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|  | Individual Report and Reflection |
|  |  |
|  | Sadiq Tijjani  Summer Practice Track  4/9/23 |

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Introduction

This report is concerned with the events of the summer practice track which took place between 4th July 2023 and 4th September 2023. My group was assigned was the problem of solving an outstanding engineering management challenge for the Babcock International Group, one of the largest defense companies in the UK and globally. The project task was to evaluate the future of Babcock’s products and services in the context of societal changes and the company’s commitments to reducing carbon emissions and creating social value.

The purpose of this report is to, firstly, capture one relevant skill, capability or process that was applied in our project which can be related to any engineering and technology management frameworks that was taught during the Engineering Business Management course, Critically evaluating how successfully it was deployed in the project and recommending potential areas of improvement, particularly this report will evaluate the different forms and methods used of/for strategic analysis during the project. Secondly, this report will endeavor to capture and/or summarize my critical reflection on the project, both at a group and individual level, providing an account of the project progression and critically assessing its delivery against the project goals and highlighting/analyzing my role in this process.

In the first part, the report will start with an overview of the project details and then move into strategic analysis(what it is and how it works), including the purpose and scope, evaluating the effectiveness of analysis, considering tools Like Porter’s five forces, PESTEL analysis and SWOT and evaluating the strategic analysis process. In the second part, the Gibbs Reflective Cycle model (1988) will be used to analyze/evaluate individual contribution to the project related to the application of leadership or teamworking skills through each of the four team development stages defined by Tuckman (1965), concluding with an overview of the work conducted and its quality, my experiences and future considerations for my personal and professional development.

Project Overview

Babcock International Group is a British aerospace, defense, and nuclear engineering services specializing in managing complex assets and infrastructure, with its main business being with public bodies, particularly the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense and Network Rail. The defense industry is currently in its early stages of sustainability/new technology adoption, with the UK’s Ministry Of Defense committing at least £6.6 billion in research and development (R&D) to ensure defense sustains operational advantage while also setting sustainable development principles, which include reducing energy consumption and emissions, for the aerospace and defense industry, supply chain disruptions and talent shortages may be the biggest challenges in 2023. Furthermore, the Russian invasion of Ukraine disrupted global supply chains, especially for critical metals and rare earth elements, and exacerbated fuel price volatility(Deloitte, 2023). As it stands, Babcock is faced by challenges such as that caused by inflationary pressures, attracting engineering talent, tracking emissions across their operations and value chain and accelerated digital transformation(Deloitte, 2023; Dimitrova, 2021; Hardy, 2022)

The Project task was as follows:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of global trends and developments, including changes in technology, consumer behavior, and market dynamics.

2. Evaluate the company's current products and services portfolio and identify areas for new markets, potential growth, and innovation considering societal changes, emerging trends, and customer needs.

3. Develop recommendations and a framework or visualization for the company to align its products and services offering with areas of growth, societal changes, and the company’s commitments to addressing Climate Change and sustainable development.

Part One: Strategy Analysis

Strategy analysis is the process of researching and analyzing an organization and its working environment to create a strategy(Corporate Finance Institute, 2020), It involves identifying strategic and vital needs, providing the enterprise with the means to satisfy those needs, and aligning agreed strategy with the other strategies of the higher and lower level. Strategic analyses enable us to assess the initial situation, to evaluate the situation inside and outside of the company, to reveal the factors that will cause changes in the environment (David, 2013; Papulova and Gazova, 2016). Strategic analysis informs the strategic decision-making process which plays a crucial role in business management because it involves fundamental decisions which shape the course of a firm and its future orientation and direction( Papulova and Gazova, 2016), this follows that the effectiveness of a strategic analysis determines the success of a company.

Immanuel Kant, in his book *Critique Of Pure Reason,* explores the relationship between human cognition and experience, questioning how knowledge arises from the interplay of sensory data and innate mental structures. He posits that while sensory experiences provide raw materials, the mind's innate concepts and categories shape and organize these experiences into coherent knowledge. He argues that certain truths, such as mathematical and metaphysical propositions, are neither purely empirical nor derived from experience alone. Instead, they involve a combination of innate concepts and synthetic reasoning that transcends mere sense perception, he also asserts that knowledge does not merely conform to objective reality but is also shaped by the mind's cognitive faculties. In essence, Kant's exploration of the genesis of knowledge emphasizes the interplay between sensory experience, innate concepts, and the mind's cognitive structures.

Immanuel Kant's perspective on knowledge genesis in *Critique of Pure Reason* has parallels with strategic analysis processes. Kant's exploration of how cognition combines sensory data and innate concepts to form knowledge aligns with strategic analysis's synthesis of empirical and conceptual information for decision-making. In strategic analysis, organizations collect internal and external data, akin to sensory experiences, to understand their situation and the environment. Kant's emphasis on innate concepts finds resonance in the application of frameworks and models, serving as cognitive structures to interpret data in strategic analysis, just as Kant combines sensory experiences and concepts, strategic analysis blends empirical data with cognitive frameworks to drive informed decisions, illuminating the philosophical underpinnings of effective strategic thinking(Kant, Guyer & Wood , 1998).

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The process of thinking and decision-making(Papulova and Gazova, 2016).

There are several methodologies available to help guide the process of collecting and analyzing relevant data for strategy planning, including SWOT analysis, Porter five force analysis, TRIZ analysis and PESTLE analysis. To complete the first project task, we began with a PESTEL analysis, which stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors, this analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the external macro-environmental factors that could impact Babcock as an organization such as high levels of investment in technological R&D at both local and international levels by UK Government/MoD, the increasing inflation rate in the UK, and the rise in global defense R&D spending(Wall Street Journal, 2023; UK Government, 2021; UK Ministry Of Defense, 2021 and MarketLine, 2023).

After understanding the macro-environment through PESTEL, we moved on to Porter's Five Forces analysis to assesses the industry's competitive structure by considering the bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of buyers, threat of new entrants, threat of substitutes, and intensity of competitive rivalry. We found that Intense rivalry characterizes the UK aerospace and defense market, driven by competition among large organizations for government and commercial contracts(MarketLine, 2023). Consolidation and high entry barriers due to substantial capital requirements favor established players, enhancing their bargaining power with buyers and suppliers. While few substitutes exist for defense systems, alternatives for commercial aircraft like rail and sea transport can be less practical and time-efficient. We finally funneled all this into the SWOT analysis, evaluating Babcock's internal strengths and weaknesses along with external opportunities and threats and identifying strategic options and understanding how the organization can align its strengths with opportunities.

Discourse On Method

**Input:** At this stage of the strategic analysis process, we meticulously defined the analysis’ scope and objective to ensure alignment with the goal as it pertains to project task 1. For reasons of research availability we narrowed down our scope to just the land, marine and aviation that Babcock were involved in, after dividing the work such that we had 2 people per sector, we embarked on a comprehensive data collection processsourcing information from wherever we could find it, our focus was to collate data that would provide a solid foundation for further analysis, the data collection included analyses on market trends for the aerospace and defense industry, competitor performance reports from companies like BAE Systems and Thales and strategic policies, plans and goals from the UK Government and the UK ministry of defense. We also made sure to gather market data strictly from reputable and reliable sources and institutions like Deloitte, PwC, KPMG, and the Boston Consulting Group while any strategic policies and plans were sourced directly from UK government websites. This stage served as the cornerstone, providing the essential raw materials for our transformation process.

**Transformation:** In this stage of the strategic analysis process, we began with attempting to synthesize our findings from the data collation process, our goal was to find commonalities in our findings from each defense sector we focused on so as to piece together a list of emerging market trends in the aerospace and defense industry. We were able to put together a list of global trends including a focus of supply chain visibility and resilience, the prevalence of unmanned warfare, increased investment in renewables and emissions reduction, increased attention towards smart factories and sustainable manufacturing, an aging global workforce and increasing skills shortages, strong growth for the space industry and dwindling weapon stocks for countries supplying Ukraine(PwC, 2023; Deloitte, 2023; Lockheed Martin Annual Reports, 2022; BAE Systems Annual Reports, 2022; Thales Annual Reports, 2022 and Boeing Defense Annual Reports, 2022). The writer Maurice Blanchot, in his book *The Infinite Conversation*(1993), writes about the search for “The Most Profound Question”, he posits that to question is to seek radically, to go the bottom, to sound, to work at the bottom and finally to uproot, the utility of questioning is constituted in this uprooting which holds on to the root. He puts It to us that we question ourselves about everything in order to sustain and advance the passion of the question, but all questions are directed toward one question alone – the central question or the question of the whole.

The next step in the transformation stage required the group to work towards the question of the whole, we’ve managed to answer the question of *what* trends are taking precedence in the aerospace and defense industry, but that question begs us to ask *how* these trends have become precedent which in turn begs us to ask *why* these trends have come about, to contextualize the trends we decided to use tools like PESTEL, Porter Five Force and the TRIZ analysis. The PESTEL and porter five force analysis served to give us a perspective on the macro environment as it pertains to the external factors which feed into the competitive dynamics within the defense industry(the how) while the TRIZ analysis furnished us with a holistic picture of the historical(Including societal, economic and technological) stressors and facilitators that have brought about these trends at this epoch in time(the fundamental why). This stage acted as the crucible where data metamorphosed into valuable knowledge, laying the groundwork for informed strategic choices.

**Output:** In this stage we conducted an analysis of Babcock’s business strength , we were able to develop a perspective of the micro environment surrounding the company, one finding of interest was that even though Babcock was an international company a significant amount of its business strength was in the UK market, after evaluation of the company’s key sustainability initiatives, we also determined that Babcock was at the efficiency stage of efficiency stage of organizational sustainability(dunphy et al, 2012; Babcock Annual Reports, 2022&2023). Bringing together the determined emerging trends, data from competitor analyses, valuable insights from the PESTEL, porter five force and TRIZ analyses with the internal evaluation of Babcock we were able to identify some of the opportunities and threats that Babcock were faced with using the SWOT analysis tool. Notably we found that Babcock could greatly benefit from venturing into new markets as the competition in the industry was high and the company had notable gaps to fill in terms of investment in R&D and service offerings. These insights were finally translated into clear and concise recommendations that aligned with our project's objectives.

Evaluation of method and potential improvements

Considering feedback from our project supervisor and from Babcock’s Chief Technical Officer and Climate Action leads, the strategic analysis undertaken during the project was satisfactory and the conclusions we drew had congruence with the thinking of the Chief Technical Officer. The Internal analysis could greatly benefit from a supplementary VRIO analysis, evaluating the value the company added to customers, rarity or scarcity of company capabilities, inimitability of company capabilities and management structure for optimum performance(Messineo, 2023). Furthermore, the evaluation of Babcock’s business strength could’ve greatly benefited from using a BCG matrix to evaluate the strategic position of the company’s portfolio, mapping the amount of market share of a product/service and its strength in the particular market against the growth rate of a product/service and its potential to grow in a particular market(Corporate Financial Institute, 2020), unfortunately it proved difficult to find data on the market share of specific niche services that the company offers. This tool together with the VRIO model would’ve allowed for the development of suitable recommendations with more bespoke implementation plans for the organizational changes required to actualize said recommendations.

Additionally, during the idea development stages the group had to cut down on the number of potential recommendations using a ranking system, this process could’ve been greatly added to by a sensitivity analysis which encompasses a range of techniques for measuring the amount of variations in a model's output in correspondence to variations in its input factors. This approach would’ve evaluated our ranking model's responsiveness to changes in parameters and underlying data, the outcomes of which could’ve had significant impact, such as detecting potential discrepancies within the model's structure, guiding the refinement of parameter calibration, and providing insights into the intricate interplay between input variables and the model's outcomes(Salciccioli et al, 2016). Scenario planning could’ve also immensely added to driving home the impact of the recommendations, outlining potential outcomes and estimated impacts, evaluating responses and managing/mitigating for both positive and negative possibilities(Luther and Ali, 2022).

Part Two: Individual Reflection

This section will focus on reflecting on the events of the summer consultancy project per each stage of Tuckman’s(1965) group development stages, including forming, storming, norming and performing, outlining specific details and circumstances at each project epoch using the Gibbs model (1988) which covers description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusions, and action.

Diagram of the Gibbs Model


The Gibbs Reflective Model, Gibbs(1998)

Forming

In this stage, groups are concerned with orientation achieved through testing for the boundaries of both interpersonal and task behaviors. Members are trying to establish their place in the team and understand the team's goals and objectives(Tuckman, 1965).

**Description**

The first week of the project involved an induction including all EBM and ITM students and a subsequent event where all groups were able to meet their respective project sponsors for the first time. The team then got to discussing organizational matters such as the team structure, the frequency of meetings and the best modes of communication, however there was a little hesitancy at first from group members to take responsibility for roles like project manager, point of contact and notes taker.

**Feeling**

The hesitance group members felt for taking on responsibility this early in the project left me with a feeling of uneasiness and discontent which I’m sure my teammates felt as well. In hindsight it was probably caused by uncertainty and apprehension regarding the roles and the tasks at hand, but at that point I felt if we couldn’t get it together this early on then we wouldn’t be able to deliver project work packages on time.

**Evaluation**

At this point in the project, we were still getting to know each other, however one positive point was we all shared common background from engineering, there also seemed to be genuine enthusiasm among group members which was able to offset the slight uneasiness of the first weeks. After the manager, point of contact and notes taker were appointed, there was still a lot left to tighten as manager was not efficient and clear on tasks in the beginning and the point of contact had to be reminded multiple times to set up meetings and send out our project charter for approval. I feel we could’ve all done more to understand what each role required and the consequences of not doing what was required.

**Analysis**

The initial uneasiness I believe was caused by ambiguity about our roles and the task that lay ahead of us, Daniel Kahneman in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*(2011) discussed the “bystander effect” where when many people are present during a situation, individuals often feel less personal responsibility to take action or help, assuming that someone else will step in. This is what I believe was happening in the initial stages of our project, everyone thought someone else would want to be the manager, POC or notes taker, personally I felt like I could take over the managerial but only if I felt like I had to.

**Conclusion and Action Plan**

All things considered the requirements for the initial stages of the project were met, even though some uncertainty lingered till about the first catch up meeting with the project sponsor. Next time I’m in a project I would, make it a point for all member to write down the project scope and objectives individually to see if there is agreement or disagreement, clearly define roles and responsibilities for each team member assigning tasks based on individuals' strengths and expertise, and insist on using an RACI matrix (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) to clearly define who is responsible for each task, who needs to be consulted, who needs to be informed, and who is accountable for the outcome(Good, 2023).

Storming

This stage is characterized by tension and disagreement as team members try to establish their roles and responsibilities(Tuckman, 1965).

**Description**

In the Intermediary stages of the project where the group was doing research on the emerging trends for the aviation, land and marine defense sectors, we encountered challenges in integrating personal work styles to achieve project goals, specifically I had gotten feedback from the rest of the group about the pacing of my work delivery, as they felt I was pushing the rest of the group harder than necessary.

**Feeling**

I felt a great deal of frustration because I felt I was setting a level work rate to meet project goals that could offset the uncertainty that is known to linger in the first few weeks of a project team’s development(Tuckman,1965), this was the way I had always worked personally on projects and receiving this feedback left me a little surprised. My teammates felt that I was creating an environment of stress which made them feel like they were not contributing enough because they were not working as quickly as I was, this a sentiment that I sympathized with as I often did ask myself if I might be overdoing things and ostracizing the rest of the group as a result.

**Evaluation**

This way of working had always worked for me and did bear some fruit for this project as I believe some of the work I was able to do in that period of “Over doing and Over Stimulation” laid the groundwork for the work we would do later in the project and set the benchmark for the level/quality of work package that we should be aiming for as a team, my feeling is if its worth doing then its worth doing well. However, I was in complete agreement with my team as my work style did create a palpable state of discomfort in the group as I was pushing the group to conform to my style and rate of work, this also created a hierarchy where everything I said was almost law which is never good for any group dynamic(Myers, 2003).

**Analysis**

The fact that we encountered this problem came as a surprise to me because the Myers-Briggs profiles of all group members was some form of a personality type starting with intuitive and introverted, which would seem to indicate a similar way of working(Hammer, 2020). In hindsight, I believe my pushing the group at an exceptional pace was to compensate for the fact that I was out of the UK at that stage of the project, as a result I felt I may have been slowing the group down by travelling back home and this led to me going into over drive, we were also about due to have a catch up meeting with the project sponsor at that epoch and I had the feeling that we weren’t thinking about the problem deeply enough.

The peer feedback and meetings with our project supervisor intervened just In time, the former because it allowed for a space were team mates could communicate things to me that they maybe couldn’t say to me because the work style was producing results and the latter because our project supervisor laid great emphasis on kindness, empathy and openness to new ideas as cornerstones of good teamwork while also giving extremely valuable feedback on the project content so far.

**Conclusion and Action Plan**

The group was able to complete the work package for trend research in time to present to the project sponsor and receive valuable feedback, the peer report I had gotten from my team member allowed me to pivot and work in a way that would enable greater cohesiveness. In my next project, I would acknowledge that individuals have diverse working styles early and openly discuss these differences within the team while encouraging team members to share their preferred ways of working and their strengths. I would also emphasize developing hybrid work processes that accommodate different work styles and allows us to use tools and technologies that facilitate collaboration and communication among team members with diverse preferences(Keup, 2021).

Norming and Performing

In these stages, teams start to work together more effectively and establish a set of norms and expectations for the team, allowing the collective to reach its highest level of productivity(Tuckman, 1965).

**Description**

At this epoch the team had gotten over the humps at the initial stages of project, by mid-late July the team through continuous introspection ad guidance from our project supervisor was able to move into cruise control, all relevant team members had grown immensely into their roles as either manager or point of contact, meetings were much more efficient and productive and we were able to deliver work packages better to meet project objectives. The team had also been able to put together a tentative presentation for a catch-up meeting at Babcock’s HQ in Bristol where we were met with both positive and constructive feedback, however the team encountered a few challenges trying to make these improvements and finalize the project on time.

**Feeling**

The situation left me with a feeling of angst as I didn’t want the amount of work we had put in up to that point to have difficulty coming across because of poor time management. The manager gave us a timeline for making corrections to our presentation slides which was exceeded multiple times in this closing stage, this was unsettling because both the presentation day and the submission deadline were quickly approaching and we were having issues keeping with the pre-determined project milestone timeline agreed upon at the initial stages of the project.

**Evaluation and Analysis**

Although we had made significant strides since the beginning of the project, we were encountering issues presumably because we began to lose urgency as we gained more and more confidence in what we were recommending to the company, in the days before the final presentation we had to work till around 9pm daily in order to finalize the project and clean up the presentation slides, furthermore the group didn’t start working on our report till about 3 weeks out to the submission deadline and we found great difficulty trying juggle the presentation in one hand and our group/individual reports on the other. This may have been added to by the fact that people in the group at this time had multiple things happening outside the project like house hunting, job-hunting, part-time jobs, personal issues and online courses et cetera.

**Conclusion and Action Plan**

This part of the project left a significant impression on me as regards to the importance of time management when it comes to closing a project, all the project content was there but we had to figure out how to organize everything(report and presentation) in a well thought-out and considerate manner with time running out, we got the job done in the end but we could’ve made our paths there easier by taking some rudimentary precautions after the tentative presentation. If I had to do it again I would emphasize on dividing the remaining tasks into smaller, manageable chunks and set deadlines for each, creating a sense of progress and urgency as work packages get completed, I would also advocate for regular check-ins to monitor progress and hold team members accountable for their tasks and deadlines in order to maintain momentum and ensure that everyone is updated on the project status at all times(Dye, 2021).

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