

SUSHI2U

PRACTICE ASSESSMENT

Activity Overview

The SUSHI2U practice assessment provides a full case study and data (both performance and financial) in a similar format to that of the final assessment students will undertake.

It provides two assessments with some variation of expectation and outcome.

Students can work in groups for the interpretation and preparation of the assessment and can then either work in pairs or alone for the timed assessment period.

The assessment grid and recommended responses can be used for teacher assessment or will lend very well to peer-assessment.

Resources Required

- Copies of the case study and data would be helpful for students to annotate and discuss
- Assessment grid with recommended responses
- PCs for final assessment time (producing report and presentation slides)

Teacher Instructions

It is recommended for students to work in groups during the analysis of the case and data. There is significant room for discussion and interpretation and this will allow students to fill any gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

The timings are recommendations only and can be adapted using the teacher's professional judgement, particularly based on how soon into the course the activity is being used.

Whilst this activity can be used as a graded mock assessment, it is far more effective to use it as a formative and developmental activity where students are able to put into practice the knowledge and conceptual understanding they have studied for Unit 6.

The teacher assessment sheet can be used as a formative or a summative assessment, and can be written on. There is plenty of scope for self and peer-assessment here which will build students' ability and understanding of the expectations of the final assessment.





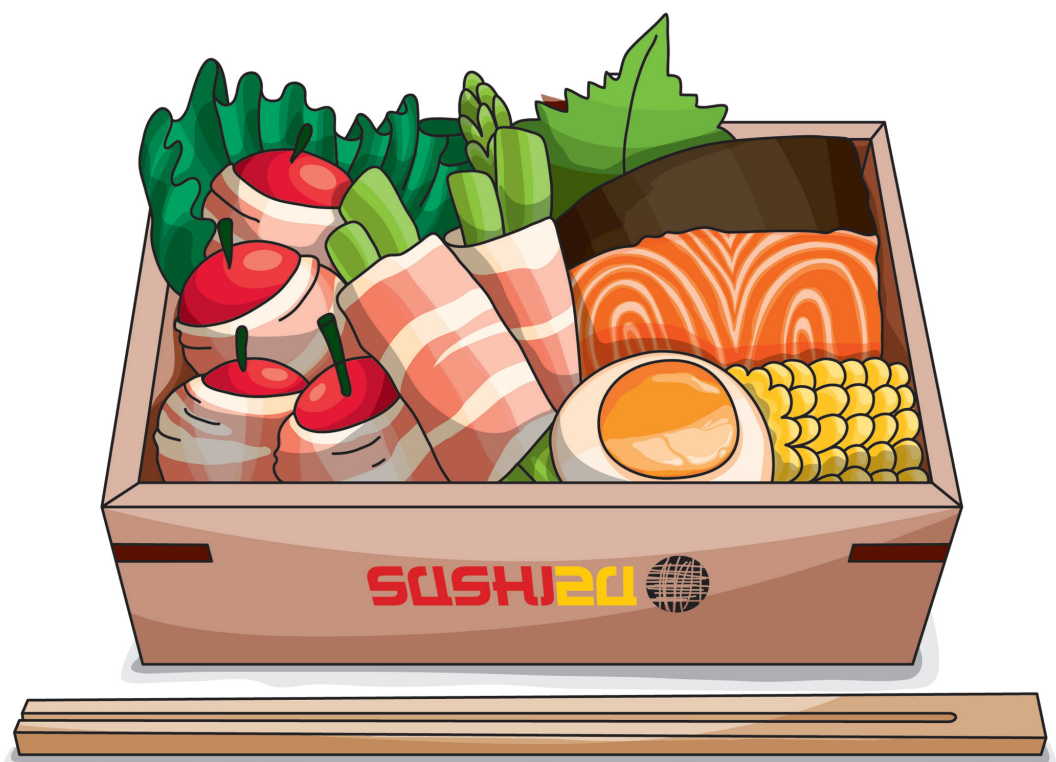
Best friends Olatunde & Himari met at university in Birmingham where they both studied Business Management. On graduating they decided to set up SUSHI2U, using some of Himari's secret family recipes to create a twist on many traditional Japanese dishes, and Olatunde's grandmother's Jollof Rice recipe to create an African-Japanese fusion bento box, the signature dish of SUSHI2U.

The original SUSHI2U branch opened in 2013 in Birmingham New Street Railway station, soon followed by three more branches in Bristol, Bath and Manchester. The outlets are all located in train stations, but have also proved very popular for takeaway deliveries via Deliveroo and Uber Eats, meaning they did not have to employ their own drivers. By 2015 there were 26 branches of SUSHI2U across the north of the U.K., all located in train stations, coach or bus stations and airports.

Passionate about paying good wages to university students, and offering flexible hours to fit around students' studies, Ola and Himari decided to mainly employ local students, offering management positions to those undertaking a placement year for their four year 'sandwich course' degree. However each Regional Management position is given only to a graduate with several years previous experience in food retail.

The casual dining market has become more and more saturated since starting SUSHI2U in 2013, and the pressure to keep costs down to compete with the likes of Wasabi and Leon has been felt by the owners, alongside the rapidly rising rental costs of retail premises in train stations.

Ola is Sales Director for SUSHI2U, and takes responsibility for marketing strategy, branding and also recruitment and other HR matters, he has developed a Training Academy for staff, and has built links with several universities to recruit excellent part time staff. Himari is the Financial Director and takes responsibility for financial and operational matters, including innovation and technology. Himari has worked with a tech company to develop a groundbreaking app which allows customers to order food from their train journey, updating the SUSHI2U branch if their train is delayed, and also works in conjunction with Uber Eats and Deliveroo to provide seamless customer service.



There is no SUSHI2U head office. Ola and Himari work from home or whilst traveling. All Regional Managers take on some wider responsibilities which would traditionally be held in a head office, but work remotely, visiting stores as needed. Once a year the management team, including all store managers attend a six day Strategic Retreat in Japan, led by Ola and Himari, where they plan for the year ahead and visit contemporary Japanese restaurants for inspiration and cultural exposure.

Ola and Himari both have a paternalistic and consultative style of leadership. They nurture and invest in the university students employed, and view them as long term assets. They value the input and ideas of all staff at every level, and have introduced new products and made improvements to systems and policies based on suggestions from restaurant employees. Many of these ideas are generated via monthly 'Think Forward' sessions where staff are asked to suggest ideas for improving quality.

After the most recent Strategic Retreat Ola and Himari were concerned at some Store Managers describing some team members as 'lazy students' and they have fears that a blame culture may be developing in some stores. It has always been their goal to have a culture of nurture and support, even for those who aren't as productive, encouraging them to take pride in their work. In a recent Regional Managers Think Forward session concerns were raised that Regional Managers feel they are spread too thinly across large regions and this makes it difficult for them to build personal relationships with all Store Managers.

Production at every SUSHI2U branch is lean and efficient. Himari's grandfather worked in car manufacture in Japan in the 1960s and inspired in her a love of efficient and lean working with minimal waste.

Due to rising rental costs and heavy price-based competition, profits at SUSHI2U dipped in recent years, causing the company to freeze staff pay for two years, and make some cutbacks to the opportunities offered at the Training Academy, much to Ola & Himari's disappointment. Profits have risen recently, but marginally and not enough to satisfy shareholders. Since the pay freeze and training cutbacks there have been some alarming effects on HR data, and Ola and Himari are worried that a culture of resentment has developed amongst staff. Management salaries were not frozen, only branch employees, who make up approximately 85% of the company, and this has caused a 'them and us' divide in many branches.

Both SUSHI2U Directors, and the Regional Management team recently held an emergency management conference to examine current concerns with quality management, staff dissatisfaction and how to deal with ongoing rising costs. It was decided to bring in a team of experienced consultants, to gain clarity, vision and expertise and troubleshooting advice. Ola and Himari are confident in leading a period of change management, once the parameters and goals have been decided. This, they believe, will have SUSHI2U back on track financially and operationally by 2020.



Staff Data:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Managerial Staff	25	40	48	52	65
Restaurant Staff	120	180	195	200	205
Staff recorded as 'very' or 'incredibly' satisfied in quarterly survey (average %)	95	96	80	75	60
Attendance to 'Think Forward' meetings (%)	100	100	98	96	90
Labour Turnover % (regional Managers)	5	7	6	5	4
Labour turnover % (store Managers)	15	10	12	15	12
Labour turnover (restaurant staff)	25	37	46	54	72
Customers served per hour per employee (average) in lunch time rush.	64	65	66	42	36
Industry Average Labour Turnover %	20	16	21	22	21

Financial Performance Data:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Revenue (£m)	35.5	42.4	54.3	55.2	56.3
Cost of Goods Sold (£m)	10.5	16.5	27.3	28.5	29.7
Total Costs (£m)	25.2	32.6	49.6	52.5	53
Gross Profit (£m)	25	25.9	27	27.3	26.6
Gross profit %	70.4	61.1	49.7	49.4	47.2
Net Profit (£m)	10.3	9.8	4.7	2.7	3.3
Net Profit %	29	23	8.7	4.9	5.9
Average number of customers per week	136,000	142,000	154,000	159,000	162,500
Quality issues identified by staff per week (avg per branch)	25	21	23	5	5
Quality issues raised by customers per week (average per branch)	5	6	5	24	27



PRACTICE ASSESSMENT 1:

You are an employee of Retail Consultants Ltd and will be advising the Directors of SUSHI2U on their next year of business.

You can spend up to 5 hours consulting with your team and planning your response. Followed by 3 hours of supervised assessment time, where you will complete the tasks in full. You will NOT be allowed to take any notes into the supervised assessment.

TASK 1:

Write a report (typed, size 12 text) which outlines the key human resource issues at SUSHI2U. Use the performance data you have been given and any other information from the case study you think may be relevant. After highlighting the key issues, provide recommendations for improvement and outline how your suggested improvements will be implemented between now and 2020.

TASK 2:

Prepare a presentation and speaker's notes outlining the change management process needed at SUSHI2U to deal with their current financial challenges. Explain the current issues and the effects in business performance. You must consider key areas for change, potential barriers and implications and also recommend the necessary actions for successful change to take place.

Your presentation can include a maximum of 6 slides. You must submit speaker's notes or script with your slides.

PRACTICE ASSESSMENT 2:

You have joined SUSHI2U as the third company Director. Your job title is Director of Vision and Strategy. You have been asked by the two original directors to present your plans for the company.

You can spend up to 5 hours consulting with your team and planning your response. Followed by 3 hours of supervised assessment time, where you will complete the tasks in full. You will NOT be allowed to take any notes into the supervised assessment.

TASK 1:

Write a report (typed, size 12 text) which examines the performance data at SUSHI2U and identifies the core issues regarding leadership and culture in the company. You must make recommendations for a 2020 vision of culture which will get the company back on track, and explain the necessary actions for the vision to become a reality.

TASK 1:

Prepare a presentation and speaker's notes based on leadership style at SUSHI2U. In this presentation you must outline and explain how leadership style can be the key to overcoming the financial challenges currently being faced by the company. You must explain how SUSHI2U needs to adapt or refine its leadership style going forward, and what the implications of this will be.

Your presentation can include a maximum of 6 slides. You must submit speaker's notes or script with your slides.

SUGGESTED MARKING GUIDANCE FOR SUSHI2U PRACTICE ASSESSMENT

PRACTICE ASSESSMENT 1:

Assessment Focus 1: Information/Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Band 1 (1-3 marks)	Band 2 (4-6 marks)	Band 3 (7-9 marks)	Band 4 (10-12 marks)
<p>Descriptor: References are made to Sushi2U but they lack detail and relevance to the specifics of the case. Analytical approach is limited and any conclusions are general and non-specific to Sushi2U.</p>	<p>Descriptor: References are made to the case study but some areas lack direct relevance to Sushi2U. Analysis leads to conclusions but some areas lack balance or relevance to the case.</p>	<p>Descriptor: References are made to the case study, which are relevant to the actual situation at Sushi2U. Detailed analysis showing cause and effect leads to relevant and balanced conclusions which answer the questions set.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Sustained references are made to Sushi2U which are entirely relevant to the specifics of the case. Detailed analysis shows relational understanding of cause and effect, leading to highly relevant and balanced conclusions.</p>
<p>Target for improvement: Use specific happenings from the case in your response and relate each to data given. To show analysis use connectives such as 'therefore' and 'because'.</p>	<p>Target for improvement: Use more specific examples from the case in your response. Ensure your conclusions are relevant to the case, for example use the type of location the business has.</p>	<p>Target for improvement (reaching the top of Band 4): For every issue you identify, follow this with 'as we can see in the case study...' and add relevant information. Ensure every paragraph of your report and every slide in your presentation shows some of the EFFECTS of your issues and your recommendations. You can use connectives such as 'furthermore' and 'consequently' to take your analysis even further.</p>	

Assessment Focus 2: Key Principles of Management:

Band 1 (1-3 marks)	Band 2 (4-6 marks)	Band 3 (7-9 marks)	Band 4 (10-12 marks)
<p>Descriptor: Some key management principles are described, but there is little explanation relevant to Sushi2U.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Key management principles are provided, with explanation related to Sushi2U's situation and goals.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Key relevant management principles are linked to the context and business goals of Sushi2U.</p>	<p>Descriptor: There is comprehensive coverage of relevant key principles, and these are linked and rationalised in line with the business context and its goals.</p>
<p>Target for improvement: For every management principle you describe, link this to Sushi2U before moving on.</p>	<p>Target for improvement: For every management principle you give, say 'as we can see in the case...' and give a factual example from Sushi2U.</p>	<p>Target for improvement (reaching the top of Band 4): Make sure you are describing your management principles in depth, but continually linked to Sushi2U, not just in general. You should link every sentence to the business. Write down Sushi2U's goals before you start writing and link back to each goal throughout your work.</p>	

Assessment Focus 3: Suggested Alternative Management Approaches:

Band 1 (1-3 marks)	Band 2 (4-6 marks)	Band 3 (7-9 marks)	Band 4 (10-12 marks)
<p>Descriptor: Suggested management approaches are general and unrealistic within the nature of Sushi2U. Justification is limited.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Suggested approaches are appropriate but are sometimes too general or unrealistic within the nature of Sushi2U. Justification is provided in the context of Sushi2U's goals.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Suggested approaches are appropriate and applied in context. Justifications are balanced and in the context of Sushi2U's business goals.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Suggested approaches are entirely appropriate and applied in context. Balanced justification for suggestions is made in the context of Sushi to you and its goals.</p>

Target for improvement:

After every suggestion you give explain which problem this is aiming to solve at Sushi2U and then explain why this is a good way to solve it.

Target for improvement:

Ensure every suggestion you make is related specifically to the case. For every suggestion you give, follow 'this will work at Sushi2U because' and explain why it specifically works for this business situation.

Target for improvement (reaching the top of Band 4):

For every suggestion given ensure you have followed this structure:

- 1 Give and explain your suggested management approach.
- 2 Explain which problem at Sushi2U this will address.
- 3 Explain why this is appropriate to Sushi2U and their goals/ market/etc.
- 4 Explain how your suggestion will help Sushi2U to you meet their business goals using 'therefore' 'however' and 'because'.

Assessment Focus 4: Structure/Presentation:

Band 1 (1-3 marks)	Band 2 (4-6 marks)	Band 3 (7-9 marks)	Band 4 (10-12 marks)
<p>Descriptor: Response lacks structure and has isolated references to management concepts. Communication errors are evident. Generic management terminology used with limited relevance to Sushi2U.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Response has a basic structure and applies some management principles. Contains occasional communication errors. Contains some references to appropriate management terminology.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Response has a logical structure and uses a variety of relevant management principles. Contains few communication errors. Uses relevant management terminology.</p>	<p>Descriptor: Response is well written and has a logical structure. A variety of relevant management concepts are used. No communication errors. Appropriate management terminology used throughout.</p>
<p>Target for improvement: Check your work for spelling, grammar and communication errors after each paragraph. Plan the key management concepts you will use in your work, and revise each one to be sure you understand it.</p>	<p>Target for improvement: Create a glossary of key management terms and language you will use in your timed assessment. Learn them and be confident in what they mean and how they are relevant to Sushi2U in their current situation.</p>	<p>Target for improvement (reaching the top of Band 4): Plan your structure and layout and be sure it is logical and relevant. Ensure you are using business language and management terminology and not writing 'man on the street' style explanations – remember you are a business consultant!</p>	

Suggested Response for Practice Assessment 1:

Task 1:

Key Human Resource Issues:

- Pay freeze.
- Minimising of training offered at the Academy.
- Decrease in attendance to Think Forward sessions.
- Staff satisfaction has reduced from 90% to 60%.
- The percentage of managerial staff has increased over time, and is at its highest, could this have an effect on empowerment and motivation?
- There is a significant labour turnover problem in branch staff, which is not occurring in management. This must be linked to dissatisfaction. Perhaps staff are going to work for competitors who are offering a better package?
- Productivity has decreased as less customers are being served per staff member during busy periods.

Suggestions for improvement could include:

- Training is important but the Academy is costing money and has had to be reduced so a focus on peer to peer 'on the job' training could be developed. A culture of coaching could be focused on. This would need a real focus on changing culture for staff and managers but should save money in the long run.
- Information is needed from staff on what is causing the increased departure of staff from the company, and the decrease in satisfaction. Exit interviews on leaving, climate surveys, more consultation with staff could all be suggested as ways to explore and tackle the issues.
- Long service rewards or perks to encourage longer service in the company.
- Recruitment programme could be examined to ensure the 'right' staff are being recruited.

How to Implement:

Implementation can take a variety of forms but what is most important is that students have devised methods which are relevant to the case study and the nature of Sushi2U, their current situation and the market they operate within. A balanced response will draw conclusions which also show an understanding of the financial situation of the business, so any costly suggestions must be balanced with how they will be achieved.

Implementation will generally take the form of training, change of culture, moving to different management styles, etc. but must have a clear and relevant method of putting the suggested improvements into place to achieve the higher mark bands.

Task 2:

Change Management Needed (to deal with current financial issues):

- The financial data at Sushi2U suggests a significant rise in costs, which has reduced the profit margin, despite revenue increasing over the period shown. Students may focus on the location of the business and the rising rent costs in train stations and suggest an overall change of location. Or they may suggest other ways to save money and increase profit margin.
- Students may draw the conclusion that the current profit margins aren't actually that bad given the business invests so well in its staff; however this would need to be balanced with the recent pay freeze.
- The recent popularity of Deliveroo and Uber Eats and the company's new app for take aways means there could be more focus on this but in cheaper locations.
- It should also be noted that costs of goods sold have increased.
- Issues with customer service can be identified here but ONLY if they are linked to financial issues (i.e. how poor service may affect revenue and therefore profit).
- The percentage of managerial staff has increased over time – this will be adding to costs and could be a suggestion for change (although in the short term redundancies could cause issues, but could this be achieved through natural wastage?)

Recommendations for change:

- Sushi2U should be looking at alternative suppliers and ways to manage these growing costs of goods sold.
- The managers may look into alternative locations which aren't so cost heavy.
- The business may need to reduce quality by using cheaper supplies, or they may need to increase prices (this needs to be balanced with the need to remain competitive with Leon, Wasabi, etc).
- Money could be saved by only taking regional managers to the Strategic Retreat and not all store managers.
- Pay freeze is both a financial and a HR issue. When looking at this as a financial concern, it should be noted by students that whilst this is saving money it is not a long term solution and soon pay will need to be increased, at least in line with inflation.
- Cuts at the training academy are saving money for now, but will service and management skills suffer over time if staff are not receiving as much training?
- Reduce manager to staff ratio to save on higher salary costs.

Potential Barriers to Change:

- The managers are very set on how they want to run the company and invest in students, etc. but financially it is causing problems – if they resist change it could be difficult, so management outlook could be a key barrier.
- Staff may be resistant to change because they feel they have already had their pay reduced and less training, so fear of further cuts may create a resistance to change.
- Culture of the company – reference to Kotter & Schlesinger's model for barriers to change could be very useful here.
- Lack of information – staff will need to be informed and communicated with in order for them to be on board with the change.
- Management understanding of the change will be vital as it is the store and regional managers who will be leading the implementation of the change.

Ways to Implement Change:

- It would be useful here to look at the ways in which leaders in real companies have created change and got their employees on board. Howard Schultz of Starbucks led a change programme to regain quality, Richard Branson wrote a personal letter to all staff of Virgin Airways and gave his personal number for anyone who had suggestions. Students could draw on real life examples and cherry pick ideas for their own suggested approaches.
- Many companies bring in new leadership for change to be successful, so appointing a third Director could be a way of implementing this change successfully.
- It could be helpful for students to focus on the core values of the business in order to implement change (communication, consultation, listening to employee concerns, etc.)
- Ideas for improving productivity and an analytical approach to explaining how this will impact the business financially in a positive way.

Suggested Response for Practice Assessment 2:

Task 1:

Core Issues regarding leadership and culture:

- Paternalistic and consultative style of leadership.
- Leaders are passionate about developing the skills of university students and graduates.
- Leaders are flexible and fluid. They work flexibly without a set location.
- They are passionate about investing in training and nurturing staff.
- Think Forward sessions show that the consultative nature of their leadership is genuine.
- The annual retreat shows that managers are developed and empowered and treated well.
- HOWEVER – students must realise that something is amiss with leadership as labour turnover is high, quality issues are occurring, productivity is dropping and staff satisfaction is at an all-time low.

Recommendations for 2020 vision of culture:

- A change of leadership style to one that is more Task Based and Dynamic.
- Leadership focused on more communication – could Himari's love of innovation and tech be used here?
- Could the company become less management heavy and empower branch staff even more?
- A third Director could be brought in to add to the leadership style.
- An overall change of culture at Sushi2U with a focus on customer service.
- Any suggestions to improve labour turnover and staff loyalty to the company via leadership.
- Store Managers to ensure they are focused on the company values of a supportive and nurturing culture for all.

Actions needed for vision to become reality:

- If culture change has been suggested then students must say how this will become a reality. This could be via changing systems, changing training, changing the way staff view the company (but must show some awareness of the financial constraints given the current goals to lower costs and claw back profit margins).
- Leadership may need to change their style and then let staff know that things will be different. Suggestions on how to do this must be relevant and appropriate to Sushi2U and the market they are in.
- Leadership may need training or mentoring themselves.
- Regional and Store Managers must be considered for their contribution to leadership too.

Task 2:

Why leadership style at Sushi2U is the key to overcoming financial challenges:

- Leadership style sets the entire tone for the company. Staff will perceive from leadership how they are viewed and how much they are valued.
- However the pay freeze and training cuts may accidentally be sending different messages – leadership style may be perceived via these actions and communication may be needed.
- The financial problems could be worsened by the lack of productivity and retention which will add to costs for Sushu2U so leadership can work to improve these areas.
- Recent issues raised such as a possible culture of blame coming from some Store Managers can be explored and linked to financial challenges (possibly linked to Labour Turnover).
- Store Managers are the leaders affecting employee and customer day to day experience – their leadership is vital to achieving Sushi2U' goals.

How to adapt leadership for success:

- Leadership can be adapted by style, by communication, by the people in the leadership positions.
- Students need to explain how their suggestions will be implemented and how leadership will need to adapt to help these ideas happen. The company vision needs to become a reality and students must show how this can happen.
- This could be by changing leadership personnel, changing leadership approach, changing leadership style, etc.
- Students can also discuss Regional and Store Managers as well as Himari and Ola.
- Leadership can be refined rather than changed, so subtle changes can also be suggested, however the ways in which they will be implemented are needed.
- Do Store Managers need a culture change of their own? Do they need to adapt more than other leaders in the business.