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Selection Tools Booklets

Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving Office Situation

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ANALYSIS EXERCISE – PROBLEM SOLVING:

OFFICE SITUATION

Imagine you are working in an import/export firm that owns its office in a good suburb of a big city.

Due to the growth of your company in the past 2 years, more people were admitted to work in the office facilities. Two years ago, there were 6 people working in the office, and you had an entrance hall, with a chair, and a meeting room where 6 people could seat comfortably.

In these two years, the company grew to 10 people in the same space, along with their desks, computers and paper files furniture. The meeting room was transformed into an office where 4 people work, and the entrance hall was transformed to receive 2 clients in a small meeting open space room. The space is divided, but it is not possible real privacy, for more sensitive business and brainstorm ideas. Only the manager, has a closed office.

There are some conflicts among staff due to being confined some many people in a stuffed, small space.

The need for more space is absolutely necessary, as a new member was hired and starts in about a month. But the firm made some new investments and is not in a good moment to buy new facilities.

Imagine that you are part of the managing team and need to make space for the new hire, keeping in mind that you need to spend as little money as you reasonably can.

Given the situation, let us now your opinion on how to advise the managing director how to act.

Q1. Please identify which problem(s) you are experiencing.

Q2. Please indicate whether you would need to collect additional information and, if so, what would you do.

Q3. Please provide several possible alternatives to solving the problem and point out its pros and cons.

Q4. From the alternatives identified in Q3, select the one that you consider most appropriate, indicating what actions you would take to implement your idea.

Q5. Considering the situation, what would you consider a good result? What lessons learned from this situation?



ORIENTATION FOR CLASSIFICATION

| | 1. Problem identification | 2. Collection of information | 3. Generation of ideas and evaluation of ideas | 4. Implementation planning | 5. Evaluation of solution |
|------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| 1. INEXISTENT | Does not identify the problem at all. | Does not refer to gather more information or the information is not pertinent. | No ideas or not adequate | Does not present an answer; or presents something different from what was presented previously; or presents something that is not logical considering the whole context. | No clear idea, or very confusing way to present it. |
| 2. LOW LEVEL | The emphasis is on the non-relevant issues, acknowledges the problem but as a detail, not the central issue. | Gather an incomplete set of information including non-relevant issues, and/or does not specify the sources. | Presentation of only one alternative with no pros or cons. | a) does not select the alternative that seems the most obvious/simple, considering the pros and cons presented; and/or b) does not explain the activities to perform. | The emphasis is on the non-relevant issues, acknowledges the problem but as a detail, not the central issue. |
| 3. INTERMEDIATE | Identifies the problem but included other non-relevant details. | Gathers an incomplete set of information and/or does not specify the sources. | One idea with pros and cons (or two ideas with no pros or cons). | a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) briefly explains the activities to perform, with not much details. | To present a basic, sometime the initial idea (with no flexibility). To identify partially the lessons to be taken, in a general way. |
| 4. HIGH LEVEL | Clearly identifies the problem. | Refers to gathering enough relevant information also indicating the sources. | Two ideas with pros and cons. | a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) explains in detail the activities to be performed to fulfil the selected option and presents alternatives of situations that might not go so well as the best predictions. | To have the perspective of the client, not necessarily the perspective of the firm. To identify the most important lessons. |

1. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Q1. Please identify which problem(s) you are experiencing.

1. **Inexistent:** Does not identify the problem at all

Examples:

The firm should not hire more people because it does not have working conditions.

The client doesn't have privacy.

The manager is a privileged.

2. **Low level:** The emphasis is on the non-relevant issues, acknowledges the problem but as a detail, not the central issue. (don't mentioned the central problem clearly and objectively)

Examples:

The fact that there are conflicts between workers, because space is confined, affects the environment in the company, and will be aggravated by the entry of the new employee.

More employee's without space conditions is stupid in terms of management.

3. **Intermediate level:** Identifies the problem but included other non-relevant details (is not clear)

Examples:

Difficulty in placing employees in the available space.

Low space to many workers and an isolated manager.

4. **High level:** Clearly identifies the problem (is objective and clear)

Examples:

Lack of space to place workers.



2. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

Q2. Please indicate whether you would need to collect additional information and, if so, what would you do.

1.Inexistent: Does not refer to gather more information or the information is not pertinent.

Examples:

When it was able to expand the company

2.Low level: Gather an incomplete set of information including non-relevant issues, and/or does not specify the sources.

Examples:

Yes, figuring out if the management team could leave the private office, and would work with the rest of the team in the open space.

3.Intermediate level: Gathers an incomplete set of information and/or does not specify the sources.

Examples:

One example of the Level 4.

4.High level: Refers to gathering enough relevant information also indicating the sources

Examples (2 of these):

Check if it would be possible for some employees to work from home

Ask the management team for the available budget

Yes, it would be necessary, to study alternatives to organise the space

Yes, know the total area available.



3. GENERATION AND EVALUATION OF IDEAS

Q3. Please provide possible alternatives to solving the problem and point out its pros and cons.

Examples of adequate ideas:

- *Change the layout of the desktop*
- *Open space for workers and changes the room with participation for collaborators.*
- *Make financial cuts where you can to buy new facilities.*
- *Rent another space near the place and at an affordable price.*
- *Organise the space throwing away what was not necessary, limiting the space to the essential.*
- *The manager office can be for more persons.*

1. Inexistent: No ideas or not adequate

2. Low level: Presentation only one alternative with no pros or cons

3. Intermediate level: One idea with pros and cons (or two ideas with no pros or cons)

4. High level: Two ideas with pros and cons.



4. IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

Q4. From the alternatives identified in Q3, select the one that you consider most appropriate, indicating what actions you would take to implement your idea.

1.Inexistent: Does not present an answer; or presents something different from what was presented previously; or presents something that is not logical considering the whole context.

Example:

The first, since it would create a better environment in the company, since all would be in the same conditions.

2.Low level: a) does not select the alternative that seems the most obvious/simple, considering the pros and cons presented; and/or b) does not explain the activities to perform.

3.Intermediate level: a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) briefly explains the activities to perform, with not much details

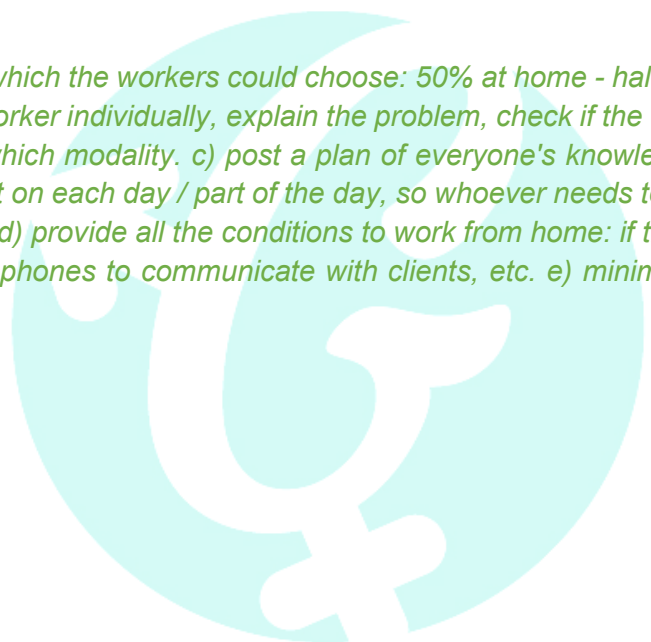
Example

The management team would share the spaces. It would make a survey that would allow to rationalize the available space taking care to the maximum the functionality and the possible privacy.

4.High level: a) Selects the alternative that, within the alternatives presented, and considering the pros and cons identified in the previous question is the most appropriate; b) explains in detail the activities to be performed to fulfil the selected option and presents alternatives of situations that might not go so well as the best predictions.

Example:

The first solution. a) to design the modality(ies) in which the workers could choose: 50% at home - half a day a day / 2 or 3 days a week, etc. b) speak to each worker individually, explain the problem, check if the worker would be willing to work from home and if so, in which modality. c) post a plan of everyone's knowledge in the workspace about who will be physically present on each day / part of the day, so whoever needs to meet with a certain person already knows when to do it. d) provide all the conditions to work from home: if they do not, replace PC's with laptops, company's mobile phones to communicate with clients, etc. e) minimum 3-month experiment time.



5. EVALUATION OF THE SOLUTION

Q5. Considering the situation, what would you consider a good result? What lessons learned from this situation?

1. Inexistent: No clear idea, or very confusing way to present it.

Example:

Host the new colleague, everyone can cooperate with that.

2. Low level: to present a basic, sometime the initial idea (with no flexibility). Is not able to make a generalisation of the lessons learnt, can only apply to that specific situation.

Example:

That the new employee could be integrated without the bad environment becoming worse.

3. Intermediate level: to present a basic, sometime the initial idea (with no flexibility). To identify partially the lessons to be taken, in a general way.

Example:

Get more space, without raising the monthly costs too much.

4. High level: to have the perspective of the client, not necessarily the perspective of the firm. To identify the most important lessons.

Example:

Get enough space for all workers, including what's to come, and taking the moment to motivate them. To be able to adapt to the situations and make the most of them.



RESULTS INTERPRETATION

AUSTRIA

Considering there are four levels of evaluation of the exercise's answers, and that there are 5 questions, the score ranges from 5 to 20 points.

To interpret results, we defined 5 levels of performance regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving, adapted to the Austrian context:

Much below average - 5 to 6 points

Below average - 7 to 9 points

On average - 10 to 12 points

Above average - 13 points

Well above average - 14 points and over.

Mean – 10,5

Median – 11,5

Mode – 5,0

Std. Dev. – 3,6

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 16,0



RESULTS INTERPRETATION

BULGARIA

Considering there are four levels of evaluation of the exercise's answers, and that there are 5 questions, the score ranges from 5 to 20 points.

To interpret results, we defined 3 levels of performance, regarding the competence Analysis and Problem Solving, each representing one third of the responses in the pilot testing in Bulgaria:

Below average - 5 to 6 points

On average - 7 to 8 points

Above average - 9 points and over.

Mean – 7,5

Median – 7,0

Mode – 6,0

Std. Dev. – 2,1

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 16,0



RESULTS INTERPRETATION

ITALY

For the Italian context, this exercise shall not be applied (there are significant gender differences in the results obtained).



RESULTS INTERPRETATION

PORTUGAL

Considering that we defined 4 levels for evaluating the exercises and there are 5 questions, the total scoring is between 5 and 20 points. For interpretation of the performance regarding the competence “Analysis and Problem Solving” in Portugal for Exercise 3:

Much below average: 8 – 10 points

Below average: 11 – 12 points

On average: 13 points

Above average: 14 – 15 points

Much above average: 16 points and over

Mean – 13,0

Median – 13,0

Mode – 13,0

Std. Dev. – 2,7

Minimum – 8,0

Maximum – 19,0



RESULTS INTERPRETATION

SPAIN

Considering that we defined 4 levels for evaluating the exercises and there are 5 questions, the total scoring is between 5 and 20 points. For interpretation of the performance regarding the competence “Analysis and Problem Solving” in Spain for Exercise 3:

Much below average: 5 – 7 points

Below average: 8 – 9 points

On average: 10 – 11 points

Above average: 12 – 13 points

Much above average: 14 points and over

Mean – 10,5

Median – 11,0

Mode – 11,0

Std. Dev. – 3,4

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 18,0



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