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**Assignment #2**

**Mental Models and Associated Behavioral Implications**

**Part I – Analyzing Mental Models from a personal perspective**

**Prompt # 1: Quoted from Hutchens (page 65)**

**Have you ever known anyone with behaviors or traits that were very obvious to others, but seemingly invisible to that person? Why do you think this was so? Might you have similar blind spots about yourself, because they don’t match your self-perception? Describe the example clearly and connect your reflection to the concepts from the readings.**

I used to work with a man named Charles who would hold in all his anger. He would consistently displace his frustrations toward his coworker and best friend, James. Although many witnessed Charles belittle James because of an unrelated event, no one would confront the issue. Charles was absolutely oblivious. So oblivious that everyone was able to call him AC for Angry Charles, and he had no idea. I think that this happens to people like Charles because he's like others that get caught up in daily routines and forget to self-evaluate.

The first time I experienced the outing a complete blind spot was when I was conducting interviews for the previous assignment. When questioning my boyfriend, Shaun, he mentioned that sometimes my expectations are too high. After letting the thought sink in for a while, I started applying it to my every day actions. I realize that at work I would get perturbed when people didn't complete tasks efficiently enough. Sometimes I feel like I can only accomplish a task because I do it best. Hutchens says mental models help us filter what and how we see. "If something doesn't match the 'road map' in our head, we may simple become blind to it," (p 64). Everyone develops certain blind spots. If we learn that we grow endlessly than we will shed light on these blind spots.

**Prompt # 2: Quoted from Hutchens (page 66)**

**Think of a time when you, or a group you were associated with, excelled by adopting a new mental model. Explain the time clearly and connect to the readings.**

Starbucks has been long known for having robust and flavorful coffee. To counteract this reputation they decided it was time to adopt a new mental model. This model included an aspect that Starbucks had never experimented with before. This new addition, called *Blonde Roast* was identified as a light roast coffee to appeal to the coffee drinkers with sensitive pallets. Starbucks decided to alter their current point of view and then acted upon it. Until 2012 they catered to the bold coffee drinkers and somewhat looked down on those who

Similar to Starbucks, as mentioned in the readings, Coca-Cola struggled with changing its mental model about packaging. "It was only after deep losses that the company became open to changing its mental model and exploring the possibility of other packing,"(p. 66). Pleasantly enough Coke's decision proved to be effective and now we still know them as a leading brand. Comparably, Starbucks has developed a product to appeal to a larger target market helping them to thrive in a competitive industry.

**Prompt # 3: Quoted from Hutchens (page 66)**

**The next time you are personally offended or frustrated by someone’s comments, what questions could you ask to better understand the other person’s mental models? How could you help him or her do the same for you? Explain your answers.**

There are many types of comments that draw offense or frustration. Many of these come from thought process' called mental models. These models web together an individuals train of thoughts to present an opinion. However, tis likely that people vocalize these opinions as facts rather than comments. When attempting to understand an unbelievable point of view, it's important to ask the right questions to try to understand. Some questions I would use would be:

*- How did you draw the conclusion you are presenting?*

If this question is answered productively I can get the reasoning behind an individual's conclusion. This question can assist in getting an individual to elaborate on why and how their thoughts guided them to an assumption. As Hutchens said, "the lifelong challenge of mental models is identifying them and bringing them out into the light,"(p. 67). This question allows a wide variety of responses and with probes it can be guided into opening up an individual's hidden perspectives.

*- Is there any change you'd reconsider your thoughts?*

This question's results will mainly have two different routes. If the individual responds with a "no" then really the only hope is to move along to the next question and hope to end the conversation peacefully. If worst comes to worst the possibility of a mediator can arise to help resolve issues. If an individual answers with a "yes" then there is genuine opportunity for an explanation of the other view point. Most importantly, the agreement was made for an attempt mutual understanding.

***-*** *Can we agree to disagree?*

If a conclusion cannot be met, the best way to end the conversation is with chivalry. Believe it or not, the concept of agreeing to disagree does exist. Sometimes two people will never be on the same page no matter how many questions they ask and discussions they have. If the conversation concludes and viewpoints still don't match it is important to at least have respect for the others opinion. Having an attitude that there is only one correct perspective will lead to a narrow minded approach to life.

**Prompt # 4:**

**Think through at least a few beliefs you hold. How has your tower view affected your life? Have you changed a view? Also, comment on how your beliefs have led to disagreements or impasses with others who inhabit “different towers with different views.”**

A strong view I hold is the pro-choice opinion when referring to abortion. Of course I don't think that it's morally right to kill an innocent being but if that helpless newborn is forced into a world that didn't want it, only harm can come. I understand other's viewpoints from their towers. It is a very sensitive subject and I cannot surely say that I will stick by my opinion later in life. Once I have a child I may hold a different perspective and change my opinion. I've never gotten into a serious debate about abortion but I imagine it would evoke rage in most people. Activists outside abortion clinics seem intimidating. Therefore, I would never attempt to change their views.

**Prompt # 5: Quoted from Hutchens (page 70), please write up a response to the following:**

**How can this self-reinforcing dynamic help in understanding, for example, racism? Generational conflicts? “Problem children” in a family full of achievers? Companies that don’t change, even though they’re losing customers?**

When a person has an initial thought, they are more likely to revisit that thought when they observe an example of it. For example, my boyfriend is African American and I am Caucasian. We can walk around the mall and count the number of people giving us dirty looks specifically because of our interracial relationship. However, if we consciously decided to walk around the mall and count, we're going to unconsciously speculate more people than if we were noticing it on average.

When your attention is drawn to a certain thought you are going focus more on it, even if it is unintentional. "Once we hold a belief and continually 'select' data from the world that reinforces that belief, then our experience can begin to conform to make that belief a self-fulfilling reality,"(p. 69) Shaun and I would be likely to misinterpret people's perception of us strictly because we are conforming to the belief that everyone is staring because our race.

**Part II – Analyzing Mental Models from an organizational perspective**

**Prompt # 6: First, identify the organization you are choosing for this assignment then write up a response to the following:**

Savatica Jewelry

**What are some mental models that your organization may hold about its role in the world?**  Handmade jewelry company, Savatica Jewelry, has many types of mental models in order to achieve its goals. Starting with its mission statement: Producing authentic jewelry with value, originality and quality for unique women. Although there are limitless mental models within an organization the most important were intentionally emphasized within the mission statement of Savatica.

In order for women to buy their products, Savatica wanted to make sure that each piece of jewelry is authentic. This means that an important mental model consists of using genuine materials to construct wearable art. Only the best material is used, consisting of semiprecious stones, pearls, silks and precious metals. This standard is held very high for this company. Savatica does not want to gain a reputation for having a cheap product. Therefore they do whatever they can to put value into everything they create.

Another key mental model is creating a worth for the product being sold. The value doesn't always consist of the dollar amount labeled on the tag. For Savatica Jewelry, value can also be something sentimental. In combination with high end materials, Savatica incorporates personal items that belong to customers in order to connect more with its clients. These items allow extreme personalization which can lead to an undying love for an item and also ties into our next mental model of originality.

Another advantage of personalizing jewelry pieces is creating a product that is one-of-a-kind. The model of originality is emphasized throughout Savatica Jewelry's creations. There is something comforting about knowing that there aren't thousands of others with the same product on your wrist or neck. When you buy a piece of jewelry at a department store you are getting a copy of a manufactured item. Originality vanishes the first time a customer sees the same product on someone else, for Savatica Jewelry clients, that feeling never has to occur.

Lastly and most importantly, Savatica Jewelry focus' on quality. This quality is defined as; high grade, superior and excellent. Everything that Savatica strives to be. Each product is handmade without rushing the process. The founder and creator treats her work as a delicate art form. She thoroughly makes sure each piece of jewelry is constructed to withhold wear and tear. Although the promise for jewelry to last a lifetime can't be granted, Savatica jewelry will replace or repair any purchased item no matter when it was bought.

**How might you and your other organization members begin surfacing and testing some of your organization’s mental models.**

Originality: In order to keep up in a business world with high competition, it is important to continue changing. Innovation is necessary when attempting to create one-of-a-kind products. Savatica Jewelry has gone through many different mental models to decipher which products they want. Each must hold the definition of originality that the company strives to identify and the customer demands.

A successful test Savatica applies consisted of recycled watch components. The jewelry designers would use gears and miscellaneous part of watches that were practically garbage and turned them into desired jewelry. This line is still making profits today. Another approach consisted of small inexpensive beads to become multi-strand necklaces. The material cost was low, but the labor was much too high for the cheap cost. Savatica only made only a few test necklaces. This was a smart decision because this particular product was high on labor with low profit. Personalizing Jewelry: Personalizing jewelry is an ever-changing feat. When the company first began, it only consisted of one type of personalization. The owner of Savatica Jewelry would make bracelets for mothers including birthstones and names of her children. These type of bracelets got so popular that Savatica thought it was time to experiment with different types of personalization. Successful and unsuccessful attempts unfolded. Success was found in forms of taking personal orders, co-designing with customers, healing bracelets and teaching classes. A specific example of an unsuccessful mental model was the time when Savatica tried to advertise custom human hair bracelets. The idea was to save a lock of hair from someone significant ant place it in a locket. Although this idea has been popular throughout history, in modern times no one was keen to the concept and this mental model was quickly dismissed.

**What are some of your organization’s biggest challenges? How might untested mental models be contributing to the problem?**

A company like Savatica Jewelry will have numerous challenges to overcome. Two of the biggest might include innovation and modernization. The use of new materials and methods will allow innovation to thrive but these untested mental models are conclusions yet unknown. Trends and styles are ever-changing and strongly impact the jewelry business. Savatica has its own style which doesn't always fit into hip, modern, national trends. This may cause issues in the future and mental models will have to be established in order to counter the effect.

These mental models are all tests of trial and error. Some may help solve preexisting issues while others hurt or dent the business. However, for a company to evolve it must take a certain amount of risk. Not to say these risks won't be calculated and educated but risk is nearly unavoidable because of all the unpredictable.

**Cite an example or two of times that your organization has set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the group’s belief in something actually made that something come true.**

Savatica Jewelry owner had attended a gem and jewelry show in Chicago one year. While sitting in on a seminar she learned of natural beach glass found in California. These colorful chips of glass had limitless possibilities and endless beauty. No one in the Midwest had the capability to get these types of materials because the glass usually came from privately owned beaches. With patience the owner networked for what she wanted and ended up receiving over 100 pounds of beautiful beach glass from a distant friend who knew someone. It took about eight months for Savatica Jewelry to find the resources they desired but the mental model at the seminar in the beginning was the inspiration for action.

**Part III – Textbook Readings Connections**

**Prompt # 7:**

**Primacy Effect:** The primacy effect consists of the idea that people remember what they initial learn compared to later findings. This effect is most commonly exemplified when forming first impressions. An individual is most likely to remember their initial judgment. "Unfortunately, it may be impossible to eliminate it entirely, although we can certainly make efforts to diminish its impact,"(p. 152).

**False Consensus Bias:** This is another error that concentrates on misperception. It directly applies when an individual believes that others view the world the same as him. These assumptions exist because, "we tend to associate more with people who are similar to us and who also share our beliefs,"(p. 153). However, false consensus bias has one exception. False uniqueness bias is the perception when an individual believes they are more unique in their minds than in actuality.

**Confirmation Bias:** This refers to the idea that we are more likely to notice things when we are expecting to see them. For example; whenever I decide I don't like a certain model of car I start noticing how many of them are on the road. It's not until I have an opinion that they are bad that I start noticing them and giving reasons as to why. "Confirmation bias is an error we make in perception as we strive to determine the 'right answer' to a problem or situation,"(p.154).

**Fundamental Attribution Error:** This error is best defined as,"our human tendency to assume that other people's behavior is due to something about their personality, while at the same time failing to consider possible situational influences,"(p.156). If someone cuts in line at a coffee shop because they're in a hurry you may judge them thinking they have a rude personality. On the contrary, if you walked into a coffee shop rushing you may do the exact same thing and someone may be having the same thoughts you once did. In reality both situation's probably had nothing to do with personality.

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