Activity Sheet 4: Evaluating solutions at work

Future skills: Forward thinker

Employability skills: Solutions management at work

At work, you need to think about how to get the best solutions for your employer or client and other stakeholders. Stakeholders are anyone who is affected by the organisation you work for.

Sometimes stakeholders will be in conflict. For example, if the shareholders of your business increase prices, this may cause conflict with your customers who do not want to pay more. It is important that you always consider the impact of decision-making on all stakeholders and that you aim for a ‘win–win’ solution where all parties are happy.

Task 1 Stakeholders

In the workplace, stakeholders can be divided into:

* internal (those people who are working for the business and are affected by it)
* external (anyone else who is affected by the business, for example, the local community or suppliers).

Choose a business in your local area. Carry out research into all the different types of stakeholder that are affected by that business.

Task 2 Solutions management at work

Using the business you researched in Task 1, think of three conflicts between stakeholders. You could use conflicts that you know the business has experienced in the past or think of potential conflicts.

Write down your conflicts in the table below. Next to each conflict, list the stakeholders that would be affected by it.

Good employers try to predict possible conflicts so that they can be prepared for them and solve problems before they become issues. In the final column of the table, come up with some potential solutions to the conflicts. You should aim to ensure that all stakeholders would be happy, even if they had to compromise.

| Potential conflict | Which stakeholders are affected? | What is the potential solution? |
| --- | --- | --- |
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Task 3 Development of future skills for employability

Now consider conflict in the context of your own future skills for employability development.

Are there any areas where there may be a conflict in terms of the skills that you have? Could other stakeholders, such as your carers, friends or neighbours, have an impact on your career? How can you resolve these conflicts?

Choose the most important conflict in terms of your career skills and then detail what you can do to work towards a ‘win–win’ solution. An example is given below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Potential conflict | Which stakeholders are affected? | What is the potential solution? |
| Need a part-time job to pay for my college travel and books, but this means I have less time to spend on my EPQ. | Me – I need to have enough time to study.My employer – I have a commitment to make sure I am at work on time and when required.My family – If I don’t work, there is a financial impact on my family. | Make a plan to work out how many hours I need for my EPQ and other studies.See how long I have left for my part-time job and ask my employer if she is happy with those hours.Ask my family whether they are able to help with my book fees if my wage isn’t enough. |
|  |  |  |

Task 4 Reflection

Now reflect on what you have learned about solutions management and your own development.

Write a summary of what you can do to support solutions management at work and in your career going forward.