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STRATEGIC PLANNING SIMULATION IN-CLASS EXERCISE[1]

By putting students/trainees in a realistic setting of applying for a strategic management job, this tool is a hands-on exercise designed to help them enhance various, as they are invited to evaluate data, collect and process info as well as to determine missing information, upon choosing a sample sector of business.

The given task is for participants to create and present a detailed plan for putting strategic management methods into practice, blending that is theoretical understanding with areal-world application, which may indicatively include:

- Assessment of the current organizational challenges;
- Compliance with applicable regulations and industry standards;
- Development of an investment and operational plan;
- Structuring a management team;
- Implementation of operational improvements;
- Planning of training, evaluation, and performance reviews.

The tool not only tests group's knowledge of strategic management but also develops key skills such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, planning and decision-making. The final presentation simulates a real-world scenario of participating in a job interview for a strategic management placement, requiring the presentation of a management plan.

The exercise foresees the following components:

1. Presentation of the exercise to the group

The tutor / trainer presents to the group the tasks, requirements and goals of the exercise:

- Presenting various types of business sectors, organisations etc. that the group should choose amongst;
- Describing the tasks i.e. analysis of the organizational context, strategic planning, investment planning, operational improvements, plan's presentation etc.;
- Defining the expected content of the final presentation with ref. to duration, content, format etc.

2. Choice of economic sector by the participants

- The participants choose a sample enterprise and start researching its profile, including publicly available data on its structure, operations, and market context. Where information is missing, trainees are encouraged to create logical and acceptable adaptations;

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- They are then called to review relevant legislation, industry standards, or organizational policies that affect the chosen enterprise;
- Following the data processing they then prepare a comprehensive plan for addressing organizational challenge foreseeing: situational analysis; risk assessment; recommendations for operational improvements and resource allocation; investment plan; strategy for training & development and performance evaluation.

3. Developing the presentation

- Upon completing research and processing of collected data, the groups draft a strategic management plan for the chosen enterprise and formulate its presentation;
- The presentation should be concise (e.g., 5 minutes), visually appealing, and well-supported by data. Supplementary documents (e.g., reports, surveys and analyses) can be attached to support the plan.

4. Presentation of the plan (in the context of a job interview scenario)

- Trainees are invited to present their plans as part of a job interview. The presentations are made to a "committee" acting as the potential employer.
- Trainees are expected to demonstrate a strong understanding of strategic management concepts and effectively communicate and justify their decisions to the "employer". The trainer/tutor evaluate both technical and practical knowledge, as well communication and presentation skills.

5. Evaluation and Feedback

- Upon the presentation, the trainer/tutor provides individual feedback, evaluating trainee's work based on multiple criteria such as: in depth analysis; logic and feasibility of proposal; ability to work with data and justify decisions; quality and clarity of the plan; communication and presentation skills.
- The final assessment takes into account both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills demonstrated during the simulation.

CONCLUSION

The exercise gives the opportunity to participants to undergo a comprehensive learning process—from theoretical understanding of strategic management principles, through research and analytical work, to practical application and the simulation of real-world professional scenarios. This type of exercise develops not only technical knowledge but also essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership.

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