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IO3
Selection Tools Booklets
Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving Office Party

Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving:
Office Party

Every year your company prepares the annual meeting where it presents the new guidelines to the main customers and partners (suppliers, representatives of relevant institutions in your business field, local entities).

Considering that the company recently changed facilities and that this meeting always takes place in the first days of July, they decided to have the meeting followed by a cocktail in the outdoor garden.
As this event has some new features compared to previous meetings (new facilities, meeting in the garden, employees are also invited, presentation of new markets where they are to expand) it was announced in due time, highlighting these innovations. Even pictures of how the meeting was to be held in the garden were announced.

The morning before the event, when the last preparations are taking place, the weather is unstable and there is no clear idea whether it will rain or not during the time of the meeting and the cocktail.
Imagine that you are part of the team that is organizing this event, which is so important to the company's image. Given the situation, and not knowing what to do, they asked your opinion on 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 would you take to implement your idea.
Q5. Given the situation, what would you consider a good result? What lessons have you 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	Cleary 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 problem is to question the credibility and the organisation image since there were published photos of an event that cannot occur if it rains. Associated with this situation, there are also problems regarding the lack of confidence of clients and the possibility of losing their interest in this firm.

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 problem is the facilities change, demanding the need for an annual meeting to be performed in an open-air garden, which is subject to the weather conditions and may inhibit the meeting occurrence.
The firm's location change might lead to problems with the location. The 2nd problem is that they associated that the fact that the meeting was going to happen in July automatically would be good weather.

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

Examples:
The instability of the weather and the fact that the meeting was already announced in the garden.

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

Examples:
The weather instability.
The weather instability and not having planned an alternative

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:
Would report the situation to the General Manager of the firm, so that he/she could take the necessary measures to solve the situation.

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

Examples:
Debate with the people in charge of the meeting to find other alternatives.
Talk to the firm's employees and with the rest of my team to know exactly what is going on and their ideas.

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

One example of the level 4.
I would need information on other appropriate locations where the meeting could take place since the weather was not stable.
Would need to have additional data as exact location, number of guests and the way the innovation was going to take place.

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

Examples:
Initially would try to understand how the weather conditions could affect the meeting, visiting the place, talking to the people who are organising each part of the event (meeting + cocktail). Would check for the weather report on a credible website. In a meeting with all involved would try to come up with several alternatives, even if it meant to change the location and some other initial plans for the event, in order to keep the guests comfortable.
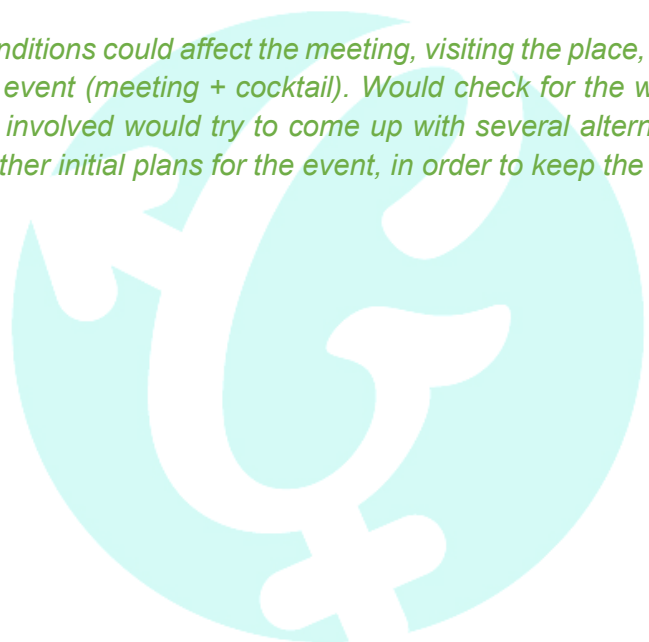
3. GENERATION AND EVALUATION OF IDEAS

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

Examples of adequate ideas:
- Changing the location to inside the office building. Pros: presenting the new office building, the weather conditions are not important, bigger comfort. Cons: the participants were counting on the garden, may cause some, disappointment
- To buy/ rent a garden tent (or somehow covering garment). Pros: stick to the initial plan, more room, and fresh air. Cons: it is harder to organise, more costly, and there is no information if there are tents available.
- Change the date of the event. Pros: to perform the event as planed; Cons: unavailability of the guests; no guaranty of good weather
- To make the event as the other ones before, that is without the employees. Pros: the rest of the guest would fit inside the office building. Cons: the inability of both partners/clients and staff to participate in the same meeting, after they were already invited

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.

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.

Examples:
The cons of buying a tent or garment to protect from the rain was that it might not be enough depending on the intensity of the rain. This was the selected option. The activities were buying the tent /garment and assemble it on site, because it was the easiest way.

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
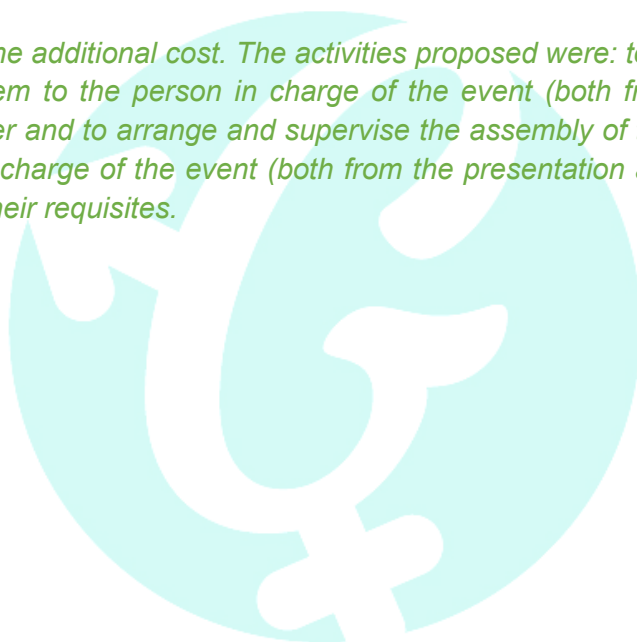*Example*
The cons of changing the location of the event within the facilities' is not fulfilling the guests' expectations. The activities proposed are: to change the evet to an indoors room; to find a big and comfortable room; to talk to person in charge and let the person know about that change.

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 cons of selecting the tent for the garden was the additional cost. The activities proposed were: to check for budget proposals to rent the tent; to show them to the person in charge of the event (both from the presentation and the cocktail); to select the supplier and to arrange and supervise the assembly of the tent in the facilities, together with the all the person in charge of the event (both from the presentation and the cocktail) in order to have everything according to their requisites.

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:
A good result would be the success of this meeting and that the message could go through in a clear way. The lesson learnt is that when we need to ask for help, we should be as clear as possible, and we cannot plan something outdoor without thinking of a plan B.
A good result would be that in the day of the meeting would be a day with good weather, so that everybody could enjoy the meeting and the cocktail.

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:
A good result would be the satisfaction of the guests with the event and that the event would go as planned, with no problems. This situation is important to see how people deal with stress and the quality of the decisions they make.

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:
A good result would be the participation of the guests that were expected, the meeting going as expected. The lesson to be taken is always have a plan B.

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

Example:
A good result would be the satisfaction of the guests that came to the meeting and that they would get a good impression of the firm. With this situation one should learn that should always have an alternative plan, and that should not advertise something that is out of our control.
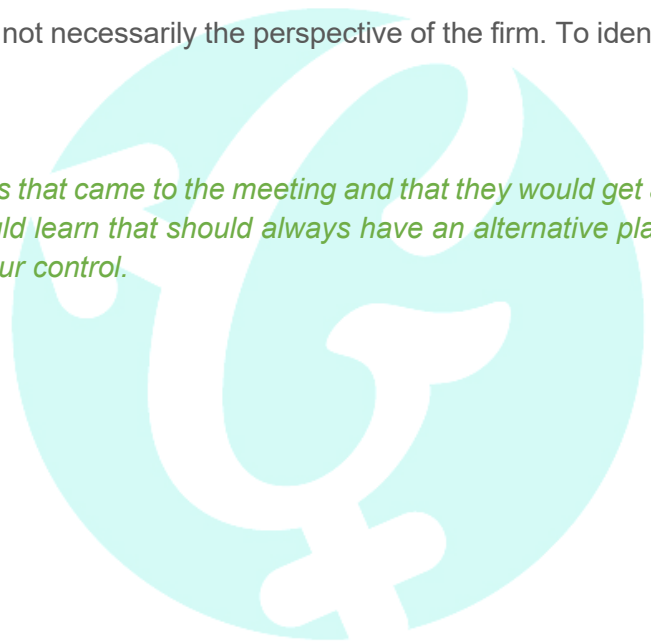
RESULTS INTERPRETATION

AUSTRIA

Considering there are four levels of evaluation of the exercise's answers, and that 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 7 points
Below average - 8 to 9 points
On average - 10 to 11 points
Above average - 12 to 13 points
Well above average - 14 points and over.

Mean – 10,9
Median – 10,5
Mode – 8
Std. Dev. – 3,45
Minimum – 5,0
Maximum – 19,0

RESULTS INTERPRETATION

BULGARIA

Considering there are four levels of evaluation of the exercise's answers, and that 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 7 points
On average - 8 to 9 points
Above average -10 points and over.

Mean – 8,4
Median – 8,0
Mode – 8,0
Std. Dev. – 2,7
Minimum – 5,0
Maximum – 18,0

RESULTS INTERPRETATION

ITALY

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 Italy for Exercise 1:

Much below average: 5 – 8 points
Below average: 9 – 10 points
On average: 11 points
Above average: 12 – 13 points
Much above average: 14 points and over

Mean – 10,9
Median – 8,0
Mode – 11,0
Std. Dev. – 3,0
Minimum – 5,0
Maximum – 17,0

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 1:

Much below average: 6 - 9 points
Below average: 10 points
On average: 8 points
Above average: 11 - 12 points
Much above average: 13 points and over

Mean – 11,8
Median – 12,0
Mode – 10.,0
Std. Dev. – 2,7
Minimum – 6,0
Maximum – 18,0

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 1:

Much below average: 5 – 8 points
Below average: 9 – 10 points
On average: 11 – 12 points
Above average: 13 – 14 points
Much above average: 15 points and over

Mean – 11,2
Median – 11,0
Mode – 9,0
Std. Dev. – 2,7
Minimum – 5,0
Maximum – 16,0

PARTNERS

Coordinator

Frauen im Brennpunkt – Austria
www.fib.at

INOVA+ - Portugal
www.inova.business

Instituto Politécnico do Porto – Portugal
www.ipp.pt
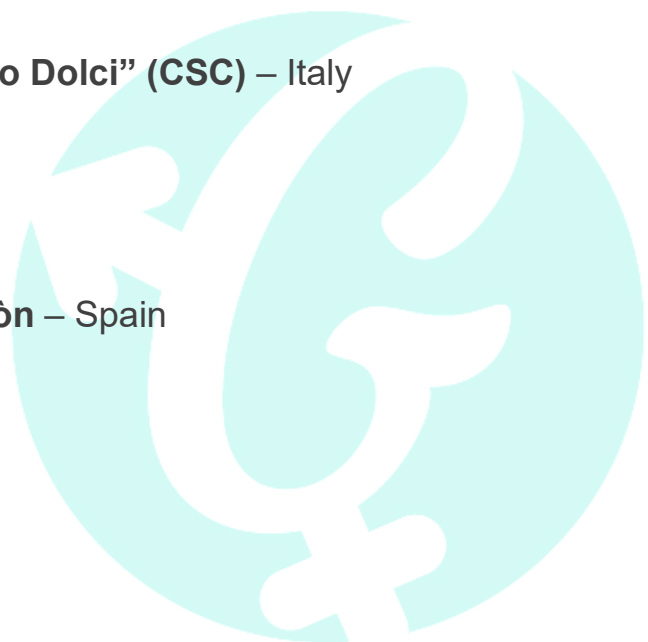
Bimec – Bulgaria
www.bimec-bg.eu

Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo "Danilo Dolci" (CSC) – Italy
en.danilodolci.org

Servicio regional de empleo y formaciòn – Spain
www.sefcarm.es

GeNeus

geneus-project.eu

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