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# **Introduction**

# My internship as a crew trainer at McDonald's provided me with a valuable learning opportunity for my postgraduate studies in Business Management at the University of Greenwich. I gained direct insight into the workings of a bustling company in this capacity, particularly on a demanding day such as Black Friday. As Kolb (1984) highlights, such experiential learning opportunities are crucial for integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application in the field of business management. I'll discuss a significant McDonald's event in this assessment. I learned a lot about controlling tension and making rapid decisions from managing stock on a very busy day. This experience has been incredibly helpful in helping me understand how company management functions in the real world and has a strong connection to what I'm learning in my degree. It's an excellent illustration of how my education and professional background combine to prepare me for future opportunities.

# **Critical Incident**

Overestimating the amount of stock needed for Black Friday at McDonald's resulted in shortages and an argument with the management.

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| STARP Table | Notes |
| S= situation | * Working the night shift on Black Friday at McDonald's in London on 291 Oxford Street. * High standards for quantity of sales and customer base. * An expanded works that goes beyond staff training that involves stock management. |
| T= task | * Make sure there is sufficient supply for the expected Black Friday demand. * Prevent running out of essential supplies like drinks, fries, and hamburgers. * Properly handle inventories under challenging circumstances. |
| A= action | * Stock predictions were based on previous sales information. * Came across shortages during the working day and worked with the team to find a solution. * Spoke with suppliers about last-minute restocking. * Managed workplace conflicts and customer service issues during the stock shortages. |
| R= result | * Substantial shortages in stock affected the store's capacity to provide customer service. * As a result of the overlook, faced a problematic situation with the manager. * Learned familiarity with the significance of crisis communication and exact estimation of demand. |
| P= plan | * Get more training in prediction of demand and handling inventory. * Create an easier and more accurate method to predict supply requirements during occasions when there is high demand. * Develop skills in communication, especially for handling conflict and extremely high-pressure circumstances. * To keep improving, ask for frequent guidance from with more experience coworkers and superiors. |

# **Detailed Reflection**

Considering the crucial occurrence of stock mishandling at McDonald's on Black Friday provides a perceptive look at the possibilities and difficulties of managing a real-world corporation. This encounter, which took place in one of the most hectic situations in retailing, offered a complex learning opportunity that went far beyond the parameters of standard inventory management. As Chopra and Meindl (2015) discuss, effective supply chain management involves navigating the unpredictability of customer demand and the complexities of inventory control, especially in high-stress situations like Black Friday sales. Moreover, Stevenson (2018) emphasizes the importance of adaptive and responsive operations management strategies to address unexpected challenges in real-time. From this incident, I should be more reflective on these four key points which I lack experience with, to prevent future mistakes in this field.

**1. Incident Analysis**

My regular duties as a crew trainer include supervising newly hired employees. But on Black Friday, which was a very busy day for customers, I had to take on the extra duty of overseeing the store's inventory. My strategy seemed simple at first: I would examine previous sales information and calculate the amount of stock needed to avoid shortages, aligning with approaches detailed by Krajewski, Malhotra, and Ritzman (2019). The goal of this approach was to guarantee a continuous flow of services. However, unexpected difficulties arose when this approach was put into practice.

Over the period of the day, it became clear that my stock estimates were way off. Early shortage of necessary elements caused a disruption in our service delivery efficiency. This not only made me question my faith in inventory forecasts, but it also brought to light how unpredictable client demand can be and how difficult it can be to manage a supply chain efficiently, particularly on a big shopping day.

**2. Skills and Challenges**

The situation required quick crisis management and analytical abilities, reflecting principles in operations management as described by Heizer and Render (2018). I worked with the team to resolve the new issues and made contact with providers for emergency restocking. This scenario put the team's perseverance under pressure to the test as well as my capacity to manage unexpected problems. Another additional complication was created by the suppliers' ambiguous response, highlighting the importance of quick decision-making in emergency situations.

**3. Learning Points**

The event made clear how crucial accurate stock forecasting is, particularly when there is a lot of demand. I discovered that making crucial errors in calculations can occur when depending just on previous information while neglecting to consider potential differences in client behaviours. The circumstances also emphasised the importance of contingency planning and the need to have backup plans in case of unforeseen circumstances.

The argument with my manager also made it evident how important it is to communicate honestly and openly as well as how to handle problems. The argument was crucial because it showed how important open communication and honesty are to admitting faults and growing from them.

**4. Academic Connection**

When the incident is related to academic study, it aligns with important ideas in organizational communication and supply chain management. For example, the Just-In-Time (JIT) inventory system emphasizes the need for flexible supply chain procedures and accurate demand forecasts. (Heizer, 2020) The episode also aligns with Timothy Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), which advocates adaptable communication techniques in crisis scenarios. (Coombs, 2007) Additionally, traits like extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness, as discussed by Robbins & Judge (2019), are instrumental for leadership during crises. Leaders who are extroverted, disciplined, and open seem to navigate leadership challenges more effectively (Stephen P. Robbins & Timothy A. Judge, 2020,).

My action plan for the future calls for improving my knowledge of handling stocks through special training and creating more accurate methods for demand forecasting. It's also critical to develop communication skills, especially when it comes to stress management and conflict resolution. My continued education and development will be greatly aided by regular comments and conversations with more experienced colleagues. Through the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical experience gained from this challenging McDonald's experience, I have improved my professional approach to management and crisis resolution by realising the significance of essential leadership qualities."

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# **Action Plan for Post-Graduate Role**

**1. Advanced Inventory and Supply Chain Management Skills**

**Objective:** To gain advanced knowledge in supply chain and inventory management, which are essential for guaranteeing operational effectiveness and successfully satisfying client requests.

**Actions:**

* Participate in a supply chain management advanced course to expand your knowledge of prediction, logistics, and inventory control.
* Take part in realistic seminars or simulations that imitate high-stress inventory situations, like to those that occur on Black Friday.

**Timeline:** Complete the course and attend at least two workshops by the end of 2024.

**Resources:**

* **Courses**: Coursera or edX for supply chain management courses.
* **Book:** "Supply Chain Management" by Sunil Chopra and Peter Meindl.

**2. Improving Strategic Decision Making and Problem Solving**

**Objective:** To improve my ability for fast accurate strategic decision-making, which is essential for handling unstable corporate conditions.

**Actions:**

* Carry out research and case studies with the focus on managing businesses and making decisions under pressure.
* Seek guidance or mentoring from experienced teachers or corporate executives to acquire understanding of successful decision-making techniques.

**Timeline:** Regular case study exercises throughout 2024, with at least one mentoring session per quarter.

**Resources:**

* **Case Studies**: Harvard Business Review Case Studies.
* **Mentorship:** LinkedIn for connecting with professionals in strategic management.

**3. Developing Leadership and Team Management Competencies**

**Goal:** To develop strong leadership abilities that boost and motivate groups, particularly in difficult situations.

**Action:**

* Participate in webinars or seminars for growth in leadership, including motivating techniques, team management, and how to resolve disputes.
* To put these abilities to use in real-world situations, volunteer for leadership positions in community organisations or group initiatives.

**Timeline:** By 2024, participate in two leadership positions and attend a minimum of three seminars.

**Resources:**

* **Seminars/Webinars:** Chartered Management Institute and TED Talks.
* **Book:** "Leaders Eat Last" by Simon Sinek.

**4. Enhancing Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills**

**Goal:** To enhance communication abilities, specifically focusing bargaining and problem solving, which are crucial for overseeing teamwork and dealing with customers.

**Action:**

* Attend classes or workshops on communication, with a focus on methods for resolving conflicts.
* Engage in regular conversations using these abilities in both personal and professional contexts and look for helpful criticism.

**Timeline:** Finish a communication course by the middle of 2024 and keep using my newfound talents.

**Resources:**

* **Workshops**: American Management Association for communication workshops.
* **Public Speaking:** Toastmasters International for public speaking and communication skills.

**5. Expanding Financial Acumen**

**Goal:** To deepen my understanding of financial management, an essential component of running a business.

**Action:**

* Get enrolled in a course on financial management that covers cost management, budgeting, and financial analysis.
* Use these financial ideas for managing my personal finances or other related projects.

**Timeline:** Finish the course before the end of 2024 and put the lessons learned to use all year long.

**Resources:**

* **Online Courses:** Udemy or Khan Academy for financial management courses.
* **Book:** "Finance for Non-Financial Managers" by Gene Siciliano.

**6. Building Networking and Industry Insight**

**Goals:** Trying to keep aware of modern business developments and expanding one's professional connections.

**Action:**

* Participate in company management-related seminars and networking activities.
* Contribute to online forums and debates and establish active connections with professionals on sites such as LinkedIn.

**Timeline:** Participate often online and attend a minimum of two industry events annually.

**Resources:**

* Conferences: Global Leadership Summit and similar industry events.
* Professional Networking: LinkedIn groups and discussions.

**7. Personal Development and Continuous Learning**

**Objective:** To inspire a continuous dedication to personal growth and education.

**Action:**

* Make time on a regular basis to reflect on my personal work experiences and lessons learned.
* To find areas that need work, get input from mentors, superiors, and colleagues.

**Timeline:** Ongoing, with requests for input and monthly reflection sessions.

**Resources:**

* **Self-Reflection:** Journals or apps like Reflectly.
* **Feedback**: Implementing a 360-degree feedback system with peers and mentors.

# **Conclusion**

This experience taught me how crucial it is to remain learning and improving constantly, especially when it comes to business management, and how crucial it is to handle difficult situations successfully. resulting in my action plan and reflecting on the Black Friday stock situation at McDonald's had taught me a lot.

I learned from the Black Friday incident how difficult it is to run a store and how important it is to make wise decisions fast. It also demonstrated to me the value of having clear communication and effective interpersonal skills, whether I'm working with co-workers or my supervisor. The main goal of my action plan is to improve in these areas. In understanding crises, it's evolved that leaders must recognize the difference between a crisis and other challenging occurrences. This ability to distinguish and respond appropriately is crucial and is a focus in my ongoing development for effective crisis management and leadership. (Lynn Perry Wooten & Erika Hayes James, 2005)

It involves learning in areas such as stock management, wise decision-making, team leadership, effective communication, financial comprehension, relationship-building, and personal development.

The strategy helps me accomplish my objectives by utilising particular books, courses, and other resources. I've gained a lot of knowledge from this procedure that will be useful for my future profession. The combination of my professional expertise and the knowledge I've gained in my coursework is incredibly helpful. This project is a step towards becoming ready for the corporate world and succeeding in my future career.

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