



R servis – theoretical introduction to the case study

Work Package 2

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It has always been a necessity to bring real life to learning and case studies represent an effective way of doing so. A case study is a sort of puzzle, having a real-life problem that has to be solved by the learners. The case study should have enough information so that the readers understand the problem, however only such an amount to help them in search for a feasible solution to the situation being solved.

A good case study must not be just a simple description providing a solution at the end. The information has to be arranged in a way guiding the reader to the problem identification and leaving an open end. The open end is the platform where the reader can exercise all the information provided and to work on the solution. Coming to a solution is a hard process and it should always be kept in mind there is hardly ever one correct solution.

Starting a business requires time, capital, and determination followed by a never ending chain of activities to keep the business operating. This was also the stimulus for the origin of the presented case study. The educational and training purposes are to allow the start-up entrepreneurs either with or without economic education step out of the presumptions and gain an insight into the problems small and medium businesses generally face.

The case study presents a real SME, its situation, and problems arising from its business activities. **R servis**, selected for the purpose of the study, is a SME situated in the town of Haviřov specializing in car repair services and tyre services.

The data was collected through an interview with the company owners, internet search, observation, and field work. All the data were a subject to SWOT analysis, semiotic analysis and thematic analysis followed by deduction. All the elementary data for the case study solution are arranged in the study to guide the readers to the problem and to help them find a feasible solution. However, the learning objective of the case study is to apply and exercise **problem solving**, a tool for successful managerial decision making, as it is a must when preparing for comparable situations in professional life. Problem solving methodology is based on collaborative approach that includes searching and sharing information sources, reasoning, and discussion.

Problem solving

The company environment is constantly changing and contains features of uncertainty, turbulence and unpredictability. In such conditions problem solving becomes an important managerial skill. The managers who can formulate the problem effectively can take advantage of the situation and thus convert the problem into an opportunity.

Problem solving includes the following steps.

- Identification of the problem
- Analysis of the problem, and gathering of information bearing on the problem
- Selection of one or more hypotheses
- Testing of hypotheses
- Arriving at a conclusion relative to the solution of the problem

Identification of the problem

The first step when solving a problem usually involves defining the problem that is to be solved. This definition not only involves identifying the problem, but also checking that this is the right problem to solve as the managers often use the most immediate solution to the first problem definition that they find without spending time checking the problem is the right one to answer.

Analysis of the problem, and gathering of information bearing on the problem

Analysis includes various methods of investigation. Necessary data and sources have to be provided via research. The data needs to be analyzed to prove that the right problem to be solved had been identified. The data is to serve as the potential source the decision making process may be based on.

Selection of one or more hypotheses

After revealing the real problem to be solved and investigating the environment, causes and available information, the next stage is to generate a number of possible solutions. At this stage many solutions should be generated, but not evaluated as often an idea, which would have been excluded immediately, when evaluated properly, can be developed into the most suitable solution.

Testing of hypotheses

Investigation into the various factors about each of the potential solutions is to start in this section of the problem solving process. The good and bad points and other things which are relevant to each solution are noted. At this stage it is important to write down

the valid good points about the potential solutions because writing is the effective way of revealing unique advantages worth the further development.

Arriving at a conclusion relative to the solution of the problem

Here starts the process of evaluating the various influencing factors for each possible solution and deciding which solutions to keep and which to disregard. In some cases pure facts and figures determine the ideas to accept, in other cases, the decision is to be based upon feelings and intuition.

Often a shortlist of potential solutions might be the final product of problem solving.

The environment and the problems the managers have to face do not allow them the luxury of obtaining all the evidence before taking action. However, training gives them skills to compensate the lack of time.

Human resources management (HRM)

The main problems detected during the research in the company operation include staff and capacity issues. The capacity issues are being solved by the company; however the staff issues, specifically lack of staff, still remain.

Human resources management can be defined as the management process of an organization's workforce, or human resources. It enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall company direction and the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives. It includes:

- attraction,
- selection,
- training,
- assessment,
- rewarding.

Large companies have their own human resources departments that are in charge of the items named above. In the SME context the functions are commonly performed directly by the owners. The SME owners lack higher economic education and frequently base their solutions on feelings and intuition, nevertheless the problem solving skills can bring more reason into the decision making process.

To learn more about Human resource management the following sources are recommended:

MATHIS, Robert L a John Harold JACKSON. *Human resource management*. 12th ed. Mason, OH: Thomson/South-western, c2008, xxix, 592 p. ISBN 03-245-4275-5.

ARMSTRONG, Sharon a Barbara MITCHELL. *The essential HR handbook: a quick and handy resource for any manager or HR professional*. Franklin Lakes, N.J.: Career Press, c2008, 255 p. ISBN 15-641-4990-0.

MITCHELL, Barbara a Cornelia GAMLEM. *The big book of HR*. Pompton Plains, NJ: Career Press, c2012, 320 p. ISBN 978-160-1636-379.

The first three items – attraction, selection, and training, come into consideration when solving the problem related to the **R servis** case study. The readers/ learners when solving the problem are to search for more appropriate information via the links provided at the end of the case study, to analyse the information, to propose and present their individual solutions, and to consider and discuss other potential solutions.

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