the problem and its causes is necessary. Without such understanding, any further action taken can lead to a new series of problems coming to existence. That's why whenever a company such as Fam.Social LLP spotlights a recurring or new issue within the organisation and its processes, all aspects of the organisation must be analysed for mistake. An organisational structure is complex and involves many different people, processes and information to be looked at and its workability defined. Furthermore, there are many ways in which a company can deal with the problem – differing tactics, strategies and techniques, which all start with a plan with the steps to problem solving. It's through an in-depth analysis of what works and what doesn't, that a company can decide on its future strategies and plan for sustainability.

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