Jigsaw Method

Idea In Short

The Jigsaw Method is a cooperative learning technique that has found its way from educational settings into the world of strategy and management consulting. This approach breaks complex problems into smaller, manageable pieces, offering a unique way to tackle intricate business challenges. By applying the Jigsaw Method, consultants can enhance teamwork, improve problem-solving skills, and deliver more comprehensive solutions to their clients.

The Jigsaw Method is a cooperative learning technique that encourages deep understanding and fosters collaboration. It breaks down a complex topic into smaller, manageable pieces. Each individual becomes an expert on a specific part, then shares their knowledge with a group, creating a comprehensive understanding within the team.

This method begins by dividing the team into smaller groups. Each group is then assigned a specific task or project. Within each group, members are further divided into subgroups, with each member responsible for researching and analyzing a particular aspect of the assigned task. For example, if the task is to develop a new marketing strategy for a product, one member might focus on market research, another on competitor analysis, and another on pricing strategy.

Once individuals have thoroughly researched their assigned area, they regroup with colleagues from other groups who have focused on the same aspect of the project. These "expert groups" allow for in-depth discussions, knowledge sharing, and the refinement of individual perspectives. In the marketing strategy example, individuals responsible for market research would convene to discuss their findings, share insights, and identify key trends and opportunities. This expert group discussion fosters a deeper understanding of the specific area and allows for the identification of critical factors that might have been missed in individual research.

After the expert group discussions, team members return to their original groups. Armed with in-depth knowledge from their respective expert groups, they can now synthesize the information, identify potential synergies, and develop a comprehensive and robust solution. In the marketing strategy example, the team would reconvene, with each member presenting their findings from the expert group discussions. This collaborative process allows for a holistic understanding of the marketing landscape, leading to a more informed and effective marketing strategy.

Case Study - Market Entry

Imagine a consulting firm engaged by a major telecommunications company to develop a strategy for entering the burgeoning 5G market. The project team, recognizing the complexity of the challenge, decides to employ the Jigsaw Method.

The project is divided into five key areas:

1. **Technology Assessment:** Evaluating the latest 5G technologies, their potential applications, and the competitive landscape of 5G technology providers.
2. **Market Analysis:** Analyzing market trends, identifying potential customer segments, and assessing the competitive landscape within the target market.
3. **Financial Modeling:** Developing financial projections for 5G service offerings, including revenue models, cost structures, and return on investment.
4. **Regulatory Compliance:** Analyzing and assessing the regulatory landscape related to 5G deployment and service offerings.
5. **Go-to-Market Strategy:** Developing a go-to-market strategy, including marketing plans, sales channels, and customer acquisition strategies.

Each team member is assigned to one of these five areas, becoming an expert in their respective field. They conduct in-depth research, analyze data, and develop preliminary findings.

Subsequently, team members regroup with colleagues from other teams who have focused on the same area. For example, the team members responsible for technology assessment convene to discuss their findings on the latest 5G technologies, compare notes on different vendors, and identify potential technological roadblocks. This expert group discussion allows for a more nuanced understanding of the 5G technology landscape and the

identification of critical success factors.

Following the expert group discussions, the team reconvenes. Each member presents their key findings from their respective expert group, highlighting critical insights and potential challenges. This collaborative discussion allows the team to synthesize the information, identify potential synergies, and develop a comprehensive and robust 5G market entry strategy. For example, the insights from the technology assessment group can inform the market analysis group's understanding of potential market opportunities and competitive advantages. Similarly, the findings from the regulatory compliance group can be integrated into the go-to-market strategy, ensuring that the company's plans are compliant with relevant regulations.

This collaborative approach, facilitated by the Jigsaw Method, ensures that the final strategy is not only informed by a wide range of perspectives but also benefits from the in-depth expertise developed within the expert groups. This leads to a more comprehensive, robust, and innovative strategy that addresses the complexities of the 5G market and positions the telecommunications company for success.

Case Study: Revitalizing a Retail Chain

Now, let's consider a real-world example of how it might be applied in another consulting project. Imagine a large retail chain struggling with declining sales and customer satisfaction. The consulting team decides to use the Jigsaw Method to tackle this complex problem.

The project leader divides the problem into five key areas: store operations, supply chain management, customer experience, digital presence, and competitive landscape. Each consultant on the team is assigned one of these areas to focus on.

The consultant examining store operations visits multiple locations, analyzes staffing patterns, and reviews inventory management practices. Meanwhile, the supply chain expert dives into logistics data, supplier relationships, and inventory turnover rates. The customer experience specialist conducts surveys, analyzes customer feedback, and studies consumer behavior patterns. The digital presence expert evaluates the company's website, mobile app, and social media strategies. Lastly, the competitive landscape analyst studies market trends, competitor strategies, and industry benchmarks.

After several weeks of individual research and analysis, the team comes together for a series of knowledge-sharing sessions. Each consultant presents their findings and recommendations. During these sessions, interesting connections emerge. For instance, the supply chain expert's findings on inventory issues align with the store operations analyst's observations about product availability. The customer experience specialist's insights on consumer preferences tie in with the digital presence expert's recommendations for online engagement strategies.

As the team synthesizes all this information, they develop a comprehensive strategy to revitalize the retail chain. This strategy includes streamlining store operations, optimizing the supply chain, enhancing the customer experience both in-store and online, and repositioning the brand in the competitive landscape.

The final solution is far more comprehensive and effective than it would have been if the team had approached the problem as a whole from the start. By using the Jigsaw Method, the consulting team was able to provide their client with a nuanced, multi-faceted strategy that addressed all aspects of their business challenges.

Summary

The Jigsaw Method offers a valuable framework for tackling complex challenges in management consulting. By breaking down complex projects into smaller, manageable tasks and fostering in-depth research and collaborative discussions, this approach enhances knowledge sharing, improves team cohesion, and ultimately leads to more effective and innovative solutions. By leveraging the diverse expertise within the team and encouraging a collaborative approach, the Jigsaw Method empowers consultants to deliver high-quality, client-centric solutions that address the most pressing business challenges.