Final Project: Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management

Introduction

Ready to apply your skills? Use them to tackle some business challenges at Northwind Trading. The company is facing a downward sales trend and negative social media feedback. In this exercise, your mission is to figure out why.

Put your new skills to work! Use the business analysis tools and techniques you've mastered to complete this task.

- Quantitative Techniques
- Qualitative Techniques
- Statistical sampling
- Root-cause analysis using the 5 Whys
- User Role analysis
- Stakeholder analysis and mapping
- RACI Matrix

Here is a brief brief outline of each technique:

Quantitative Techniques: Utilize statistical methods and data analysis to identify patterns, trends, and anomalies in numerical data, such as sales figures, customer metrics, and performance indicators.

Qualitative Techniques: Gather insights, opinions, and feedback through interviews, surveys, and observations to uncover subjective factors, perceptions, and underlying issues that may not be captured by quantitative data alone.

Statistical Sampling: Statistical Sampling is a method used in research and data analysis to gather information about a population by examining only a subset, or sample, of its members. Instead of analyzing every individual within a population, statistical sampling selects a representative group based on predefined criteria.

Root-Cause Analysis using the 5 Whys: The 5 Whys method involves asking "why" repeatedly to uncover the underlying cause of a problem or issue. By iteratively probing deeper into the root cause of each answer, you can identify the fundamental factors contributing to the problem.

User Role Analysis: User Role analysis involves identifying and understanding the needs of different users. It helps with making sure that the provided solutions match user expectations.

Stakeholder Analysis and Mapping: Stakeholder analysis involves identifying and assessing stakeholders' interests, influence, and involvement in a project. Stakeholder mapping visualizes the relationships between stakeholders and their level of influence or interest in the project, helping prioritize communication and engagement efforts.

RACI Matrix: The RACI Matrix is a project management tool used to clarify and communicate roles and responsibilities for project tasks. It assigns each stakeholder a role (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted or Informed) based on their involvement in each task.

It's time for you to begin the exercise and apply these tools and techniques to address the challenges faced by Northwind Trading. Read the case study carefully, then apply your skills to each step of the project/exercise.

Case study

An eCommerce company, Northwind Trading, has been operating successfully for the past four years. Sales have been steady through this time, with some small seasonal fluctuations. However, last month's sales figures showed a downward trend for the first time, and the company also noticed that several customers posted negative comments on social media about the online store.

Ali, the Northwind Trading website administrator, reported that the eCommerce website was redesigned a month ago. The redesign included implementing a new checkout process that now requires the customers to register before completing the sale. The registration was implemented because the marketing team needed to collect customer data for promotional purposes and to track purchase history. Ali has not noticed any technical issues with the website. Pages are loading slower than he would wish, however he expects that the performance will be dramatically improved once he has completed the optimization of all the product images.

According to the report completed by Sua, the sales manager, there aren't any obvious problems with the sales. However, Northwind Trading management believes that "it is better to be safe than to be sorry" and decide to investigate the situation before the sales problem gets any worse.

You are provided with the following information:

Step 1: Download data files

You are given two data files by Northwind Trading. Click each file and save it to your device.

Step 2: Download the workbook file

To prepare and present your analysis use this workbook. Click the file and save it to your device for later use.

Step 3: Problem identification

You are assigned as a Business Analyst to manage this project. You need to investigate if there is an issue at Northwind Trading and, if you find an issue, to pinpoint the root cause of the problem. Then you need to write a short recommendation to the management as to what is the best course of action. Use the Excel spreadsheet for any calculations and then complete **Deliverable 1** on page 1, and **Deliverable 2** in page 2 of the *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook,* which you should have downloaded in Step 2.

Questions are provided below to guide you in this step.

Deliverable 1 - Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis (Questions 1 to 5)

1. Scrutinize Northwind Trading March Sales Data (in the *Sales Data and Statistics* spreadsheet you downloaded) and see if you can spot any trends. Are the sales growing, declining, or fairly stable? What about website visits?

2. Calculate March sales totals and average daily sales values, the number of transactions per day, and the average transaction value per period using the *Sales Data and Statistics* spreadsheet you downloaded. Once completed, please fill your answers in the DELIVERABLE 1 section of *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook*

3. Compare February and March totals. Calculate the difference in sales value and difference in percentage. Record it in the *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook.*

4. Read and analyze the customer complaints in the second download file - *Sales Report and Customer Complaints*. Is there a recurring theme? What are the customers unhappy about? You can add these complaints to the *Sales Data and Statistics* spreadsheet (create a new Customer Complaints Analysis tab). You must analyze and categorize the customer complaints. Read all the complaints and determine where complaints fall into the same category. The hashtags will help you with categorization but don't depend on them totally, read the complaint and use your own judgment to categorize it. In the next column of the Complaints Analysis tab create a heading called 'Complaint type' and enter in your categorization of each complaint, for instance Checkout-issues or website speed issues. Then count the number of complaints per complaint type; e.g., "Checkout-issues: 5 complaints." You will need this count of each category for your final recommendation to the Northwind Trading Management (located in the next deliverable).

5. Read the Sales Manager's report in the *"Sales Report and Customer Complaints"* file you downloaded in Step 1 of this exercise . Do you agree with her analysis of the situation?

Deliverable 2 - Root cause analysis and Management Recommendations

1. Root cause analysis—What questions would you ask to determine the root cause of this problem? Write down each question and a fictional response of one of the Stakeholders to demonstrate your understanding of the 5 Whys root-cause analysis method. Use *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook*

2. Now, write down your recommendation to the Northwind Trading management team in the *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook*.

Remember that all your opinions and recommendations must be backed by hard facts, so please quote the results of your analysis in your recommendations.

Step 4: Initiate the project by understanding the users and the stakeholders.

In this step, you need to address the issue of declining sales and customer complaints. Imagine that based on your recommendation the Northwind Traders management decided to launch a website redesign project.

You were asked to assist the Project Manager with project planning. Your task is to analyze your website users and the project stakeholders, and help with the allocation of project roles and responsibilities. The PM asked you to deliver User Role Analysis, Stakeholder Analysis and Mapping and the RACI Matrix.

Deliverable 3 - User Role Analysis

1. Identify the users of the online store and complete the user role analysis using the *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook* provided.

Deliverable 4 - Stakeholder Analysis and Stakeholder Mapping on the Power - Interest Grid

1. Identify the project stakeholders and complete stakeholder analysis, mapping, and prioritization using the *Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook* provided.

Deliverable 5 - Stakeholders' RACI Matrix

1. Consult the high-level project plan to improve the website and allocate each task to the stakeholders using the RACI Matrix (*Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management – Workbook* provided).