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Selection Tools Booklets

Analysis Exercise – Problem Solving Store Situation

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ANALYSIS EXERCISE – PROBLEM SOLVING:

STORE SITUATION

A colleague of yours has placed an order of € 10,000 for a client. This order was urgent for the customer. Your colleague consulted the supplier (in France), requesting the information about the delivery time and was informed that it would take a maximum of 5 working days. Your colleague indicated that he would inform the client, by SMS, as soon as the order arrived.

After 5 working days, the customer went to the company facilities to collect the order. It had not yet arrived, and your colleague was on his day off on that day.

When the customer realized that the order was not available, he was very upset, and said that he really needed those materials not to delay the activity of his business. The customer also said that this situation meant a loss of confidence in the company. Indeed, he was already a loyal and a good customer (he ordered much material and always paid within the time limits).

Considering this situation, indicate how you would 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 day off of the colleague;
Low credibility of the enterprise and its workers;
Lack of information.

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:

Attempted to satisfy an urgent request;
Did not check if he was working the day the order arrived;
The colleague should have communicated to the other colleagues;
Little responsibility of the colleague;
Lack of the order;
Upset customer.

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

Examples:

The problem is the time in processing the client's order.
To assure delivery times that depend on others.

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

Examples:

Delay of an order / product for customer
Upset customer



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:

To make sure several people in the team know about each demand, so they could intervene in case it is needed;

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:

I would try to understand with the client what was actually agreed between him and my colleague, and then contact my colleague and confront him with the situation;

The reason for the delay (explains what was looking for but does not specify how);

Try to know where the client's order is at and get a way of having it on time (explains what would do, but does not specify how).

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

Examples:

One example of the Level 4.

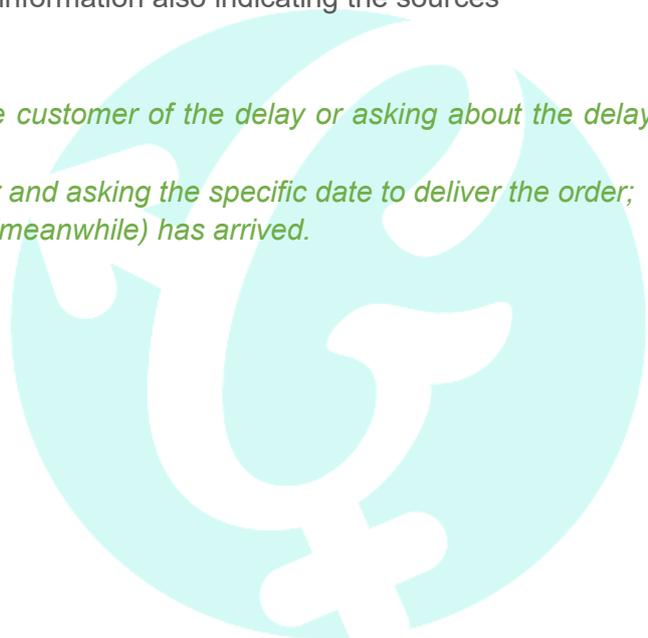
4.High level: Refers to gathering enough relevant information also indicating the sources

Examples (2 of these):

Search if there was no email or sms informing the customer of the delay or asking about the delay to the supplier;

Call to the supplier to clarify the "state" of the order and asking the specific date to deliver the order;

Check with the warehouse if the package already (meanwhile) has arrived.



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:

- *Call the supplier and see what is the best possible date, if not good enough for the client, to try to get that material elsewhere;*
- *Try to offer alternative material;*
- *Try to offer partial satisfaction of the demand, if possible, while trying to get the rest of the demand*
- *Trying to negotiate with the administration a discount to the customer in the face of the delay*
- (...)

1.Inexistent: No ideas or ideas with no pros and cons.

2.Low level: Presentation only one alternative with pros or cons

3.Intermediate level: Two ideas with pros and cons (or only one, but very complete)

4.High level: Three 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:

1st alternative would implement an automatic messaging system. I would choose the first alternative (see above) that would be the most effective. Actions that would develop: 1. to hire an outsourcing company that could work and implant the system in the company and 2: also give training to the employees about the system. Then I would make an agreement with the company to perform a maintenance and update of the system every six months.

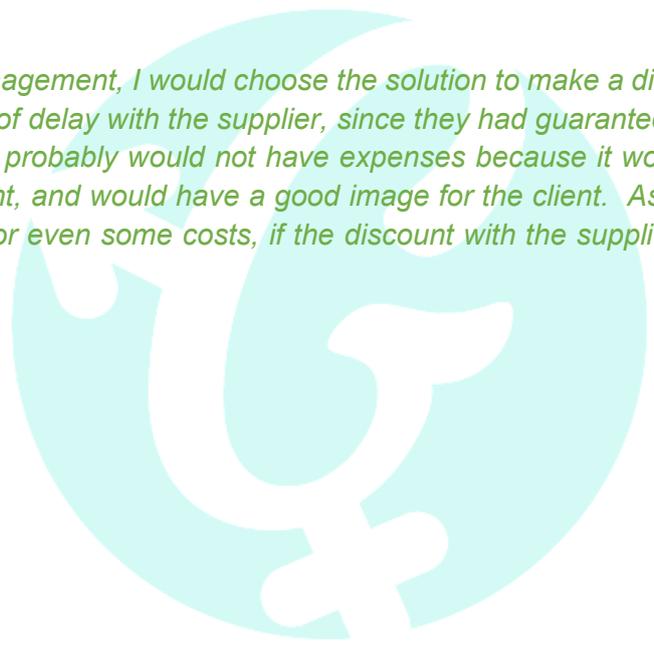
2.Low level: a) does not select the alternative that seems the most obvious/simple, considering the pros and cons presented; and/or b) does not explain the activities to perform.

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

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:

Probably, if I could get the agreement with the management, I would choose the solution to make a discount on the order. I would negotiate a discount per day of delay with the supplier, since they had guaranteed that deadline and did not comply. This means the firm probably would not have expenses because it would be compensated by the supplier, would keep the client, and would have a good image for the client. As cons, could have a lower profit margin on that demand or even some costs, if the discount with the supplier was not low enough.



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 if the order had arrived on time. A lesson to be retained is that solutions are not always in our favour because they do not depend entirely on us.

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:

Fast and efficient solution of the problem.

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:

Despite the error, it was important the recognition by the client of our effort. Presents - Never order something important for the day you present it, give some margin.

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 client. Always have an alternative plan/ plan B. To be able to deliver in a timely manner, even if with costs, to be able to charge the costs to the supplier or transporter and restore the trust with the customer. Apprenticeships: Systematically monitor processes in order to anticipate possible delays in advance in order to fill them before they occur and / or keep clients informed of their possibility so as not to lose their confidence or to hinder the functioning of their companies.



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 7 points

Below average - 8 to 9 points

On average - 10 to 12 points

Above average - 13 to 14 points

Well above average - 15 points and over.

Mean – 11,0

Median – 11,0

Mode – 11,00

Std. Dev. – 3,53

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 19,0



RESULTS INTERPRETATION

BULGARIA

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



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 2:

Much below average: 5 points

Below average: 6 – 7 points

On average: 8 points

Above average: 9 – 10 points

Much above average: 11 points and over

Mean – 7,8

Median – 8,0

Mode – 8,0

Std. Dev. – 2,7

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 15,0



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 2:

Much below average: 5 – 7 points

Below average: 8 – 9 points

On average: 10 points

Above average: 11 – 12 points

Much above average: 13 points and over

Mean – 10,2

Median – 10,0

Mode – 11,0

Std. Dev. – 2,6

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 17,0



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 2:

Much below average: 5 – 7 points

Below average: 8 – 9 points

On average: 10 points

Above average: 11 – 12 points

Much above average: 13 points and over

Mean – 9,8

Median – 10,0

Mode – 10,0

Std. Dev. – 2,6

Minimum – 5,0

Maximum – 15,0



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