

Guidance for evidence-based practice

Learner 2

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EBP in an organisation (AC 1.1)

Evidence-based practice can help organisations make decisions that can produce positive impacts and minimises any potential risk that could harm them. Decisions that are made based on personal experience, passed wisdom, intuitions, assumptions, and belief can potentially cause critical and/or sometimes irreversible damage to organisations. Evidence based practice is about using good quality, best available evidence, and critical thinking to make the best decision possible to deliver a positive outcome for the organisation.

Organisational evidence can be used to investigate many issues. For example, a high staff turnover rate, HR professionals can conduct staff exit interviews, asking them the reasons for their resignation, then collect and assess this information to see if there is any commonality. Possible issues that could be identified are lower than average salaries, high volumes of work, and limited or no flexible working time to meet family needs. The HR professional can investigate these issues and come up with solutions which could help retain staff.

Stakeholder evidence can be used to improve staff satisfaction. For instance, HR professionals can conduct surveys on flexible working hours to find out more about employee's needs around work and life balance. Examining the results together with the company policy, a HR professional can make recommendations to improve and update company policies to drive better outcomes.

The importance of using data in organisations (AC1.2)

Use of data is necessary to run the day-to-day business operations as it gives greater insight and evidence to support any critical decisions that need to be made. Without data, it is difficult to accurately determine problems and issues an organisation maybe facing. For instance, keeping data on business expenses allows organisations to allocate financial budgets, predict future spendings, and identify any over or under performance giving rise to future potential issues. An employee's performance data can be used to identify skill gaps, which can then be addressed with an appropriate training plan. Key to this is to ensure that the data is up-to-date and accurate as unreliable data can lead organisations to make the wrong decision.

Organisations also need to keep data to ensure they comply with employment law and any regulatory requirements. Records of Tax, national insurance payments, pay, wages and personal information about an employee are all necessary data that organisations are obliged to keep. This data contains highly sensitive and confidential information about employees, as well as the business. The organisations must handle all data ethically and ensure this information is protected from misuse or external access. It also must meet with legal requirements such as the Equality Act UK and GDPR. Breach of these legislations can lead organisations to face tough consequences not only financially but also to its reputation. Therefore, regular training, updates on data usage and protection are necessary.

Types of data measurements that people professionals use (AC 1.3)

Qualitative data is non-numerical and text-based data that cannot be measured. It can be observed and/or recorded. It is subjective and can give more in-depth information in a small number of cases. A HR professional can collect qualitative data by conducting surveys, interviewing employees, and examining existing data. For instance, if there is a high trend in staff absence and turnover, a HR professional can conduct surveys on employees' wellbeing, satisfaction and exit interviews to find out more about the reasons why employees are resigning. After collecting information, a HR professional can interpret the data and identify potential solutions and make recommendations to combat any specific issue. However, validity and reliability of this approach will depend on the ability of the researcher to interpret data.

Quantitative data is based on the collection and analysis of numerical data. It may produce less in-depth information in comparison to qualitative data, however, it works well when assessing a large range of cases/employees. It can also see trends as data can be monitored consistently over a long period of time. HR data such as number of employees, hours of work, holidays and salary are all quantitative data. A HR professional can use quantitative data to assess and better understand many situations within an organisation. For instance, percentage of age, gender, and race of employees provides an insight of diversity of the organisation. If there is a greater volume in one area, the HR professional can consider addressing this issue in future recruiting. A high number of dismissals can be an indicator for problems in recruiting, inefficient training, and/or mismanagement. In such scenarios, a HR professional can investigate into each possible area and come up with suggestions to improve the situation.

How the application of agreed policies and procedures informs decisions(AC 1.6)

Having agreed and up to date policies and procedures enables a HR profession to act consistently, treating everyone fairly and equally. It also gives them a clear guidance to follow when an event happens, therefore, it saves time in decision making. For instance, a policy about parental and caring duties gives all employees the same benefit when they are raising a family. Another example would be a health and safety policy which can mitigate potential risks and injuries at work. Policies should also include the rights and responsibilities of both the employees and employers to have a clear understanding of their positions.

The application of policies and procedures benefit organisations in many ways. For instance, disciplinary policies can help identify harassment or bullying within a workplace, offering guidance on actions in how to improve the situation. This helps create a better working environment which benefits everyone's wellbeing and ultimately improves productivity.

Just having policies and procedures in place will not be enough to impact the organisation positively. They must be well written, clearly communicated, accessible to everyone, and properly implemented within the organisation. Policies and procedures are there to protect everyone and to make working conditions fair and equal. It is important for HR professionals to fully understand policies and procedures and be able to apply them to each situation.

How people professionals create value (AC 2.1)

Recruitment is one of the areas that people professionals can create value to an organisation. Selecting and hiring the right person at the right time will benefit all stakeholders. It increases employees' productivity and helps sustain and improve the business's performance level. In addition, an insufficient number and less talented employees can create risks to the organisation. Providing the right number of people with the skillsets improves productivity and profit of the organisation. It also creates a good work atmosphere, avoiding unnecessary work pressure due to an insufficient number of employees which can contribute to employees' wellbeing. Good working conditions enhances employees' engagement which ultimately generates more profit for the organisation. The quality and speed of work can improve which in turn can add to the customer satisfaction.

Creation and delivery of a well-made induction plan for new starters adds value to both the employee and organisation. It gives a clear guidance and expectation to the new starters, and it is a great opportunity to embed positive organisational cultures with new starters as they are more likely to adopt such behaviours. The clearer the job expectations are made, the shorter time spent for them to be fully productive and become great assets to the organisation. This results in increased profitability and customer satisfaction.

People professionals can set a transparent and attractive performance and rewards scheme. Having a competitive scheme not only encourages employees to perform but also assists in retaining and recruiting high performers. As people are the heart of organisations, having motivated, well performing employees can help accelerate the company's performance to achieve its goals, which benefits all the stakeholders.

How I can be customer-focused, and standards driven (AC 2.2)

As a HR professional, my primary customers are internal customers. To give them the best customer service, having a Service Level Agreement helps everyone to be aware what levels of service are to be expected in certain situations. It minimises the chance of any misunderstandings between all parties and helps me make decisions and act in a fair, accurate and speedy manner.

Good communication is a vital skill when it comes to offering the best customer service. To do this, I listen and try to understand the situation fully so I can consider all aspects when deciding on what support I can offer. I always seek to be honest and clear when providing advice and support. To develop this in my past roles, I have asked managers from each department to give me feedback and advice on what can be improved. This has helped me find out their needs in more depth and improve how I can best support them.

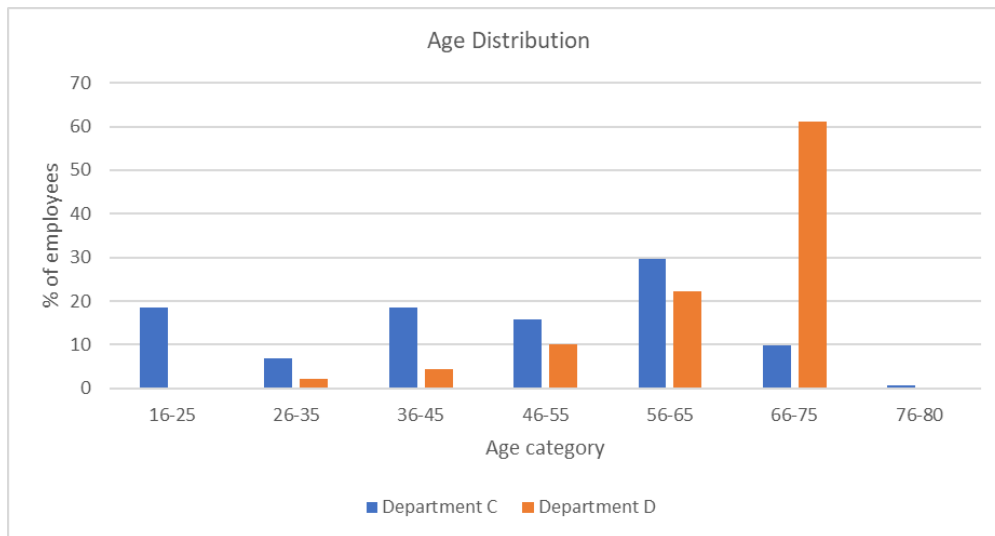
It's also important to stay up to date with developments in the external market. Checking industry focused materials and websites regularly helps me stay in touch with the latest industry developments. I regularly review information that can be used to benchmark my organisation which helps me judge where we are standing in the market. This allows me to make recommendations to improve the HR effectiveness if necessary.

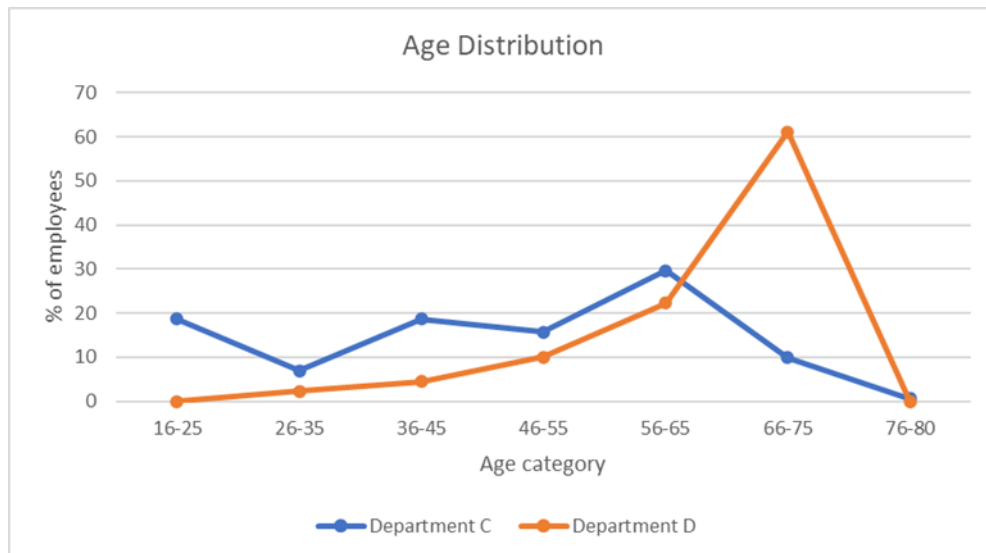
Reviewing my own effectiveness is another great way to improve my customer service skills. For instance, time management is very important to meet customer needs. Therefore, I would prioritise and be transparent about my time frame of work and service I can provide. By combining my experience, market knowledge and latest findings, I can identify and prioritise areas that need to be improved and which will have the most material impact on the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, building customer satisfaction and developing my credibility.

Calculation of the data (AC 1.4)

		Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age
	Total in each department	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76-80
Department A	182	12	23	45	44	50	8	0
	%	7	13	25	24	27	4	0
Department B	146	4	9	21	36	70	4	2
	%	3	6	14	25	48	3	1
Department C	172	32	12	32	27	51	17	1
	%	19	7	19	16	30	10	1
Department D	90	0	2	4	9	20	55	0
	%	0	2	4	10	22	61	0
Department E	262	18	12	31	56	118	23	4
	%	7	5	12	21	45	9	2
Department F	158	74	54	18	7	5	0	0
	%	47	34	11	4	3	0	0

Interpretation of the data (AC 1.5)





The age distribution of Department C is well balanced and closely reflects the average age distribution across all departments. Although having age diversity is great, this may also cause cultural conflict due to the broader mix of generations. Introducing an open and transparent culture which promotes diversity and clear communication could positively benefit the department as it will help remove both conscious and unconscious biases, thus creating a productive workplace culture. Organising thoughtful and appropriate team building activities and social events are recommended to maximise the inclusion of the diversity and promote the opportunities to work effectively together. Promoting mentoring within the department can also help cross training, the sharing of experiences and creating a more positive team bonding.

Although the age mix is spread across all categories almost half of the employees are in the average parental age category. Flexible working hours and options for remote working will support employees' need with a parental care responsibility. In addition, flexible working style is getting more and more popular as employees are valuing a balanced work and lifestyle, especially after the Covid 19 pandemic. To retain high performing employees and attract new talent it is recommended to implement flexible working. However, this does need to be balanced with employees outside the average parental range with recognition that younger worker could equally value office working for the social interaction, increased learnings and also reflecting the limitation they may face in working from home.

61% of employees in department D fall into age group 66-75, in comparison to only 6% and 0% of employees falling into the 26-45 and 16-25 age range respectively. These are the lowest percentage representations within these age ranges across all departments in the organisation. This indicates one possible risk, that there could be a large number of retirements in a short period of time which would result in putting a lot of pressure on the remaining staff, affecting the department's ability to perform effectively. It may also reduce productivity due to an insufficient number of staff and the loss of relevant experience. Therefore, to sustain the business level, recruiting younger employees are recommended, while also having open dialogue with older staff so any retirement is known well in advance and can be planned for. Balancing out the number of staff in each age category not only minimises the potential risks, but also benefits the organisation for its diversity and inclusion.

To implement a successful succession plan, investing in a phased retirement plan, training and development in younger employees are key actions in the management of this department.

Providing legal and financial advice and general guidance to those who are retiring in coming years can help promote the need to plan for retirement which in turn supports how the business can manage this transition.

	Age	Age	Age
	16-25	26-55	56+
Department A	7%	62%	32%
Department B	3%	45%	52%
Department C	19%	41%	40%
Department D	0%	17%	83%
Department E	7%	38%	55%
Department F	47%	50%	3%
Average	14%	42%	44%

