
50 Case Studies for Management & Supervisory Training

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Advantage Human Resources

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Second, I am indebted to the numerous managers and supervisors who were willing to share their stories with me, to let me listen to the troubles, frustrations and, yes, the mistakes they inherited from their predecessors. In these moments, it was happily unclear who was the trainer and who was the student. Their experiences have given all of us an opportunity to learn, and on our behalf, I wish to thank them.

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The practices of the user organization should be tailored to accommodate to the particular need. In case of any uncertainty with respect to any specific organization policy, competent legal counsel should be sought.

The individuals portrayed in this book are completely fictional. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Using the Cases in This Manual

The cases reported in this manual are, with few exceptions, based upon true stories that I have gathered from a broad spectrum of supervisors and managers. While the essential features of each story have been retained, the names of the people and organizations have been changed to protect their identities, as well as to make the cases more flexible for training purposes.

I have used these cases successfully in various management and supervisory training programs over the years. From my experience I have found that they produce recognition, discussion, and even debate. Invariably, they challenge trainees and encourage them to rethink and reexamine the fundamentals of being an effective leader. Together, as presented in this manual, they cover a full range of management and supervisory issues and concerns.

Although the cases are written primarily in the context of service industries, and a few cases set in manufacturing, they go straight to the heart of universal leadership challenges and their application extends into virtually any organizational area. They include such issues as dealing with a difficult employee, improving performance, training and coaching, selecting the right person for the job, and managing fairly and effectively. These challenges are likely to confront any manager or supervisor in any kind of organization, and developing the ability to respond to them productively and to learn from them is what this manual is all about.

The Case Studies in This Manual

The Cases

Many of the cases are presented in one complete story; others are subdivided into sections that highlight major decision points in the development of the story. Either following each section or at the end of the case are suggested questions for discussion or assignment.

Case Discussion

Accompanying each case is the Case Discussion. This helpful guide contains a summary of the case along with answers to the suggested questions presented in the body of the case. The Case Discussion attachment is intended for use by the trainer or discussion facilitator.

Case Issues Index

The Case Issues Index lists the cases and the major management and supervisory issues addressed in each (see page xxi). Use the index to locate the issues you want to cover; then read the case summary in the Case Discussion to learn the specifics.

Using Case Studies in Training Programs

There are several ways by which you can profitably include case studies as part of your training programs. These options are reviewed below.

Preparing for the Training Program

Putting sufficient effort into the preclass preparation process can make the difference between a focused, effective training session and a fragmentary, inconsequential one. As a regular practice, I require managers and supervisors who will be participating in my training programs to submit a case report drawn from their personal experience as part of this preparation process. There are several reasons for doing so:

1. Case write-ups serve as a needs assessment, revealing the issues and concerns of the people who are coming into the program.
2. Case preparation begins the process of orienting the participants to the training.
3. For the cases selected, learning materials specific to the client organization and its unique management needs can be prepared and used in the training.

A Case Report Worksheet designed for the preclass case assignment is provided for your use at the conclusion of this introductory section (see page xii). You can distribute this Worksheet to participants some time before the scheduled start date. Participants return their completed forms to you. You look for cases that seem representative and important, then write a case based on that information for use in the training.

The Training Session

To use either the cases provided here or ones that you develop as part of the training, select a case(s) that fits the topic under study.

In the training session, the participants are organized into leaderless groups and the cases are distributed. The groups are given anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes to read and discuss the case. When the participants are ready, debriefing is conducted, beginning with a prompt recitation of the story's main facts. This review leads directly into the questions supplied at the end of the case.

Case discussions are important features of the training and serve two functions very well: First, they promote participant involvement, encouraging participants to talk and interact with one another; second, they offer marvelous opportunities for participants to apply and extend what they have learned to specific problems. The productivity of these case discussions can be increased by reviewing the steps in the Case Discussion (see the following chapter on *Analyzing a Case*), or by providing each participant with a Case Analysis Worksheet (see page xvii). These worksheets help participants evaluate the cases and apply their problem-solving skills to each group consensus on case solutions.

Cases and Role-Playing

In many of the cases, a meeting between the manager/supervisor and the employee(s) is needed. Several different kinds of goals are possible for such a meeting; to communicate decisions, to listen for information, to negotiate a solution, to chastise, or to recognize good work. In this context, these cases present natural gateways for role-playing practice exercises.

To use these exercises as role-playing lead-in, the trainer assigns to participants the various roles of supervisor, employee, or anyone else integral to the case. Then the participants are given the task of conducting the meeting already discussed by the group. The case establishes the situation, but how the role-players, especially those in supervisory roles, deal with the situation is up to them.

The participant who plays the role of the supervisor usually has the most control over how the situation develops—and the most decisions to make. For example, if the scenario is a disciplinary meeting, what should the supervisor say? And how should he or she act? While there might be common-sense rules about proper action, the use of more specific behavioral guidelines is often desirable.

There are numerous sources of behavioral guidelines that are appropriate for use in case scenario role-plays. Some behavior modeling training programs provide a list of steps a manager should take in any given situation; thus a set of behavior principles for coaching can be applied in these situations. Guidelines may also be drawn from the general literature. The behaviors associated with assertive communication, for example, are rather widely known and can be used as the basis for training and role-playing activities. Finally, keep in mind that the organization which employs the participants may itself be an invaluable source of guidance. The organization's policies and procedures in disciplinary matters, for instance, may clearly indicate what a supervisor should do and say, therefore providing the role-player with an established model of conduct for dealing with disciplinary problems.

The cases, which create the context for action, and the role-playing exercises, which bring participants into the sphere of action, help participants further develop their problem-solving and decision-making skills. Using these cases in conjunction with role-playing exercises and the appropriate guidelines can thus result in a highly effective training method.

Questions and Answers About the Cases

How Were These Cases Developed?

These cases, collected over the past 10 years, are based on the experiences of managers and supervisors in a variety of professions. The occupational settings represented here include financial, health-care, educational, governmental, retail, and manufacturing settings.

Each case tells the story of a particularly compelling or challenging management and supervisory situation. Representing the "critical incidents" in the lives of managers and supervisors, these stories have been generated by the kind of circumstances that, whether simply unusual or quite extraordinary, can have profound effects on individuals and organizations. They are also circumstances for which clear-cut rules and routine procedures do not always apply.

Because the cases were developed according to the accounts of these real-life circumstances, as in life, there often is neither one absolutely correct answer nor single correct course of action to follow that will neatly solve the problems they pose. Such realistic difficulties only increase the power of these cases as learning tools. When a case situation can support several different possible responses, it promotes discussion and stimulates competing opinions and alternative points of view. Case discussions, in turn, promote the evaluation of options and help build judgment in considering how to handle difficult leadership situations.

A Note on Leadership Orientation

Several of these cases were developed for use with training in situation leadership methods. *Situational leadership* is an approach to directing employees in which the type of appropriate leadership style depends in large part on the maturity level of the employees. For instance, according to this method, a highly competent employee should not be managed in the same way that an untrained, poorly motivated new employee is managed: A supervisor or manager should use a more individualized style of leadership.

The classic statement of this approach is given by Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard in *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*.

Where Did the Answers to the Case Questions Come From?

The answers provided in the supplementary Case Discussion sections are based on my experience in managing employees, in training managers and supervisors, and in administering human resource management systems. Others may see the cases in different ways and recommend courses of action that vary from those which I have recommended. Case discussion will often yield a wealth of opinions which, through case analysis, can be developed into several options for resolving the case; then, the "best" alternative from among those options can be chosen (see page xv, *Analyzing a Case: A General Strategy*). Again, equally competent managers and supervisors may arrive at different—yet equally plausible—solutions.

Can the Cases Be Adapted to My Organization?

If necessary, you can adapt and customize these cases by changing the identity of the firm and/or industry while retaining the essential features of the story. For example, with very little effort, you can shift the setting of a case from health care to finance by just changing names and some slight details of the case. "Data processing" in a hospital could be translated into "information systems" in a bank, for instance, in order to fine-tune the case to your specific situation.

I do *not* recommend, though, using the name of your organization in the case. By using your firm's name, you invite participants to make analogies and to speculate on whom this case is really about, and it would not be unusual for rumors to start. Moreover, the important issues of the case can become secondary to these distractions.

For similar reasons, I also do not recommend using the names of public figures, whether real or fictional, for case characters. If a boss is named Rebecca Howe (from "Cheers") or an employee Frank Burns (from M*A*S*H), participants will immediately apply the character traits of those fictional personalities to the individuals in the case, which, again, distracts participants from a full consideration of the case issues.

If you find it necessary to alter a case in this manual, please add the following statement to the bottom of the first page on which the case appears:

This case is adapted from the (*case name*) case, found in *Fifty Case Studies for Management and Supervisory Training*, by Alan Clardy, Ph.D., © HRD Press, 1994. Adapted by permission.

CASE REPORT WORKSHEET

Please answer each of the items on the form below. Certain cases will be adapted for use in training. If your case is selected for use, you will be contacted for your permission to use it and, if permission is given, for more details. The case prepared for final use will be written so that all people involved, including yourself, will be anonymous.

Name _____ Work phone _____

Describe a challenging situation you have faced or are currently facing as a supervisor. There are several reasons why the situation may be challenging:

- It was unusual.
- Even though it was usual, you were not sure what to do about it.
- The demands or conditions were complicated.

There could be other reasons. The situation could be a problem or an opportunity. It might involve an individual or group you manage directly, or someone you do not manage at all. Use the reverse of this page or attach additional paper if you need more writing space.

1. Identify the people who were involved: use job titles (no names) and describe each person's age, gender, years in current position, and/or any other relevant characteristics.

2. Describe the nature of the situation. What is going on? What is happening? What is the performance issue?

3. What was your role? What did you do, and what happened?

4. What was the conclusion, or what is the current status?

Return to _____ by _____

Analyzing a Case: A General Strategy

A case is a story that describes a problematic incident, event, or situation. It typically reports in-depth information about certain aspects of the situation while under-reporting other aspects, and its conclusion is commonly left open-ended. The mission of case analysis is to make sense of the given material and to identify appropriate actions for handling the case situation.

Successful case discussions begin with an analysis of the key issues in the case. The analysis then serves as the basis for defining the most desirable outcomes and considering what options are available. This process usually results in a diversity of opinion as participants view the case situation from their unique perspectives, stressing different values and promoting different outcomes. Such diversity of opinion is the strength of the group case exercise. Participants should value these differences, recognizing them as essential to learning, and make a special effort to encourage new opinions about the case. As a result, the case exercise will become an even more profitable learning experience.

In case analysis, participants also evaluate the different opinions about the case and use their evaluations as the basis for forming a common opinion. By working together in this way to build group consensus on case solutions, participants gain a deeper understanding of how they can constructively deal with real-life leadership issues. Included below are case analysis guidelines that constitute a seven-step method for reaching group consensus. These steps provide participants with a common source of direction for addressing case issues, and also appear in the form of a handy Case Analysis Worksheet at conclusion of this section (see page xvii).

Case Analysis Guidelines

Step 1. *What are the key issues or problems of the case?*

Any case may suggest several interpretations of what the focal concerns are. It is helpful to begin by identifying as many different interpretations as possible. Have each participant state why he or she identified the issues or problems as key.

Step 2. *Prioritize the problems.*

Participants should focus on the key issues of the case. This may involve selecting one of the issues already raised or creating a new statement that identifies the problem. In some cases, there may be several problems at work, in which case participants may wish to simply rank the problems in terms of either potential importance or timing of impact.

Step 3. *Consider whether it is necessary to determine the "cause" of the problem.*

In some cases, it is important to determine what caused the problem in order to identify the appropriate solution(s). In other cases, the cause of the problem is not as important as what to do about it. Therefore, when working on a case, always ask whether it is necessary to decide what the cause is.

It should be noted that speculating on the motivations of the individuals in a case seldom does more than sidetrack a case study. By trying to determine why a person acted in a certain way, participants can easily fall into unproductive discussions that revolve around guesswork instead of focusing on the situation at hand. Managers and supervisors often must respond to actions (or lack of actions) made by the people with whom they work, and reflecting on the motivations of others is, in this regard, only a diversion.

Step 4. *Brainstorm the options available to the leader.*

There is always one option: Do nothing. However, there are usually several ways to respond to a problem, and helping participants identify those options is an important part of case discussions. Participants should be encouraged to use their best brainstorming skills to determine what the options are.

Step 5. *Evaluate the options.*

Each option will have advantages and disadvantages. In management and human resource issues, there are several criteria that may be useful for evaluating different options, including:

- The power of the option to solve the problem
- The impact of the option on organizational performance and/or morale
- Legal or regulatory liabilities and requirements
- Cost of the option
- The ability of the person(s) involved to carry out the option (in terms of skill, authority, or basic motivation)

Step 6. *Select the optimum solution*

The ideal solution will produce the best outcome at the least cost. In management situations, this may not be possible. Therefore, selecting the best solution may involve balancing competing opportunities and constraints with an optimum solution that produces satisfactory outcomes on as many criteria as possible.

Step 7. *Describe how the solution should be implemented.*

Create a plan or "script" of what the manager or supervisor should do to implement the solution.

CASE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

1. What are the key issues or problems of the case?

2. Prioritize the issues or problems.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

3. Is it necessary to identify the cause of the problem?

4. Brainstorm the options available.

5. Evaluate the options:

Advantages

Disadvantages

• _____:	_____
• _____:	_____
• _____:	_____

6. Select the optimum solution.

7. Describe how the solution should be implemented. _____

An Invitation to the Reader

I am continually looking for new case examples. If you have a particularly instructive story, please contact me with the details. Stories that illustrate the key problems and challenges of leadership can be important sources of learning for all managers and supervisors, and I encourage you to share your experiences.

You may also contact me if you would like information about the case-based training programs I conduct or how I could assist your organization in developing customized cases on these subjects and other specific applications:

- Management, supervision, and leadership
- Quality management
- Human resources management
- Employee training and development
- Selling and business development

Finally, I would like to hear from you about your experiences with these cases. Best wishes for provocative training and learning experiences.

Please mail all correspondence to:

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Columbia, MD 21046

CASE ISSUES INDEX

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4. Part 1— <i>Getting Started on the Right (or Left?) Foot</i>	Establishing a new relationship, etc.
5. Part 2— <i>Kicking Into Gear</i>	Performance management, controls
6. Part 3— <i>A Time for Action</i>	Termination
7. Mary Corey	Performance problems
8. Shipping and Receiving	Sexual harassment
9. They Came From Docu-Max	Sexual harassment
10. He's Just Not the Seme	Disabled employee
11. Special Checking Is Handed a Loss	Performance problems, orientation, leadership style
12. Beverly Comess Full Circle	Career/employee development, mid-career changes, counseling
13. It Was Really So Simple	Leadership, orientation, delegation, coaching
14. Pain in Claims	Dealing with disruptive employee
15. Don't Let Her Get Behind You	Dealing with problem employee
16. Kathy Showers	Dealing with disruptive, problem employee
17. Forgetting Claims	Coaching, counseling
18. Answering the Phone "Good News, Bad News"	Training planning
19. Part 1— <i>The \$3.75 Mistake</i>	Customer relations, employee insubordination

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| 20. Part 2— <i>Judy, Judy, Judy</i> | Group morale, problem solving, coaching, discrimination |
| 21. Part 3— <i>The Storm Breaks</i> | Disruptive conflict, performance management and problem solving |
| 22. Conflict in Customer Service | Sex discrimination, coaching, problem solving |
| 23. Don't Let an Old Flame Die | Job enrichment |
| 24. The Contradiction of Business | Business problem solving |
| 25. Problems Behind the Counter | Formal disciplinary procedures |
| 26. Wanted: Good Secretary | Coaching, dealing with productivity problems |
| 27. Another Staff Meeting | Communicating, conducting meetings, employee participation |
| 28. The Case in Case Analysis | Coaching, disruptive employee, morale |
| 29. A "No" in the Field | Insubordination |
| 30. Buddy Jefferson | Assuming leadership role, poor performance, coaching, counseling, orientation |
| 31. A Wet Pain in the Neck | Managing for service quality, coaching, leadership |
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| 33. The "B" is Back | Abusive behavior, bad employee morale |
| 34. Accidents Happen | Selection, handicapped employee, morale/group activity |
| 35. A Leadership Challenge | Assuming a supervisory position, team-building, selection, problem employee |
| 36. It Was Either Some Dress or Some Stain | Violence in the workplace |
| 37. Bad News in Budgets | Communication, leadership, training, morale |
| 38. Out of Control | Running a meeting, productivity improvements |
| 39. What a Waste of Time | Transfer of training, coaching, performance improvement |
| 40. Getting a Fair Hearing | Dealing with informal, antagonist employee group, labor organizing, morale issues |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 41. Who's Telling the Truth? | Sexual harassment, conflict resolution |
| 42. Shouting for Results | Labor negotiations, performance appraisals |
| 43. Fixing Things Over Dinner | Performance problems, counseling, in-subordination |
| 44. A System's Migration to New Skills | Training, coaching |
| 45. The Worst Part Was That She Often Was Right | Leadership style, disruption, participation |
| 46. Lighting a Fire | Motivation |
| 47. Caught in the Act | Violent behavior, drug problems, termination, customer security |
| 48. Look Out Ahead | Developing and coaching a supervisor |
| 49. A Problem in Security | Codes of conduct, controls, dealing with criminal conduct |
| 50. Who Me? | Sexual harassment, employee counseling, race relations, violence |

The Fifty Case Studies

CASE 1

How Come They Make More Than Me?

Fran Jefferson began her job as the supervisor of the Training Department of Metro Bank and Trust Company almost four years ago. She was generally pleased with the four trainers and one secretary in her unit. Indeed, Fran took pride in her ability to create a high morale and high performance unit. This was particularly pleasing to Fran because they were constantly busy and barely able to keep up with the volume of training expected from them.

Then, early on Wednesday morning, Fran's secretary, Judy Martin, knocked on Fran's door and asked to see her. Fran liked Judy and considered the secretary to be one of her "stars." Indeed, in an effort to develop Judy's talents and abilities, Fran had gone out of her way to give Judy special assignments, including her in all the major planning activities of the department and entrusting her with the administration of certain departmental programs, such as tuition assistance and evaluation follow-through. By now, Judy functioned more as an administrative aide than as a secretary.

It was clear that Judy was upset about something as she seated herself in the chair next to Fran's desk. Slowly, Judy placed a job-posting application form in front of Fran. She would not look her supervisor in the eyes.

Fran was surprised, to say the least. As far as Fran knew, Judy liked both her job and working in the Training Department. In turn, everyone else in the department liked and respected Judy.

Fran looked over the form and said casually, "So you want to post for the executive secretary job in the Branch Management Division." She paused. "Could I ask you for some additional information, Judy? I'm kind of surprised."

Judy looked at her clasped hands, thinking. Fran waited.

Finally, Judy looked up and said: "I noticed in last week's job posting that the executive secretary position is graded as a 14. Now that's two grades higher than my job!"

She caught her breath. "You know my friend Mary Johnson works over there. She told me that half the time the secretary sits around doing nothing."

Judy continued, gathering some anger in her look and resentment in her voice. "Look, Fran, you know how hard I work, how hard we all work, around here. I mean, I'm always busy. I don't see why I should work in a job graded at a 12 and work twice as hard and yet not be paid the same as that secretary. The job requirements for the job are just a littler higher than mine, and the merit raise you gave me last month hardly helped at all."

Fran listened; then she replied: "It sounds to me, Judy, that you're feeling angry because you think you should be paid more for the work you do and that you want to switch jobs rather than put up with things as they are. Am I right?"

Judy nodded her head in agreement.

Fran knew, though, that the Metro job evaluation system was up to date and that the executive secretary position to which Judy referred did require additional background experience, skills, and responsibilities beyond what was needed in Judy's current job. Because her secretary was such a good employee and a nice person, Fran was quite concerned. She felt strongly that moving to the executive secretary job would not be what Judy really wanted, and she hated to lose Judy, especially if her decision was based on faulty reasoning and the move would not be good for her.

Fran tried to figure out what to do.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the reasons given by Judy Martin for wanting to post for a position in another department? What points are accurate and which are debatable?
2. How should Fran respond to Judy's request to transfer?
3. How should Fran respond to Judy's salary complaints?

CASE DISCUSSION: How Come They Make More Than Me?

Summary

Fran Jefferson supervised the Training Department of Metro Bank. One of her star employees, Judy Martin, surprised Fran one day with a job-posting application. Judy wanted to transfer to another department where the employees made more money (in higher evaluated jobs) and supposedly did less work. In the ensuing discussion, Fran learned that Judy was very unhappy with the merit increase she had recently received. Judy believed she could earn more money in the open position, which was three grades higher than the position she currently occupied.

Judy now functioned more as an administrative assistant than as the departmental secretary (the position for which she had been hired). Fran knew that the job evaluation system in use was valid and up-to-date, and that grade differences between Judy's job and the open position meant real differences in responsibility, skill, and accountability.

Fran did not want to lose Judy.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What are the reasons given by Judy Martin for wanting to post for a position in another department? Which points are accurate and which are debatable?

Judy's line of reasoning is as follows:

- (a) Her recent merit increase was not adequate enough reward for her hard work.
This is Judy's opinion, and for her, it is true.
- (b) There is an open position that would pay much more than what she is making now.
It is true that this open position would pay her more than she is making now.
- (c) She has heard that the job in question is easier to do than the one she has now.
Unfortunately, this point is misleading and probably wrong. Her information is based on hearsay. In fact, grade differences of three levels mean these jobs require higher levels of talent, initiative, and responsibility. Judy has confused being busy with working at a higher level of difficulty.
- (d) Therefore, she wants to get an easier, higher paying job by moving to that new position.
She might get a higher paying job, but it would not likely be an easier job.

2. How should Fran respond to Judy's request to transfer?

In many job-posting systems, the posting employee is required to notify his or her supervisor of the intention to post for a position. However, the employee is not required to obtain the supervisor's permission. To the extent that this rule applies here, Fran cannot do anything but pass along the posting application.

However, it would be prudent of Fran to help Judy make the best career decision in this matter. While agreeing to move the job-posting application along, Fran should also counsel Judy. First, she should encourage Judy to do some career and job informational interviewing. For example, Judy should be encouraged to meet with people in the other department to learn what they really do. Second, she needs to think about what she wants in a job. Finally, Fran should explain to Judy that the jobs are graded differently because there are real and significant differences in the jobs. She should caution Judy that hearsay can be misleading and that she should look at the executive secretary position in terms of levels of skills and accountability, not just in terms of dollar differences.

3. How should Fran respond to Judy's salary complaints?

It is likely that Judy is motivated in part by her anger and resentment over what she sees as an inadequate recognition of her hard work. Fran should work to communicate her appreciation for Judy's contributions. In addition, Fran needs to note that Judy is performing a job that is higher than the job for which she was hired. Judy should institute a job reevaluation request.

CASE 2

"She's a Smart Enough Broad"

The young man glanced at the nameplate on his desk after closing the file cabinet drawer: *James Washington, Center Manager*. He leaned against the cabinet for a moment, smiling and thinking.

James really liked the way that title sounded. And why not? He was only 24 years old, had just completed the company's Management Associate Trainee Program, and had just assumed the manager's job at the Northview Servicing Center. He was eager to do a good job in this first assignment, and there was a lot about the job that he liked. However, there was one thing he didn't like, and he could see her through the glass partition of his office, out on the service center's main floor.

His problem was Dorothy Rogers or, more exactly, the way he felt about her. In his opinion, she was both pushing and resisting him.

Dorothy was something of an established figure at Northview, having worked there for over 12 years as an assistant manager. She was now 59 years old and had dropped hints occasionally about retiring. "If only....," James thought to himself.

He remembered the first time he met Dorothy, about six weeks ago. James had just learned he was being promoted into the Northview manager's job. He went to visit the service center, to meet the personnel and begin the transition process with Hank Waters. Hank was the current manager and was being moved to manage a larger branch of the company, closer to his home. He had been at Northview almost two years.

After showing James the facility and introducing some of the sales and service representatives, Hank had walked James to Dorothy's desk and introduced them. Although she was very pleasant and nice, James watched rather uncomfortably as Hank tried to pass along an assignment to her regarding a customer account investigation. Six weeks later, their exchange, which follows, remained clear in James' memory.

HANK:

By the way, Dorothy, can you follow up on the Williams' account problem we talked about earlier today? I just got word from downtown that—

DOROTHY (interrupting in a soft yet determined voice):

Now, Hank, you know that if I do that for you, I won't be able to take care of the budget reconciliation report you have me do each week. Don't you think you can take care of it yourself?

HANK (pausing a moment, obviously thinking):

Well, yes, I know you're busy. I was just hoping that you could—

DOROTHY (jumping back in, this time with a certain accusatory tone in her voice:

Look, Hank what do you want me to do? I can't do both. You know I'm busy.

(She stares expectantly at Hank; James looks at her desk, which is neat and clean.)

HANK (pausing again, biting his lower lip):

Well, you know...OK, you may be right. Let me go ahead and do it.

DOROTHY (nodding in agreement):

That's better, I think. Don't you?

Hank had seemed relieved to end the conversation. He walked with James back into his office. Dorothy went to get some coffee.

"She really runs this place," Hank told James. "I hate to impose. She knows so much about all the operational and service matters of this center."

James nodded his head. "I guess she must be pretty important."

Hank hadn't reacted as he sat behind his desk.

James moved back to the chair behind his desk. He continued to look at Dorothy as she finished working with her customer. He thought back to his first few weeks on the job. At first, Dorothy had been fine and, in fact, very helpful. This was perfect because not only did James still have a great deal to learn about Northview's operations, he also had a lot of work to do elsewhere. For example, much of his time was spent outside the service center, meeting existing customers, doing sales calls, attending training and fulfilling similar obligations. In the month that he had been at Northview, he had spent probably no more than a total of five hours with her.

Unfortunately, most of that time with Dorothy had been spent sorting out and listening to a problem between her and Senior Service Associate Bonnie Johnson. Bonnie was Dorothy's age, but that was about all the two women seemed to have in common, for Bonnie was rather quiet and reserved. James had expressed his interest in Bonnie taking a more active role in working with the other service associates, but Dorothy had not liked that idea, thinking that James was trying to take away some of her job duties. Consequently, she started fighting with Bonnie over any little detail.

James learned about this bickering from comments and meetings with both Dorothy and Bonnie, as well as from some of the center's other service associates. Last Monday, after what seemed like a week of nonstop arguing, he had called them both into his office.

"Look, you two," he had told them, "I'm really getting tired of all this squabbling. I expect both of you to cooperate and function as a team. I'm the one running the show here. If this fighting doesn't stop, I'll have to put you on probation. And if it doesn't stop after that, I may just fire you."

Shocked and silent, both had left his office without barely a glance in his direction.

After that meeting, Dorothy became quiet, but seemed unmotivated. She appeared to have settled into a low-energy and low-output mode. She would do what she was supposed to do, but nothing more than that. And James had overheard her complaining to other employees, both at Northview and elsewhere, about a number of things, including the company, the service center, and James. He had thought to himself, "She's just a negative person. Sure, she's a smart enough broad. She knows how far she can go. But don't expect her to be of any real help."

Upon remembering those thoughts, James leaned back in his chair, rubbing his eyes. He could not argue with that estimation of Dorothy, only confirm it. His mind turned to what had happened at closing yesterday. The memory was so vivid it was as if the events were taking place at that very moment.

The last customer had just left and the doors are being locked. Everyone is busy closing their stations when suddenly Dorothy brings out a small portable television, makes herself comfortable at her desk, and turns the television on, clearly intending to watch it.

James, seeing her do this, is dumbfounded. He thinks to himself, "What in the hell is she doing? If my boss comes here, I'm in big trouble." He remembers the recent memo from headquarters, demanding more productivity and application to getting the work done.

He walks over to her desk. She smiles as he approaches and says, "Oh, it's OK, James. We do this every so often. Hank said I could watch it when I had to stay and finish up routine work, as long as I wouldn't let it interfere with the work."

James feels pushed to the limit. He decides not to say anything to her and leaves, certain that at this point she's testing him, trying to find out how far she can go. She is challenging his authority again, he feels, and this time he must do something dramatic.

James was still trying to decide what to do as he watched Dorothy finish with the customer and return to her seat.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is there a problem(s) here?
2. What is (are) the problem(s)?
3. What should be done?

CASE DISCUSSION: "She's a Smart Enough Broad"

Summary

James Washington was a young graduate of the organization's Management Trainee Program. He recently assumed the manager's job at one of the organization's service centers, Northview Servicing. Dorothy Rogers had been an assistant manager at Northview for over 12 years and was more than twice James' age. After a series of encounters with her, James began to feel that Dorothy was resisting his taking over leadership of the service center and was working behind his back to undermine his authority. James threatened to fire her at one point. Subsequently, she became passive and withdrawn. To James' astonishment, one day after the store had closed, she brought out a portable television and placed it on her desk, intending to watch it. This act was in direct violation of company directives. James wondered what to do about the situation.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is there a problem here?

Yes, there are several problems here.

2. What is (are) the problem(s)?

First, there is the immediate problem of Dorothy violating company rules by bringing out the television.

Second, there is the more deep-seated problem of James establishing a working relationship with someone with whom he has had difficulty. To complicate matters even more, James is dependent upon Dorothy for help with managing the center because of her expertise and background. Unfortunately, James indicates that he has an attitude and set of assumptions about her that can hamper the establishment of a good working relationship (for example, his derogatory and backhanded compliment that she was a "smart enough broad"). James' limited experience managing others will be a drawback in this respect.

Third, there is the more profound problem of establishing effective control and leadership over the service center.

3. What should be done?

First, it is not too late for James to hold a "transition meeting" with the staff. In this meeting, there is a mutual communication about expectations, styles, and needs. Such a meeting would allow him to detail his performance expectations and management practices as well as learn more about what employees want and need. Thereafter, he can hold follow-up meetings with each employee individually.

Second, he should ask to talk with Dorothy privately. As part of that session, he should indicate matter-of-factly but firmly that television watching is not acceptable; he should explain why and ask for Dorothy's help.

During this meeting, he should also raise the problem of how he has been feeling—that she is pushing and resisting him. In this way, they can establish a more effective working relationship.

James should raise these issues assertively. That is, he should preface his remarks by noting that he is still new to managing and that he will likely make some mistakes. For example, it would be appropriate to apologize for the firing threat made earlier. He should explain his frustrations in trying to find a good working relationship and ask if she has any similar feelings. This approach could be a nonconfrontational way to open up for discussion how they will work together.

It appears that Dorothy is technically a very competent employee, although her motivation level is average. A participative style of managing is suggested. Thus, a general strategy would be to recognize and capitalize on her technical abilities while trying to improve her motivation. Clearly defined authorities and a regular reporting relationship can help achieve the former, while including her in center planning and decision making can hopefully improve the latter.

James' efforts to redirect the quality of their relationship does not mean, though, that he abdicates center leadership duties. He should spend more time working with both Dorothy and Bonnie Johnson to define and implement any changes in their respective duties. For example, in a discussion with Dorothy, James should state his plan and his rationale as well as ask for her help and suggestions. James should also be attentive to indications that he is failing to establish a workable relation with Dorothy. If there is an inadequate response on her part, he may need to begin either to transfer her, to discipline her, or to terminate her.

CASE 3

Improving Performance in Business Services

Two years ago, the State Department of Economic Development created the Business Services Group to provide special services to out-of-state businesses that were considering relocating in the state. Another key task of the group was to help those businesses who had recently relocated get settled and operating as quickly as possible. In that two-year period, the Business Services Group put together a good record of helping more than 35 businesses move into the state efficiently.

The Business Services Group was staffed with a complement of a department manager and 5 Business Development specialists, along with some secretarial and clerical support. The job of the Business Development specialists consisted principally of contacting and working with appropriate personnel in each business to identify the kinds of information or help they needed, then making sure that the correct assistance arrived. The specialists also served as "troubleshooters" for the business whenever there were problems with the "bureaucracy." Specialists were responsible for keeping these businesses happy and efficient. As such, the specialists needed to be imaginative, persistent, and self-driven. Each specialist had a quota of contacts and services to make each month.

Charles Thompson was initially made acting supervisor of the Business Services Group after the hasty departure of the previous Department Manager. After three weeks of keeping things running, he was promoted to manager. Charles originally was hired as a specialist. Six months ago, he was transferred to another, related department to serve as assistant manager.

When Charles learned that he was moving back to the Business Services Group, he was very happy because he would be reunited with the people with whom he used to work. In fact, Charles had worked with all five of them to some degree while he was in Business Services.

John Willis, now the senior specialist, joined the Business Services Group the same day Charles did. In fact, they had come from the same department to join Business Services. Suzy Harris and Barbara Garrett became specialists shortly thereafter. For most of the time that Charles was in the Group, these four worked together easily and effectively. As the Business Services Group expanded, Tom Rollins was added. Finally, before Charles transferred, he had a chance to orient and train Melanie Bronson, who had been hired as his replacement.

As a group, these individuals represented a fairly high level of experience in the business services function. Moreover, based upon their record and reputation, they also performed very well. Charles reviewed the batch of complimen-

tary letters sent to the Business Services Group, some of which had been signed by the governor. They worked effectively and creatively on their own with few personnel problems.

In spite of this consistent record, though, Audrey Downs (Charles' new boss, the head of Economic Development) felt there was still room for improvement. She explained her thinking to Charles in a luncheon meeting one day, not long after Charles had been promoted to manager. By that time, Charles had seen enough of the Business Service Group's operations to agree. One of Audrey's major programs for the entire department was to institute a Service Quality Management program, and she wanted to start in the Business Services Group. Charles agreed with the idea.

Early the following Monday, Charles called the staff together for a meeting. He told them of Audrey's goal for instituting a Service Quality Management program and that they were selected to begin it. He also told them that in order to move them forward, he was going to do two things, effective immediately:

- Raise their service quotas by 20 percent
- Submit anyone who failed to meet that quota to a formal disciplinary action

The specialists left the meeting without comment, although there was a lot of mumbling in the hallways as they walked back to their desks.

Over the next week or so, Charles noticed that they seemed to avoid him and were noticeably cooler to him when he was at hand. He had to make more of an effort to get information and ideas from them, and it seemed that the tone and tenor of the offices became more tense, hostile, and somber.

After two weeks, Charles reviewed the performance records of the specialists. Sure enough, Suzy Harris had not met her quota, and as promised, Charles issued a written reprimand to her. Suzy was speechless, though clearly angered by Charles, as he reviewed the reprimand with her.

It has been two days since that meeting. Since then, Suzy has filed a grievance in the Personnel Department against Charles. John Willis put in a request for a transfer and Charles heard that Barbara is preparing to request a transfer. None of the employees in the Business Services Group now talk to him at all and simply pass along information in handwritten notes. He also has noticed how services to certain businesses have now slightly slipped.

He knows there is a major problem. As he sits at his desk at 5:00 p.m., in an empty office, waiting to make a call to one of the businesses who have complained, he wonders what went wrong and what he should do now.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. How should Charles have responded to his manager's interest in starting the Service Quality Management program?
2. Describe the problem(s) facing Charles.
3. What should Charles do to respond to the problem(s)?

CASE DISCUSSION: Improving Performance in Business Services

Summary

Charles Thompson recently was appointed manager of the Business Services Department. Earlier in his career, he had worked as a specialist in this department for 18 months, until he transferred to another department. When he moved back, he was reunited with a group he had previously worked with. This group, known officially as the Business Services group, was experienced and effective in working together. Spurred by his new boss to improve service quality, Charles raised their quotas by 20 percent and threatened to put anyone who did not meet this quota on formal discipline. After two weeks, he did so to one employee. There is now a major morale problem and a grievance filed with the Personnel Department.

Answers to Case Questions

1. How should Charles have responded to his manager's interest in starting the Service Quality Management program?

Charles should have first clarified with the manager what her expectations were for this program, including deadlines, budget, outcomes, and learning activities. He should have reached some agreement with her about his authority to execute the program as he sees best and how they will communicate on the program's progress.

The employees in the Business Services Group are in general a medium-to high-competence group. The recommended leadership style would be a participative one. This means that Charles should meet with the Group's members and explain the situation, including all relevant background.

At this meeting, Charles should solicit their input on identifying options for improving services. This may include seeking training resources as well as providing service quality information. This first meeting would create a schedule for how the Business Services Group would plan and carry out this project. It would be possible to delegate specific assignments to each member of the Group.

2. Describe the problem(s) facing Charles.

Charles faces a serious morale problem which will likely escalate into lowered productivity, reduced communication, increased complaints, turnover, and conflict. This morale problem rests on a resentment and distrust of Charles' management practices.

3. What should Charles do to respond to the problem?

Charles used the wrong approach in seeking to produce change among his employee group. In effect, Charles created the reason for the problem by taking a directive approach when a more participative one was needed. Therefore, Charles should call a meeting with his staff to discuss the matter.

At the meeting, Charles should indicate that he made a mistake in his approach to the goals of improved service quality. Indeed, he should reaffirm his commitment to that process. However, he should take responsibility for the problem. Assuming that there were no complications in the grievance process, it would be appropriate to rescind the formal discipline on the employee in question.

It is likely that, given the opportunity, the employees may have repressed a level of anger about things in general and about Charles in particular. At this meeting, he should encourage them to raise that anger or any concerns so that he can make any changes needed to forestall future problems.

Either at this meeting or at one held in the near future, Charles should use a more participative process for instituting the service quality management program. At that point, he could pick up on the procedures discussed in the answer to Question 1.

CASE 4

"Looney Tunes on Parade"

Part I: *Getting Started on the Right (or Left?) Foot*

Introduction

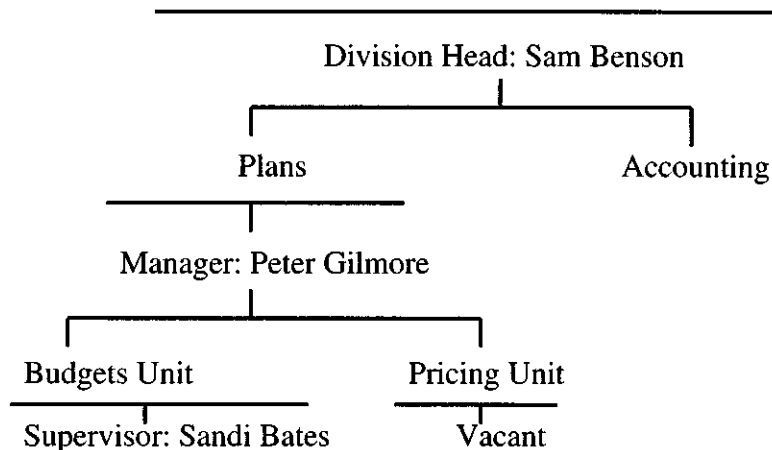
Republic Insurance Company is a regional, all-purpose firm with offices in a three-state area. The central headquarters office houses the staff that plans and controls the field-office operations. Because the company is in such a competitive industry, sales play a very important role in Republic's efforts.

The group responsible for planning and controlling the sales effort of Republic's three-state field force is the Strategic Management Division. There are two main components of the Strategic Management Division:

1. The *Accounting Department* pays the bills and keeps track of the income.
2. The *Plans Department* does the marketing, product and price studies, profit, budget planning, and similar duties.

The organizational chart of this Strategic Management Division is shown below. It depicts the structure of the division and the leadership roles within that structure which have a bearing on this case. It also includes the names of the individuals who filled those leadership roles in June, 1987, the time at which the events in this case begin.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DIVISION



The manager of the Plans Department is responsible for two units: Budgets and Pricing. Each unit has a supervisor who is responsible for the projects and tasks assigned to the unit. The Budgets Unit does long-term planning and evaluation of the profit and cost centers of Republic, and coordinates the overall budget planning for the entire company. The Pricing Unit is responsible for keeping track of the competition's prices on insurance policies, company-wide profit-forecasting, and other special studies about company products or costs. The Pricing Unit regularly provides these studies to other units and divisions within the company. These studies supply essential information to the managers of these other departments so that they can make their own business and budgeting plans.

In June of 1987, the Strategic Management Division was headed by Sam Benson. Peter Gilmore, who had been with Republic for 10 years, managed the Plans Department's two units. The Budgets Unit was supervised by Sandi Bates, and the Pricing Unit's supervisory position was vacant.

In that same month, Peter Gilmore received a referral from Personnel for the open supervisor's position in the Pricing Unit. The job candidate's name was David Randle. Randle had a resumé that looked good (see the copy of the resumé on the following page), and Gilmore managed to squeeze him in for a 20-minute interview between business meetings. The manager talked in general about the job and asked Randle about his resumé. He found Randle personable and easy to get along with, liked the candidate's background, and decided to offer him the job. He told Personnel to hire him and take care of the details.

Randle began work a week later, on July 1, 1987, as supervisor of the Pricing Unit. He had two cost analysts and a secretary reporting to him.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Evaluate David Randle's resumé.
2. Evaluate the selection procedure used by Peter Gilmore.
3. Anticipate any effects of the selection procedure used by Peter Gilmore on David Randle's future performance.

DAVID RANDLE
5634 Watercrest Street
City, State 12345

EDUCATION

State University
The Evening College Program
B.S. in Business
3.75 GPA, 3.8 in major
1978-1984

PERSONAL

Born: October 9, 1957
Married
Fluent in four languages:
Spanish, French, Italian, Portugese

WORK HISTORY

Smith Stores
January 1987 – date
Cost Accountant: supervises Cost Unit, profit-planning, budget coordination for the stores

Johnson Adhesives Manufacturing
February 1986 – July 1986
Price Analyst: developed and supervised computer records, inventory controls, payrolls

Safety Media Films
January 1983 – February 1986
Price Analyst: budget planning, international finance, financial planning

Bander Food Chains
November 1981 – January 1983
Senior Bookkeeper: price studies, computer records, supervision

Get Smart Book Publishers
February 1981-- November 1981
Junior Bookkeeper: payroll accounts, accounts receivable, payable, general ledger, audits.

Approaching the Job of Supervisory Leadership

Peter Gilmore was a capable, energetic manager with the Republic Insurance Company. He began his career with Republic some 15 years ago, after graduating with an accounting degree from the night-school program at City University. He was personable, well-liked, and bright.

Peter worked hard and diligently, regularly putting in 10-hour days and work on the weekends. Because of his dedication, Peter had been rewarded with ever-increasing responsibilities and promotions. He was now serving effectively as the second in command in the Strategic Management Division.

Peter once summarized his supervisory philosophy and practice in this way: "You know, every time my boss gave me an assignment, I always worked as hard and as fast as I could to complete it perfectly and on time. I expect the same from my subordinates: If I give them something to do, I expect the same from them—it should be done correctly and on time. I can't take time to check up on them or see if they are doing it."

Peter's management practices were good to his word: He delegated projects easily and would expect them to get done. When he handed out an assignment, he didn't expect to have to deal with it again until the employee brought back the completed task within a reasonable time.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. For this type of supervisory leadership to work successfully, what kind of relationship must Peter Gilmore have with his subordinates? What characteristics must the employees possess?
2. What kind of problems, if any, might you expect from this kind of supervision?
3. What general kinds of supervisory actions should Peter Gilmore be taking?

Getting Things Under Control?

After a month or so of orientation and break-in, Randle was regularly given assignments by his boss, Peter Gilmore. For example, one major assignment Peter gave to Randle involved proposed price changes in Republic's line of life insurance policies. These policies were a major income producer for Republic. Recent changes in the prices for similar products by the competition were beginning to put pressure on the profit margins of these products. Republic needed to maintain a strong and sound competitive posture in this sales area. This was a major, long-term study that would take about six or seven months to complete. During the period in which Gilmore was trying to hire a supervisor, he "babysat" the project. Once Randle was hired, Gilmore was more than happy to turn the project over to him.

Gilmore would give these studies and assignments to Randle and expect them to be done. Since many of these reports were prepared for other departments in the company, Gilmore did not necessarily see them once they were done.

In addition, it turned out that Gilmore and Randle lived in the same part of town. Shortly after Randle was hired, he and Gilmore started commuting together to and from work. Gilmore felt that Randle had ample opportunity to talk with him if there were any problems or questions.

There had been a series of problems in the Pricing Unit, though, not long before Randle was hired. Work was not getting done properly through the unit, and at first no one knew why. Sam Benson (the head of the Strategic Management Division) finally determined that these problems had developed because requests for work were made directly to the Pricing Unit from other departments. Benson issued a standing order to the other divisions in Republic that the Pricing Unit would no longer take work requests directly from other departments. Instead, the requesting department had to submit their work order directly either to him or to Peter Gilmore for initial approval.

Randle learned of this rule very quickly. When managers approached him for work assignments, Randle told them: "I'd really like to help. But you know the rule that Sam Benson laid down. You need to discuss the project with him."

During Randle's first six months on the job, everything seemed to be going fine. Gilmore would give Randle assignments and, not hearing anything to the contrary, would assume that the projects were being done. As far as Gilmore knew, all was well.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Did Gilmore need to establish any controls over the work of David Randle? Did Gilmore have adequate controls over the work?
2. What kind of control should Gilmore have established over the work of Randle and the Pricing

CASE DISCUSSION: "Looney Tunes on Parade" —Part 1: Getting Started

Summary: Introduction

Peter Gilmore managed the Plans Department for Republic Insurance company. The Pricing Unit supervisor's job, one of the two supervisory positions that would report to Peter, became vacant. Gilmore spent about 20 minutes interviewing David Randle for the position, liked him, and told Personnel to hire him.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Evaluate David Randle's resumé.

The resumé Randle provided indicates that he graduated from the Evening College Program of State University with a high grade point average (GPA) after attending classes for six years. He has a bachelor's degree in business and is multilingual. His work history shows a steady progression up the career ladder in the accounting field. He does appear to move from one job to the next fairly quickly, though. There is a six-month gap between his most recent job and the one held before it. Jobs held before 1981 are not reported, although he was in the Evening College Program during part of this period.

In general, the resumé suggests he has a strong background.

2. Evaluate the selection procedure used by Peter Gilmore.

Although there is limited detail, it does appear that Gilmore's selection procedure was off-the-cuff and informal. Gilmore apparently relied on Randle's resumé to define his technical background and paid more attention to how much he personally liked the candidate.

Not mentioned in the case was the reliance on Personnel for follow-through. At Republic, Personnel contacted a private investigator to check out references and past employers. Personnel also requested new hires to supply official copies of their college transcripts. If no transcripts were received after three months, Personnel ceased the request.

3. Anticipate any effects of the selection procedure used by Peter Gilmore on David Randle's future performance.

Gilmore's casual approach to Randle's technical background and his reliance on personal chemistry signals Gilmore's operating style. The lack of a rigorous selection process will have minimal impact on socializing Randle into the operations and culture of Republic Insurance.

Summary: Approaching the Job of Supervisory Leadership

Peter Gilmore was a dedicated, hard-working employee who had graduated from night school with an accounting degree. His diligence earned him progressive promotions through the company. He expected his employees to complete their assignments independently. Since he worked hard and took responsibility for his work, he expected his employees to do the same.

Answers to Case Questions

1. For this type of supervisory leadership to work successfully, what kind of relationship must Peter Gilmore have with his subordinates? What characteristics must the employee possess?

For his style of leadership to work, Gilmore must have a very trusting relationship with his employees. He is relying on them to complete their work without his review. The employees must be like him: hard-working, trained and capable, and willing to take responsibility.

2. What kind of problems, if any, might you expect from this kind of supervision?

To the extent that employees may not be fully capable, there is a real potential for performance errors or delays. Problems such as these reverberate throughout an organization, affecting the employees and the quality of service they provide, and generating stress and conflict. These problems could reach the point of turnover or termination.

To the extent that the employee is not trustworthy, Gilmore's entire style of managing is compromised, putting stress on him and lowering the productivity of others.

3. What general kinds of supervisory actions should Peter Gilmore be taking?

There are two main actions Gilmore should be taking at this stage in the managing of David Randle. First, he should be planning and completing an orientation period for Randle. Second, he should be scheduling regular review meetings with Randle to examine the quality of the work being performed to guide Randle in new assignments.

Summary: Getting Things Under Control?

During Randle's first six months on the job, he appeared to settle into the job well. Gilmore would give him assignments and expect them to be done. Since Gilmore and Randle commuted to work together, Gilmore assumed they had ample opportunity to discuss any problems. Not hearing of any problems, Gilmore figured that all was going well.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Did Gilmore need to establish any controls over the work of David Randle? Did Gilmore have adequate controls over the work?

Yes, Gilmore did need controls but he apparently did not have them. Gilmore needed some way to determine on a regular basis what Randle was doing and how well it was being done. He did not have such a procedure in place, however.

2. What kind of control should Gilmore have established over the work of Randle and the Pricing Unit?

In this kind of situation, Gilmore could have used two different control procedures. First, following an MBO-type approach, he should have kept a log of all the projects assigned to Randle. Then, in regular sessions (perhaps weekly at first), he should have gotten updates from Randle on the progress of each. At the start, he should have reviewed the actual products (reports, memos, and the like).

Second, Gilmore should use some method to contact the recipients of these reports to assess their satisfaction with the quality of reports received.

CASE 5

"Looney Tunes on Parade"

Part 2: *Kicking Into Gear*

Background Information

Peter Gilmore, manager, hired David Randle in July, 1987, to supervise the Pricing Unit of Republic Insurance Corporation's Strategic Management Division. The Pricing Unit conducted important studies about the competitive posture of Republic's various policy products. Once Randle was hired, Gilmore delegated assignments to Randle often and easily. Gilmore expected these assignments to be completed and returned on a timely basis, although he did not check on progress during the interim.

Flares in the Night

In December, 1987, six months after he was hired, things still seemed to be going smoothly for the new supervisor of the Pricing Unit, David Randle—at least on the surface. Nonetheless, Peter Gilmore was feeling uneasy. As he later put it: "It was nothing I could put my finger on exactly. I just didn't feel comfortable trusting him." In fact, Gilmore had been receiving some information about Randle that was giving him some pause for concern.

One source of this information was supervisor Sandi Bates. Sandi, David Randle's counterpart in the Budgets Unit, also reported to Peter Gilmore. It became clear not long after Randle was hired that he and Sandi Bates simply did not get along. Gilmore was not too concerned, feeling the problem was just a difference in personalities. There were periodic flashes of anger and occasional back-biting. Finally, in January, Gilmore lost his patience and told the two of them: "I don't want this fighting anymore. You two work out your differences and get this squabbling resolved."

In early March, Sandi Bates asked to see Gilmore privately. She told him that she had tried to resolve these problems but with little success. She also told him that Randle was "screwing up" some of the projects Gilmore had given him. Gilmore asked Randle about these "screws-ups" a few days later. Randle conceded that he had been having some difficulties because of family problems. Gilmore took him at his word but still felt uneasy.

In mid-March, a second matter of concern developed. The source of this concern was Randle's new sideline venture: a mail-order supply business that he had started with his brother-in-law in February. Randle would occasionally solicit other employees in the headquarter's office for orders. Gilmore was amused

at first, but in mid-March, employees started calling his office to complain that Randle was not filling their orders.

By April, 10 months after Randle had started with Republic, Peter Gilmore was definitely bothered by David Randle. He wondered to himself: "What's going on here? Is Randle too busy, or is he incompetent, or what? Something just isn't right."

To deal with this concern, he talked with Randle and asked the supervisor to complete a long self-assessment form he had picked up at a conference a few year's earlier. It contained a list of skills for accountants in project management. The person completing the assessment rated his or her current skill levels on a scale of 1 to 7. Gilmore wanted Randle to identify any job performance weaknesses he might have and to start improving them.

Randle filled out the form and told Gilmore that the assessment was very helpful and that he could see performance areas he needed to improve immediately. Sure enough, Gilmore seemed to notice some improvement in Randle's work during the next few weeks.

Discussion Questions

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What was happening at this point?
2. What should Gilmore do at this point?

Changing the Guard

Sam Benson had been head of the Strategic Management Division at Republic Insurance for nearly six years. He served well in this capacity, capping a 30-year career with Republic by retiring in April, 1988.

Sam was replaced by Henry Carpenter, 41. Henry had been with Republic for almost three years, serving as chief information management officer. Carpenter moved into Sam Benson's office during David Randle's eleventh month with Republic, in May.

It seemed to Peter Gilmore that from that day forward, Randle spent a lot of time with Carpenter. He could often be found in Carpenter's office, no matter what time of day it was. They would have lunch together or go out for drinks after work. Beyond these social contacts, Carpenter began assigning projects directly to Randle. Often these assignments were made without Gilmore even knowing about it. Gilmore, who suspected as much, was too busy to give the matter serious thought. "What the hell," he told himself. "Let Henry work with him, too."

Not long after, though, when Randle was on vacation, an incident occurred which convinced Peter Gilmore that his vague intuitions about something not being right with David Randle were well founded. Sometime earlier, in April, Randle had conducted a performance evaluation of Betty Moore, one of the cost analysts in Randle's Pricing Unit. During the evaluation, Randle promised to make Betty a supervisor and arrange for her to receive a 20 percent salary increase. (In fact, Republic had a policy that the maximum salary adjustment to which anyone was entitled during a six-month period was 14 percent.) By May, when Betty saw no change in her salary, she met with Gilmore privately. Betty had worked with Gilmore for over four years.

Betty began: "You know, David did my performance appraisal two months ago, and he promised me a supervisory promotion and a 20 percent salary increase. But I haven't received either yet. Is there something wrong?"

Gilmore was surprised. "David promised what?" he asked in astonishment. He was very aware of the firm's policy on salary increases and knew that David Randle was also aware of them.

Betty repeated her comments. As Gilmore listened to Betty's explanation, his anger rose. When Betty finished, he called Bill Schmidt to join them. Bill was Betty's colleague and the other cost analyst that Randle supervised.

Gilmore said, "Bill, Betty has been telling me some things which I find very distressing about David's management practices. Tell me what's going on there."

He got an earful. The analysts told him that Randle never gave them any work to do on any kind of regular basis. They did not know what he did with the assignments he received from Gilmore or Carpenter, but every so often, Randle would give them a real rush job on a big project and then pressure them until it was finished. When Randle finally received their report, he would put his name on it and pass it along.

Peter Gilmore now became very angry. He thanked Betty and Bill for their honesty. As soon as they left, he walked into Henry Carpenter's office and made three points: "One, I don't trust Randle, and I may want to fire him. Two, I

think you and Randle are getting way too close. And three, in the future, tell me if you make any assignments directly to Randle." Gilmore's irritation was obvious, and Carpenter patiently waited for him to calm down. Gilmore then told Carpenter what he just learned from Betty and Bill.

After returning to his office, Gilmore phoned Randle at his home. Randle's wife answered the call, and told him that Randle was not available.

Gilmore said pointedly: "Tell David that we will not be commuting to work anymore together."

Sensing something in Peter's tone, Mrs. Randle started talking about all the family problems David was having. Gilmore ended the conversation as quickly as possible.

Randle was now approaching his first year's anniversary with Republic Insurance, and his performance appraisal was due. When he returned from vacation the following week, the evaluation was waiting (see the following page for Gilmore's appraisal of Randle). During the discussion, Gilmore told Randle that there had better be improvement in his performance—or else.

Again, Randle seemed to make a recovery. He came into work early, worked hard and stayed busy, was quiet, and stayed late.

But Gilmore was watching him closely now.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What are the problems at this point?
2. Evaluate how well Gilmore is handling these problems.
3. Recommend how he should deal with the problems.
4. Evaluate Gilmore's performance appraisal of Randle.

Republic Insurance

Employee Evaluation

Employee: David Randle Date: June 1988
Position: Supervisor, Pricing Unit
Manager: Peter Gilmore

1. Describe the employee's overall performance.

David has the skills to become one of the top performers of this division. However, during the past year, he has done only a satisfactory job.

2. Describe the employee's work habits and accomplishments.

David usually finishes his work on time. He has a strong tendency to let projects slide and then try to get them done at the last minute.

3. Future skills development plans.

Improve knowledge of insurance and accounting. Develop career plan.

David Randle /s/

Peter Gilmore /s/

CASE DISCUSSION: "Looney Tunes on Parade" —Part 2: Kicking Into Gear

Summary: Flares in the Night

As manager, Peter Gilmore easily delegated assignments to his new Pricing Unit manager, David Randle. Gilmore expected Randle to finish the projects on his own and did not check up on Randle's progress. After six months, though, Gilmore began to receive signals that all was not well. For example, Randle's counterpart supervisor, Sandi Bates, told Gilmore that Randle had been "screwing up" some assignments. Gilmore also began to get complaints from employees about Randle not filling personal orders to merchandise placed through his sideline mail-order business. Gilmore had Randle complete a self-assessment of his skills, and the situation seemed to improve.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What was happening at this point?

By now, Randle should have become sufficiently oriented to be performing his tasks adequately. However, Gilmore does not know how well Randle has been doing his work because he has not asked. Randle and his peer supervisor have some kind of "personality" conflict. Further, Randle is conducting a personal business venture on company time and premises. This can be a problem if the company has a no solicitation policy. In general, Gilmore has a general sense of unease with Randle. Gilmore has Randle complete a self-assessment exercise. However, this exercise is not really relevant to what should be the key issue: Randle's job performance.

2. What should Gilmore do at this point?

Gilmore should do several things. First, he should instruct Randle to cease and desist any and all private business solicitation. Second, he should meet with Sandi Bates to listen more adequately and fully to Bates' reports on Randle. He may need to spend more time managing the Bates and Randle relationship to reduce difficulties. This could be done through such steps as creating common goals for both, more clearly defining respective job duties, and/or looking for ways to resolve any operating conflicts. Finally, Gilmore should ask Randle to provide a full and complete accounting of where he stands on all the projects he has been assigned. At this point, Gilmore does not know what Randle has done. Randle is out of Gilmore's control.

Summary: Changing the Guard

When the head of the Strategic Management Division retired, he was replaced by Henry Carpenter, who had been managing another division in the company. Randle began fraternizing with Carpenter almost as soon as Carpenter moved in. Gilmore noticed how quickly Randle and Carpenter had become friends. Although he had a vague feeling that something was not quite right about Randle, he did not become alarmed about the supervisor until one of Randle's employees inquired about the status of her performance increase and promotion, which Randle had promised her some time ago.

Upon investigating the matter further with a second employee Gilmore learned that Randle seldom supervised employees, but would occasionally pressure them into completing an assignment, onto which he would later put his name. After he discovered this, Gilmore alerted Carpenter, then phoned Randle, who was home on vacation. He told Randle's wife that they would not be commuting to work anymore. Randle's wife mentioned that she and her husband were having family problems lately. Next, Gilmore prepared an evaluation of Randle to coincide with the supervisor's first anniversary with the company.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What are the problems at this point?

The immediate problems are several. One is that Gilmore now trusts Randle very little. A second is that Randle has insinuated himself into a friendly relationship with Gilmore's boss. Third, Randle has acted inappropriately with his employees, creating morale and production problems. The deeper, latent problem concerns the extent to which Randle has been performing his job tasks effectively. Gilmore cannot answer this question.

2. Evaluate how well Gilmore is handling these problems.

In some ways, Gilmore is acting appropriately. For example, he directly investigated Randle's supervision once he was tipped off by a disgruntled employee. It is not clear in the case what action he took to resolve that employee's problem, although he should have initiated some action. He also acted well in alerting his boss to a problem and implying that Carpenter should distance himself from Randle. He also acted well in severing their relationship as commuters.

However, Gilmore still does not know how well Randle has been doing his job. He has not asked for a follow-up. Furthermore, Gilmore should have counseled Randle on his supervisory practices. In some contexts, Randle's plagiarism of employee work would be considered unethical and considered worthy of disciplinary action. Finally, Randle's evaluation is rather weak and superficial.

3. Recommend how he should deal with the problem.

He should ask for a full and complete accounting of the status of all projects assigned to Randle. He should counsel Randle about his supervision practices and make sure that the problem with Randle's employee is resolved as effectively as possible. He also should determine whether disciplinary action is warranted for Randle's plagiarism. The performance appraisal should be more clear and forceful.

4. Evaluate Gilmore's performance appraisal of Randle.

Gilmore's evaluation of Randle was insufficient. He needs to provide more detail of specific areas of performance. He should note past instances of performance problems (sideline business activities, supervisory practices). He should state that Randle must improve significantly or termination may be necessary.

CASE 6

"Looney Tunes on Parade"

Part 3: A Time for Action

Background Information

Just over a year after Peter hired David Randle to supervise the Pricing Unit Department of Republic Insurance's Strategic Management Division, he was faced with a number of problems. The initial period of smooth sailing had deteriorated as revelations about Randle's questionable conduct had surfaced. In response to these revelations, Gilmore completed an appraisal of Randle's job performance, warning him that he needed to make improvements in this area. Gilmore was now watching Randle closely.

Gilmore's new "get-tough" supervisory style yielded a number of results. It was now early July, 1988, and the Life Insurance Line Price Study for which David Randle was responsible was a few month's overdue. The head of the Customer Services Division had called Gilmore last week to ask him where it was. This time, Gilmore knew to ask Randle for it.

David Randle said it would be ready the next day, and sure enough, the following morning it was on Peter's desk. At an early-morning coffee break, Peter asked Betty Moore if any of the cost analysts had prepared this report. Betty replied, "No, David did it all himself late yesterday afternoon."

Peter started to read the report, and one thing immediately became apparent: The numbers and calculations did not seem correct. And there was something else that wasn't right about the report. At first, he just couldn't figure out what it was; then he remembered. He went to his bookcase, pulled out the February, 1986, issue of *Life Insurance Digest*, and there it was: David Randle's report—or rather, the *Digest* article that David Randle had copied and used for his report.

Gilmore talked with Carpenter that afternoon, and both agreed that Randle must go. The next morning, Randle was sitting in front of Carpenter and Gilmore in Gilmore's office.

Carpenter began: "David, a week ago when we discussed this price change study, the figures you gave me were quite different from the figures in this report. What the hell is going on?" Carpenter was angry, and his tone harsh.

Randle shifted in his chair. "Well, er, the figures I gave you were still tentative. They were, ah, still estimates." Randle did not look at either of them and fidgeted slightly in his seat.

Carpenter continued: "The Knilson Actuarial Count equation is a basic formula for computing the real market pricing for our life insurance policies. I want to see you do it, here, now!"

Randle was now visibly shaken and said lamely: "Well, Hank, as you know, I'll need my work papers. Let me go back to my desk, I don't want to take your time . . . maybe there is a specific error I made that—"

Carpenter cut him off: "No sir, here and now. We'll supply you with the information. Use this pen and pad of paper." Carpenter pushed the items towards him.

Randle picked up the pen and began writing down some numbers. After a minute, he looked up and started to explain his results.

Gilmore interrupted him: "David, you don't know what you're doing. You've got two of the basic parameters confused, and you just don't know what the hell you're doing . . . You copied this article virtually verbatim from the *Life Insurance Digest*, didn't you?" Gilmore pushed the article across the desk, in front of Randle.

Randle was stunned.

Gilmore said, "Let's go to Personnel, David. You no longer are an employee of Republic Insurance."

At 10:30 a.m., David Randle walked to the street in front of the Republic Insurance Company, and by 10:45 a.m., he was no longer in sight.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Evaluate the termination procedure used.
2. Are there any legal considerations in releasing David Randle in this manner? Are there any legal grounds for prosecuting David Randle?
3. What should Gilmore do now with his staff?

Post Mortems

Later that morning, after Gilmore told his staff that Randle was fired, Gilmore and Betty Moore cleaned out Randle's desk and files. When they were finished, they assembled a pile of papers over a foot high. These papers were all the projects and assignments Gilmore had given Randle over the past year. They had been thrown in drawers, in cabinets, wherever—and had not been touched.

About a week later, Gilmore received a rather alarming report from another Republic employee. This employee had been to Randle's house earlier in the day to pick up a mail-order shipment. While she was there, Randle made a comment that was a threat on Gilmore's life. Gilmore told Carpenter, and Carpenter called Randle's house, demanding an explanation. Carpenter threatened to call the police. Randle laughed and said he was only joking.

The circumstances surrounding Randle's termination alerted the Personnel Department, who proceeded to investigate what had happened more carefully. Upon reviewing their files of David Randle, they found out two rather disturbing facts. First, Randle had been fired from every job he had held as an adult. This fact was hinted at in the standard background check conducted by a private investigator. At the time the report was submitted, though the references had been indecisive (see report on following page). Second, it was also discovered that, contrary to the information in his resumé, Randle had attended State University for only one year and did not have a bachelor's degree.

When Gilmore learned of these last tidbits, he just smiled, shook his head, and said: "Looney tunes on parade."

ACME PERSONNEL INVESTIGATIONS

**UNDER CONTRACT 1987-482 TO
REPUBLIC INSURANCE**

CONFIDENTIAL

Date _____

Applicant: David Randle

Smith Stores: 1/1987 to date

Payroll clerk verifies applicant was employed from January to June as a Cost Accountant. SSN verified.

Johnson Adhesives Manufacturing: 2/1986 to 7/1986

Personnel Clerk verifies applicant employed as Price Analyst from February 1986 through July 1986. SSN verified. Applicant was laid off due to cost cutting.

Safety Media Films: 1/1983 to 2/1986

No listing found for the above place of business. Apparently it is out of business.

Bander Food Chains: 11/1981 to 1/1983

Account Manager verified that applicant was employed from November 1981 to December 9, 1983, as a Senior Bookkeeper. Apparently, his work was satisfactory as nothing in the file is derogatory. It was noted that he was discharged. However, this was probably due to a change in supervisors at that time.

Get Smart Book Publishers: 2/1981 to 11/1981

Clerk verified that applicant was Junior Bookkeeper from February 1981 through November 1981. This was all the information she could give over the telephone.

CASE DISCUSSION: "Looney Tunes on Parade"—Part 3: A Time for Action

Summary

Over the course of a year's time, Peter Gilmore had become increasingly distrustful of David Randle, the man he had hired to supervise the Pricing Unit group of the department he managed. Gilmore believed that employees should carry out the assignments they were given without a manager having to check up on them. After six months, Gilmore began to learn that there were certain peculiarities in how David worked, such as running a sideline business in the workplace and plagiarizing employee work. He now began to watch Randle closely. He gave Randle an assignment only to discover that the report Randle later submitted on that assignment had been copied from a professional publication. In response to this discovery, Gilmore and his boss, Henry Carpenter, met with Randle the following day and instructed him to complete a standard calculation. Randle could not do it and was terminated for poor performance.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Evaluate the termination procedure used.

While somewhat unorthodox, the method used was perfectly legal and very acceptable. They could have fired him solely on the grounds of submitting false information, but taking this additional step confirms their belief and further supports their rationale for termination: Randle is not qualified to retain his position. In taking this additional step, and given the absence of specific job performance information, they know they are fully justified in deciding to release Randle from the company.

2. Are there any legal considerations in releasing David Randle in this manner? Are there any legal grounds for prosecuting David Randle?

One potential problem might be the way the test was administered—under stressful and threatening conditions. If Randle wanted to push the matter, he could contend that he knew how to answer the problem but was inhibited from doing so by the way it was presented to him. In itself, this is a valid point; however, given the context of the entire matter, it would have secondary significance.

At this point, based upon what is known, there are no grounds for prosecuting David Randle. That is, there is no evidence of fraud or embezzlement known at this stage.

3. What should Gilmore do now with his staff?

Gilmore should meet with the staff to explain that Randle has been released and to plan for interim steps. There could be a potential libel issue here if Gilmore explains the reason for the termination in ways that impinge Randle's character. Truthful statements, though, are defensible,

such as "Randle was released because he copied a report without attribution." In general, though, Gilmore should focus more on what to do next rather than on Randle. Gilmore should instruct his employees that any calls or inquiries regarding David Randle should be forwarded to either him or to Personnel.

Gilmore should order an audit of Randle's budget and related matters as a precaution, however.

Summary: Post Mortems

There were several after-effects of the David Randle termination. First, Gilmore discovered an enormous pile of work that Randle had not completed. Second, and most significant, it was determined that David Randle was a fraud. He did not have a college degree, and he had been fired from every previous job he had. The background check obtained at the time of Randle's hire had been suggestive but inconclusive.

CASE 7

Mary Corey

Background Information

Mary Corey recently completed her fourth year with Statewide Services Corporation. In her position as customer support specialist, she consistently received high performance evaluations—until recently. Indeed, her most recent evaluation, completed three weeks ago, rated her as "less than satisfactory." Her supervisor, Helen Rowe, wondered why this previously strong employee had fallen so quickly.

Helen had just returned from a meeting with her boss, Betty Alden, when again the subject of Mary came up. Betty suggested that Helen look through Mary's past work-records to try to find some clues about what happened and what they should do now.

Helen closed the door to her office, sat at her desk, and pulled Mary's personnel folder from her desk drawer. As she flipped through the materials in the folder, Mary's story came into better focus:

About six months ago, around Christmastime, Mary started taking longer lunch breaks. Given the cramped quarters in which Helen's Customer Support Department worked and the demanding routines they had to follow, it was easy to notice her stretching her regular lunch period by 10 or 15 minutes. Once she even stretched it for a full 25 minutes. Since it was the holiday season, Helen took no specific action. However, her occasional remarks reminding Mary of the lunch break schedules would produce an uncharacteristically evasive, defensive response from Mary. On at least two occasions, she nodded off to sleep at her desk after returning from lunch.

In January and February, she was 10 to 20 minutes late for work on six different days and called in sick on four other days. It was during this time that Mary's dealings with her co-workers deteriorated. Normally quiet yet sociable, Mary became increasingly short-tempered and given to periodic outbursts of anger and belligerence. Since Mary, 36, was a single mother of two teenage girls, almost everyone in the office assumed there was something going on at home.

On February 23rd, though, things took a disturbing turn. Mary left for lunch at her usual time, but did not return. She called in three hours later to say she had gone home because she had suddenly become ill. Her speech seemed slurred, somehow not quite right. She returned to work two days later, with a doctor's note explaining she had been sick with a stomach flu.

Nonetheless, the pattern of lateness continued. Two weeks later, Helen gave Mary her first written disciplinary notice regarding her attendance and punctuality. During the discussion, Mary confessed to Helen: "I know I've been a little different recently. I'm just having some problems at home with my children." She didn't elaborate, and Helen didn't probe.

For the next few weeks, Mary was on time every day and rarely left her desk during working hours. Her level of performance improved, as did her interaction with co-workers.

By April, however, Helen noticed Mary slipping back into her negative habits of lateness and irritability. Helen began to notice something else in Mary's after-lunch behavior: She seemed to have real difficulty completing her work, making decisions, and solving problems. On one occasion, there was a big argument between her and several co-workers. Mary went home, claiming she was "too upset to work." She continued coming in late to work and was absent on two successive Mondays. However, after each absence, she produced a doctor's excuse.

In early May, Helen issued a second written warning, this one concerning not only Mary's punctuality and attendance, but also her deteriorating work performance. At this time, Helen made it clear that Mary's continued employment was on the line: "I don't know what's going on, but you're in danger of losing your job. I've tried to be understanding, but I'm losing my patience. You need to get straightened up and soon, or I'll have no choice but to let you go."

During the following weeks, Mary again improved her productivity and performance. She was obviously concerned about losing her job. By mid-July, it was time for her formal performance evaluation. Although her evaluation was "less than satisfactory," Helen did note that there had been some improvement in all areas recently.

Then, last week, the bottom fell out. On July 23rd, Mary returned from lunch 45 minutes late, glassy-eyed and weaving slightly, fumbling with things, and smelling strongly of peppermint. She sat at her desk for a full 20 minutes, rummaging through drawers, moving paper, nodding, spilling things, and creating quite a distraction among the other employees.

Helen came to her desk: "Mary, what's the matter here? Something's wrong, and you don't seem able to work at all. Are you ill? Can you work? Are you drunk? Tell me right now!"

Mary slowly looked up, taking awhile to focus on Helen. After what seemed like a minute or so, during which time she appeared to be again listening to Helen's remarks, Mary burst into tears. She grabbed her purse, pushed and stumbled past Helen, and left.

The next day, one of Mary's children called in, saying she couldn't work because she was "in bed sick." Helen checked and Mary had only three days of accrued sick leave left available to her.

She did not return to work until today. She went to the ladies room for an hour. When she emerged, she went into Helen's office and asked for an immediate transfer to some other department "where the pressure isn't so great." She seemed very agitated and would not look Helen in the eye. Helen told her to return to her desk and pick up on her work as well as she could until Helen could look into things more closely.

It was then that Helen met with her boss, Betty Alden. They were trying to decide what to do.

In thinking about where things stood now, Helen knew that Mary's presence in the unit was becoming a source of contention and disgruntlement. Everyone knew that she had some kind of problem, and most people thought it was due to drugs or alcohol, or both, although no one had ever personally seen her use or abuse either. Since her work was now so erratic, the other employees in the unit had to regularly back up her work by either finishing it or correcting it. She seemed to have no remorse about her conduct and could not presently be counted on to make an effort to correct it.

Helen wanted to fire her. As she explained to Betty: "When she's here, she fights with everyone, and I'm never sure when she's coming to work or how long she'll stay. She's hopeless. I hate to do this, but she has screwed up just too much."

Betty, as unit manager, could see that a previously valued and productive member of her department had for some reason, fallen well below accepted work standards. Both Betty and Helen believed there must be some serious, extenuating circumstance affecting Mary, although they didn't know for certain what it was. Betty was concerned whether there could be any legal problems in firing someone in this condition. Betty reminded Helen that the Company did have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and wondered whether they should try to involve Mary in the EAP before taking further action.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Can Helen terminate Mary without running into legal problems?
2. What should Helen do now regarding the Employee Assistance Program? Simulate how you would make a referral to the EAP if you were Helen.
3. Should Helen have acted sooner? If so, how?

CASE DISCUSSION:

Mary Corey

Summary

Helen Rowe supervised the Customer Support Department for Statewide Services Corporation. Over the past six months, one of Helen's top performers, Mary Corey, had fallen into a situation of poor performance. In looking through her personnel folder, Helen reconstructed the history of Mary's decline, which follows.

About six months ago, at Christmastime, Mary began taking longer lunch breaks. When Helen made some comments, Mary was uncharacteristically defensive. Helen noticed that Mary fell asleep at her desk on two occasions. Then, beginning in January, Mary occasionally came into work 10 to 20 minutes late or did not come in at all because she was sick. During this period, Mary was increasingly short-tempered with her co-workers. Her co-workers thought that Mary, a single mother of two teenage girls, might be having some problems at home.

In late February, Mary did not return from lunch one day. She called three hours later, claiming to have become ill. Her voice sounded slurred. She returned two days later with a doctor's note explaining she had a stomach flu. After repeated lateness, Helen issued Mary a formal disciplinary notice, and her attendance improved.

By April, Mary was slipping back to lateness and irritability. But now Mary also seemed to have problems completing her work after returning from lunch. In early May, Helen issued a second notice, indicating that this time her job was on the line. Mary's performance improved again. However, she was given a less than satisfactory evaluation on their performance evaluation shortly thereafter.

Last week, after returning to work 45 minutes late and smelling strongly of peppermint, she created quite a commotion while trying to settle into her work. Helen confronted Mary, at which point Mary burst into tears and ran from the office. The next day, one of Mary's children called, saying Mary was sick.

When Mary returned to work today, she asked for a transfer to a less pressured area. Helen, concerned about the impact Mary was having on the Customer Support Department, wanted to fire her. The company did have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Answers to Case Questions

1. Can Helen terminate Mary without running into legal problems?

Mary has been demonstrating behaviors that point to alcohol and/or drug abuse. One drawback for Helen is that she does not know whether it is alcohol, drugs, or a combination of both that is at the root of Mary's problem. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, current illegal drug use is not protected. Thus, if Mary's problem is due exclusively to illegal drug use, Mary would have no protections under the law and could be terminated with minimal concern.

Alcohol abuse, on the other hand, is protected under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Employees with an alcohol abuse problem cannot be discriminated against in employment based on this disability as long as they can perform their job duties safely and effectively. Employees with this condition, though, can be held to the same standards of performance as other employees.

To the extent that Mary's problem might be alcohol based, then, there could be some legal ramifications to firing her. However, given her erratic performance, a strong case could be made that she cannot perform her job effectively at the standards established.

A larger question, though, is whether termination is the best course of action here. In this case, Mary Corey was a very competent employee until recently, when things obviously went wrong. What kind of responsibility does an employer have for an employee, especially a good employee with a long history with the company? Unfortunately, Helen has dragged her feet in this matter and reduced her flexibility in acting (see Question 3). Still, it might be prudent to refer Mary to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that is available through Statewide Services.

2. What should Helen do now regarding the Employee Assistance Program? Simulate how you would make a referral to the EAP if you were Helen.

Helen should note Mary's behavior problems and indicate that Mary is in immediate jeopardy of losing her job. Helen should indicate that a transfer is out of the question because of Mary's poor performance recently. Helen could then suggest that the only option to immediate termination would be Mary's participation in the Employee Assistance Program.

Helen should explain that the EAP would report to her on Mary's attendance but that the subjects discussed would be confidential. Helen could encourage Mary's participation and indicate that she is concerned about Mary's well-being and would hate to lose an employee who had performed well. Helen should also make it clear that Mary will be held to the same standards as everyone else and that the next instance of violating a standard will result in Mary's immediate termination.

At this point, it could be a very good idea to give Mary the rest of the day off, with pay, to make up her mind regarding what she wants to do.

Under this non-punitive disciplinary procedure, Mary would be expected to decide what she wants to do. The next morning, she is to report directly to Helen's office with her decision. That decision would be either:

- resign because she cannot agree to meet the established standards of performance
- agree to meet the standards of the job, which may include participating in the EAP.

However, the stricture about no further violations of standards still applies.

3. Should Helen have acted sooner? If so, how?

Yes. It was clear early on that Mary was under the influence of a harmful and debilitating abusive substance(s). Helen should have referred Mary to the Employee Assistance Program much sooner.

CASE 8

Shipping and Receiving

Background Information

Midge Watson had been working in the Bookkeeping Department of the Best Fits Sporting Goods Manufacturing Company for the four years since she graduated from high school. She was bright, attractive, and popular, and had done well in the company, as her recent promotion to senior bookkeeper proved.

One of her new job responsibilities required Midge to go to the warehouse once a week to check on and verify various inventory and shipment information. This meant that she often worked for three or four hours at a time in the Shipping Office. In order to reduce the noise from the operations around it, the office was completely walled in. On these trips to Shipping, Midge worked closely with the shipping clerk, Susan Adams. Susan, a veteran employee of ten years with Best Fit, was divorced. Susan maintained all the shipping and inventory information as it was processed.

Since Midge had never before worked in an actual manufacturing and warehouse operation before, she was nervous at first. However, she was very relieved to find that Susan was very nice and helpful. Midge found Susan easy to talk to because Susan seemed so interested in what Midge was thinking and doing.

During her fourth visit to the warehouse, Midge and Susan were talking as usual about the week's shipping activity. As they were talking, Susan casually walked to Midge's side of the desk and sat on the edge of the desk right next to Midge.

Midge tried not to feel uncomfortable with Susan so close. At a break in the discussion, Susan looked at Midge very seriously and asked her: "Do you like to go dancing?"

Midge, a little surprised by the question, replied evenly: "Well, I like to, but I have a difficult time getting my boyfriend to go. He'd just as soon go drin—"

Susan interrupted: "I wasn't talking about your boyfriend. Would you like to go dancing with me?"

Midge, not sure what Susan was getting at, laughed and said: "Well, sure, maybe sometime...." Her voice trailed off. She was trying to be polite but did not really want to commit herself.

Midge picked up a file and brought their discussion back to shipping information. She finished her work, then returned to her department. She was uneasy about Susan's behavior and invitation.

When she returned to her desk, Midge's supervisor, Mike Polski, noticed that she seemed to be distracted, and asked if everything was OK. Midge ex-

plained what had just occurred and wondered if Susan had some ulterior motive for asking her to go dancing.

Mike, not sensing a problem, shrugged off what happened. "I wouldn't give it much thought. You're probably reading something into Susan's comments. Don't be concerned," he advised Midge.

Next week, at her regular time, Midge returned to the warehouse. As she walked into the Shipping Office and closed the door, Susan jumped up from her chair and walked briskly over to Midge, smiling. She put her arms around Midge and hugged her tightly. After stroking Midge's back and patting her on the rear-end, she looked into Midge's eyes and told her: "Midge, I really missed you. I'm glad you're back."

Midge was completely startled, shocked, and afraid. She wiggled free and began to cry. Dropping the file she was carrying, she ran from the office back to her department. By the time Midge arrived, she had calmed down to some degree, but was still upset as she entered Mike Polski's office to describe what just happened.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is this a case of sexual harassment?
2. Does the company have a responsibility and/or liability?
3. What should the supervisor do now?

CASE DISCUSSION: Shipping and Receiving

Summary

Midge Watson was a young, attractive senior bookkeeping clerk for a manufacturer of sports clothes. In this capacity, Midge was required to go to the Shipping Office in the warehouse every week to verify inventory records. The Shipping Office was completely enclosed and private. Whenever she went there, Midge would work closely with Susan Adams, the shipping clerk. They worked well together, and Midge had no reason to anticipate any problems from Susan. Nonetheless, during one meeting, Susan sat very close to Midge and asked her if she wanted to go out dancing together. Midge left shortly thereafter and informed her boss, Mike Polski, about what had happened. He shrugged off her comments.

When Midge arrived at the Shipping Office the following week, Susan rushed over to her, hugged her tightly, stroked her back and patted her rear-end, and told Midge how much she had missed her. Midge was shocked and afraid. She broke free of Susan and ran back to her department, crying. She told Mike Polski what had happened.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is this a case of sexual harassment?

Yes. Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature which creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. Such advances do not need to come only from a member of the opposite sex.

Based on Midge's reactions and statements, it is clear that she did not welcome Susan's actions; she also finds those actions offensive.

2. Does the company have a responsibility and/or liability?

Yes. Once Midge notified her supervisor the first time, the company should have acted. Its failure to do so could be a future liability problem because a member of management (her supervisor) was aware of the employee's problem, yet did nothing. The supervisor should have taken Midge's first notification seriously and contacted Personnel or some other authority inside the company.

3. What should the supervisor do now?

The supervisor should notify Personnel or some authority about this matter. The appropriate authority in the company should begin an investigation and take appropriate action. It is likely that until the offending employee is removed, the supervisor may need to work out some alternative arrangement for completing the inventory checks. For example, the supervisor may accompany her to the Shipping Office. Or, her visits could be scheduled at times when Susan is instructed to be away from the office. Or, the inventory checking tasks could be assigned to some other employee.

CASE 9

They Came From Docu-Max

Background Information

All six typists in the secretarial and correspondence pool were overjoyed when the long-awaited announcement was finally made: Their department would be getting the new Docu-Max Automated Production system. This word-processing system was the best in the field and would make everyone's job easier.

Beverly Marshall, a typist who had entered the department 18 months ago, had worked with a Docu-Max system at her former place of employment. She was particularly looking forward to the semi-private workstations each typist would receive. An attractive 28-year-old mother who had returned to work after her youngest child began school, Beverly liked her work and got along well with her co-workers.

Installation of the system began the week following the announcement, on Monday, and was expected to take a full week to finish. The Docu-Max Corporation assigned three of their installation technicians to do the job. The technicians were men in their mid-thirties. Once the basic plans are agreed to, these men work without any on-site supervision from Docu-Max.

The installation process required the technicians to assemble the workstations and supporting terminals as well as to route and hook up the various electrical and cable systems that made the system work. Consequently, the technicians had to maneuver and climb around the office as people were trying to do their jobs. Just how disturbing this activity could be became apparent to Beverly on Monday when two of the technicians spent a lot of time working around her desk. Initially, Beverly exchanged friendly conversation with them, but by the afternoon, their constant comments and interruptions were becoming annoying. Beverly was glad when the day was over.

On Tuesday, the situation became unbearable. At about 9:00 a.m., the two technicians walked in with coffee and stood near Beverly's desk. She smiled, said "Good morning," and tried to go back to work.

Speaking casually, without lowering his voice, one of the men began telling the other about the incredible time he had the night before with a woman he "picked up" in a bar. Beverly could hear every word as, for about ten minutes, he described his sexual encounter in explicit detail. The other man laughed along and offered a variety of suggestive comments. Beverly tried her best to pretend that she was paying no attention to them.

The men finally started working. They spent an hour stringing cables around Beverly's desk. A number of times one man or the other touched Beverly as they maneuvered the cables and the equipment around her desk.

Just before lunch, they began trading comments *about Beverly* within her hearing. "I'd sure like to try a repeat of last night with her," said one, laughing.

"Do you think she'd be good in bed?" asked the other.

"Are you kidding? She wouldn't have to be, 'cause I'd do all the work," replied the first.

One of the men moved his ladder next to Beverly's desk. He climbed to the top, looking down at Beverly the entire time. As he opened the ceiling tile, he said, "Hey doll, why don't you go out with me tonight and let me show you what sex is supposed to be about?"

Beverly quickly got up and went to the ladies room. There, she ran into June Boston, one of her co-workers. Beverly was very upset and told June what had been going on. They spent some time talking about the situation.

Shortly thereafter, on her way back from a meeting, Mary Bowers, Beverly's supervisor, passed June's desk. June was telling a co-worker about Beverly's story. Mary heard the gist of it.

Walking back to her office, Mary reflected on the past two days. She had noticed that the installers were unusually busy around Beverly's desk, but she had not realized how serious things were. When Mary reached her office, she sat down at her desk and wondered what she should do.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is this a case of sexual harassment? Does the company or supervisor have any responsibility in this matter?
2. Mary Bowers knows she must act on the problem.
 - (a) What should she do in regard to Beverly?
 - (b) What should she do in regard to the installers?
3. Should Mary have acted more quickly? If so, in what way?

CASE DISCUSSION: They Came From Docu-Max

Summary

As a typist in a correspondence pool, Beverly Marshall was pleased to hear that her employer had decided to introduce a Docu-Max Automated Production system. Beverly, an attractive mother returning to work after a recent birth, had used a Docu-Max system at her previous employer's company, and she knew how much easier it could make the job. However, her job became much more difficult when, on the first day of the installation process, the Docu-Max technicians assigned to install the system kept working about her desk, talking to her continually and interrupting her work. The next day, the two technicians intentionally stood near her desk while one told the other about his sexual exploits the night before. For the entire morning, both men worked near her, even touching her on occasion. Shortly before lunch, they began talking about her in explicit sexual terms. One man finally propositioned her. She ran off to the ladies room, feeling very upset, and told a co-worker what had been happening. Beverly's boss, Mary Bowers, later overheard the co-worker relating the details of the incident to another employee in the department.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is this a case of sexual harassment? Does the company have a responsibility in this matter?

Yes to both questions. Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature which creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. Such advances can come from others who are not employees of the organization if they are present under the direction of company management.

Based on Beverly's reactions and statements, it is clear that she did not welcome the actions of the Docu-Max employees; she also finds those actions offensive.

Now that Mary Bowers has constructive knowledge of this episode, she should take action.

2. Mary Bowers knows she must act on the problem.

- (a) What should she do in regard to Beverly?

Mary should meet with Beverly privately as soon as possible to listen to Beverly's story. She should seek verification of this information, if possible, from any co-workers.

Another option would be to send Beverly back to her workstation while Mary stays close by, in order to personally verify any further harassment.

Either way, Beverly should be assigned to another work location until the matter is resolved.

(b) What should she do in regard to the technicians?

If Mary can obtain proof of harassment, she should do the following:

- Order them from the work-site immediately
- Notify the person in charge of the Docu-Max contract inside the company
- Contact Docu-Max supervisors
- Notify Human Resources or the appropriate authority

3. Should Mary have acted more quickly? If so, in what way?

This is a judgment call. Mary noticed a high level of activity near Beverly's desk earlier. But this is not a clear indication of a problem. On the other hand, Mary was not present at any point during the installation.

CASE 10

He's Just Not the Same

Background Information

In the same month, Bill Connors turned 47 years old and began the start of his eleventh year with the Bay State Service Corporation. Bay State Service provided various maintenance, cleaning, and repair services for apartment complexes in the greater metropolitan area. Bill had been hired initially to work in the Transportation Department as a driver. About four years ago, he moved to a job in the mail room. Even though the mail room job required more lifting and carrying, in Bill's mind, the salary increase more than justified the added work.

It turned out to be a good move for him. The pay increase really helped, and although the pace was hectic, Bill kept up with the work. His performance was always acceptable; he consistently showed up on time and was always busy.

When on vacation last year, his tenth year with Bay State, Bill injured himself in a nasty fall while hiking during a family camping trip. His family took him directly to the hospital, where an X-ray showed both a broken leg and ankle. The doctor told him he could not return to work until the bones were fully mended, a five-week rest at the minimum. However, just before he was scheduled to go back to work, he called his boss, Ken Pierce, to tell him that since he was still in a lot of pain, the doctor wanted to put a brace on his leg and keep him home a little longer.

Bill returned to work three weeks later, but things were not the same, and they did not improve much in the following year. Bill's problems all went back to his injury. There was some indication that the leg and ankle breaks had not been set properly. Bill eventually had to wear a substantial leg brace and he occasionally walked with a cane. It became obvious that he could not keep up his former pace of lifting and delivering the bulky boxes, bags, and packages that had to be delivered throughout the company. Ken tried to give him as much desk work as possible, but there remained a substantial backlog of items that just weren't being delivered on a timely basis.

Now, not long after the anniversary of Bill's eleventh year with the company, some of his fellow employees in the mail room, particularly the newer ones, are beginning to complain to Ken about the extra work they have to do; they claim to be doing twice the work Bill does, at about half his salary.

Ken knows he will be doing Bill's performance appraisal in about three months. Based on the production problems in his department he really wants to just "tell it like it is" and get rid of Bill. After all, Bill can no longer keep up and it is a physical job. Ken wonders whether he could suggest that Bill be given a transfer. However, Ken is not optimistic that a transfer can be arranged.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What legal regulations apply to this situation?
2. Can Bill's supervisor legally fire Bill?
3. Should the supervisor try to terminate Bill?
4. What kinds of options does Bill's supervisor have for dealing with this matter? What should Bill's supervisor do?

CASE DISCUSSION: He's Just Not the Same

Summary

Bill Connor, 47, has been with Bay State Service Corporation for 11 years. About four years ago, Bill was promoted from the Transportation Department to the mail room. The mail room job involves lifting and carrying boxes of supplies for distribution throughout the organization. For three years, Bill consistently did an acceptable job in this capacity.

Last year, during a vacation camping trip, Bill broke his leg and ankle in a nasty fall. The doctor who set his leg told him he needed five weeks' rest. However, just before returning to work, Bill called and notified his boss, Ken Pierce, that he had to stay out a little longer because the leg was not mending properly.

When he did return to work, he could not maintain his pre-injury pace of lifting and delivery. Eventually, he had to wear a leg brace and use a cane. His boss gave him as much desk work as possible, but a backlog of undelivered materials began to build up. Other employees in the mail room are now complaining that they are working harder and making less money than Bill.

Bill has a performance appraisal due in three months. His supervisor would like to just tell him the truth and terminate his employment. Short of that, he would like to suggest that Bill be given a transfer, although he is not optimistic that a transfer can be engineered.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What legal regulations apply to this situation?

The applicable laws affecting disabled employees do exempt smaller and non-Federal contractor employers. While it is not clear what Bay State Service's exact size and nature is, for this case it will be assumed that Bay State is covered by these laws.

There are two main laws that could apply. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 generally prohibits employment practices that discriminate on the basis of disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 extends that basic protection by detailing certain procedures for adjusting employment to accommodate workers with disabilities. There may be state or local laws that apply also.

Under these laws, a person is considered disabled if (in part) that person has a physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. In this case, Bill would clearly be considered as having a disability. Consequently, he would be protected by these laws.

2. Can Ken Pierce (Bill's supervisor) legally fire Bill?

This is something of a trick question. Under the general provisions of the Employment At Will doctrine, an employer has the right to hire and fire at will, so in that sense, Ken does have the right to fire Bill. However, in this case, Bill enjoys certain protections that, if violated, could

be legally contested. Ken's preferable course of action would be to follow the legally defined guidelines, which could end up in Bill's termination.

3. Should the supervisor try to terminate Bill?

A first answer to this question is as much an ethical judgment as a legal one. Bill has been a consistent and presumably loyal employee for Bay State Service for more than a decade. He still wants to work and, with some assistance, appears able to do so. Does Bay State want to give up such a valuable employee so easily?

Beyond this consideration, Ken should first exhaust some other alternatives before moving to a termination (See Question 4).

4. What kinds of options does Bill's supervisor have for dealing with this matter? What should Bill's supervisor do?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, *qualified* individuals cannot be discriminated against and denied employment because of their disability. A qualified person is someone who has the skills for the job and who, with or without a *reasonable accommodation*, can perform the *essential functions* of the job.

In this situation, Ken should work closely with his Human Resources Department. The first steps in this case would be to determine what the "essential functions" of the job are. These functions define the basic nature and purpose of the position; they should focus on the outcomes of the job, not necessarily on how tasks are performed.

For example, in this case, is the essential function of the position to distribute bulk or is it to make sure information and materials are in sufficient supply in each department? The answer to this question should be recorded in a job description.

Second, can Ken make certain reasonable accommodations to the job that would allow Bill to perform the job? In part, Ken has already made certain adjustments by letting Bill do as much desk work as possible. Reasonable accommodations could include adjustments such as job restructuring, modifying a work schedule, and acquiring or modifying equipment or devices. Such accommodations are required unless they involve significant difficulty or expense to the employer (this is referred to as *undue hardship*). What is significant depends in part on the size and resources of the employer.

Here, because Bay State seems to be relatively large, an additional level of accommodation might be expected. For example, there are at least two accommodations that Bay State might be expected to take: (a) a permanent restructuring of the job to give Bill more of an administrative set of duties or to allow him to deliver only smaller items to local sites; (b) the purchasing of equipment that Bill can operate, that will do the lifting and carrying. There might be other feasible alternatives.

While these steps seem excessive, their application can be done relatively directly and deliberately. They can certainly be completed within the three-month period before Bill's performance appraisal is due. If after these actions Bill is still unable to perform the job, and no other alternatives are possible, Bill can be terminated.

CASE 11

Special Checking Is Handed a Loss

Background Information

Sammy Benson supervised the Special Check Sorting Unit of the Greater Downtown Bank and Trust Company for over two years. The Special Check Sorting Unit processed all the "special" checks that came into the bank, such as odd-sized, foreign, or mutilated checks. Once the checks were sent to his unit, they were manually interpreted, recorded, entered into the appropriate account transactions, and filed for return.

Sammy supervised three check sorting clerks in his department. These jobs were staffed by relatively untrained, entry-level individuals who had just graduated from high school. People who did well in this unit were often promoted into other positions in the bank. As such, turnover tended to be high and there was a fairly steady stream of employees through this unit.

During the summer, Greater Downtown Bank hired low-income, disadvantaged young people for various jobs throughout the company as part of its Community Upbeat campaign. To participate in this effort, representatives from the Human Resources Department visited selected high schools to interview students. Since the students were already prescreened by the school, the interviews were little more than "get-acquainted" discussions. Last summer, Sammy's unit supplied one of the jobs in this effort.

Juanita Perez was hired in this context to work as a Special Checks clerk. She was scheduled to begin working in June after graduating from the local vocational high school, where she maintained a C average. This was her first full-time job.

When Juanita reported to work in June, she was scared. It was not only her first day on the job, but the first time she had ever been in the bank. Nevertheless, she kept up her courage and reported to the Human Resources Department as planned. After waiting in the lobby for a while, she was taken to a small meeting room where she and two other new hires were shown how to fill out and sign various forms and documents. Next, an administrative assistant read to the new hires a series of personnel policies about work schedules, breaks, overtime, pay secrecy, attendance, and benefits. She signed more forms, wondering what all this meant.

As the meeting drew to a close, Sammy Benson arrived after receiving a call from Human Resources. He and Juanita were introduced for the first time. Sammy escorted Juanita back to the Human Resources Department, showing

her the bank's various offices and other departments. He gave her a quick tour of his area, introducing her to the other clerks as he went. Sammy was careful not to interrupt their work, however, nor did he explain to Juanita what they were doing. It was obvious by the expressions on their faces that the employees were surprised to see her.

Sammy gave Juanita the job of processing foreign checks. He felt this task was the easiest job to learn and do correctly. During her first day on the job, Sammy spent about 15 minutes showing her the procedure: inspect, record, enter, adjust, file. Since he had to prepare for a meeting later that day, that was all the time he could spend with her.

By the end of the first week, Juanita seemed to be getting the hang of things: She came to work on time, stayed busy, and was fairly pleasant and easy to get along with. Sammy intended to spend as much time as possible with her during this period; however, because she seemed to catch on quickly and he was very busy, he saw her only occasionally over the next few weeks. He would ask how the work was going, if she was getting it done, and whether she needed any help. Juanita would always smile and say everything was going fine.

Then, after about a month, Juanita called in sick one day. A replacement was brought in, and as she looked through Juanita's desk for a notepad, she found what appeared to be a large pile of unfiled checks. When Sammy looked through the pile, he found that there were, in fact, quite a few unprocessed checks, some of which dated from Juanita's first day on the job. As they were the more unusual kinds of checks the department handled, Sammy assumed that she apparently had not known how to process them. Unfortunately, the combined value of these checks totaled around \$65,000. The bank had lost the "float" value on them, and Sammy knew that customer complaints would be coming in soon.

Sammy expected Juanita to come back to work the following day, and he wondered if he should write up a warning notice for her immediately.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What is the work maturity or competence level of Juanita Perez? What kind of supervisory behaviors should Sammy have used with her?
2. Describe the adequacy of the orientation process which Juanita received. What kind of orientation procedure should Sammy have used with her?
3. How should Sammy respond to the problem of the unprocessed special checks?
4. Sammy is considering issuing a formal, written warning notice to Juanita upon her return. Is this an appropriate action to take?

CASE DISCUSSION: Special Checking Is Handed a Loss

Summary

Sammy Benson supervised greater Downtown Bank's Special Check Sorting Unit, which processed odd-sized, foreign, and damaged checks. His staff of three were semi-skilled recent high-school graduates. Sammy took on Juanita Perez one summer as part of the bank's Community Upbeat program. Juanita was hired and reported to the bank for a brief induction program. Sammy then arrived, met Juanita for the first time and escorted her back to the department. After a quick tour and passing introductions, Sammy gave Juanita some basic instructions in her job. Juanita seemed to pick up on the work and fit in. After working there a month, Juanita called in sick one day. Her replacement discovered a large number of checks which Juanita had not processed. Sammy examined the checks and realized that Juanita had created substantial problems for the bank and its customers.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What is the work maturity or competence level of Juanita Perez? What kind of supervisory behaviors should Sammy have used with her?

Juanita has a low level of work maturity: She has no prior work experience, no prior training in the task to which she is assigned, and limited ability to manage her work process. She does show an apparent commitment to working on time and well with others.

Sammy should have used a directive leadership style with her. This would involve significant efforts to define work expectations, to train her in the task, and to check up on her performance regularly.

Unfortunately, Sammy did not use the proper style of leadership with her. He did not adequately train her for her job duties, nor did he check in to see how well she was doing. He did not establish standards for production nor for how to resolve problems. Although one would expect experienced and secure employees to bring problems to the attention of their boss, Juanita did not, perhaps thinking that she could correct them as she learned more. Ultimately, then, the reason for Juanita's performance problem must be laid at Sammy's feet.

2. Describe the adequacy of the orientation process which Juanita received. What kind of orientation procedure should Sammy have used with her?

There is a difference between an induction and orientation process. Induction involves the minimum steps of enrolling the new employee as a member of the organization. Orientation involves learning much more: the nature of the business, the function and operation of the department, working with the boss and other co-workers, personnel policies and procedures, and the like.

In this sense, Juanita went through an induction process but received the bare minimum of an orientation. The supervisor has the final responsibility for making sure new employees are properly oriented. Sammy did not meet this responsibility.

An effective orientation for Juanita would include instruction in what the banking business entailed and how this department's work fit into that business. It would also cover how to recognize checks of different types, what the function of this work involved, who the other people in the unit were, and so on. This process should have extended over several days and could have been delegated to a more senior member of the team, who would serve as mentor to Juanita.

3. How should Sammy respond to the problem of the unprocessed special checks?

He should take care of any particularly critical special checks immediately. When Juanita returns, he should meet with her and let her know how the checks were discovered and ask for her explanation. It is desirable to make this discussion as non-punitive as possible. Sammy could do this by conceding at the outset that he did not train Juanita effectively. Sammy should then undertake a better orientation process, along the lines noted above. He should also spend more time training her, beginning by going through the left-over checks to determine why she had problems with them.

4. Sammy is considering issuing a formal written warning notice to Juanita upon her return. Is this an appropriate action to take?

Given the circumstances, such action does not seem warranted.

CASE 12

Beverly Comes Full Circle

Background Information

Beverly Wyman took her job as supervisor very seriously. Though only 33 years old and somewhat new to the company, she liked her work and believed she did a good job. Beverly was in charge of the Consumer Credit Sales Group of the First Union National Bank. She was in charge of seven credit sales representatives (CSR's). Her sales group was formed six months ago to aggressively sell and market the bank's various car, boat, and other personal loans. Beverly was promoted and became group supervisor shortly after the group was started, moving up from an assistant manager's job in the nearby Credit Analysis Section. Some problems in the Analysis Section kept her there longer than was anticipated, and she joined her sales group after it had already started operating.

Even though she was generally pleased with the progress her sales group was making, she did have a problem: Bob Watson. As she thought back, she knew why this was so painful now.

Back to Beginning: Bob Watson

Three years ago, when Beverly joined First Union's Credit Analysis Section, Bob Watson was the chief credit analyst and her boss. He was then 41 and had been a First Union employee for 18 years. In this position, Bob was responsible for training all new junior analysts. Bob had long been a top credit analyst: he earned almost twice the net income as the next most productive employee in Credit Analysis. It was this exceptionally high level of productivity that allowed the division manager to look the other way whenever Bob had one of his occasional fits of moodiness. Indeed, although Bob was widely respected for his consumer credit talents, he was just as widely avoided for his unpredictable temperament and erratic work habits.

Beverly learned a lot about credit from Bob, and they got along well together—at least until Beverly started to equal Bob's record in Credit Analysis. That was about 18 months ago. It was around this same time that Bob seemed to undergo a change. There was a subtle but distinctive difference in how he worked: He maintained an adequate analytic volume, but he seemed drained of energy. Some employees thought the change was due to his divorce.

Whatever the cause, Bob's idiosyncrasies now became a real problem and the change in his work became increasingly less subtle. He was absent from his desk frequently and for long periods. Indeed, it seemed he would put in a couple of good hours of work a day and then spend the rest of the time listlessly wandering around. An exasperated department manager, Tony Ianelli, finally had to act, giving Bob a written disciplinary notice. Bob's wandering seemed to sub-

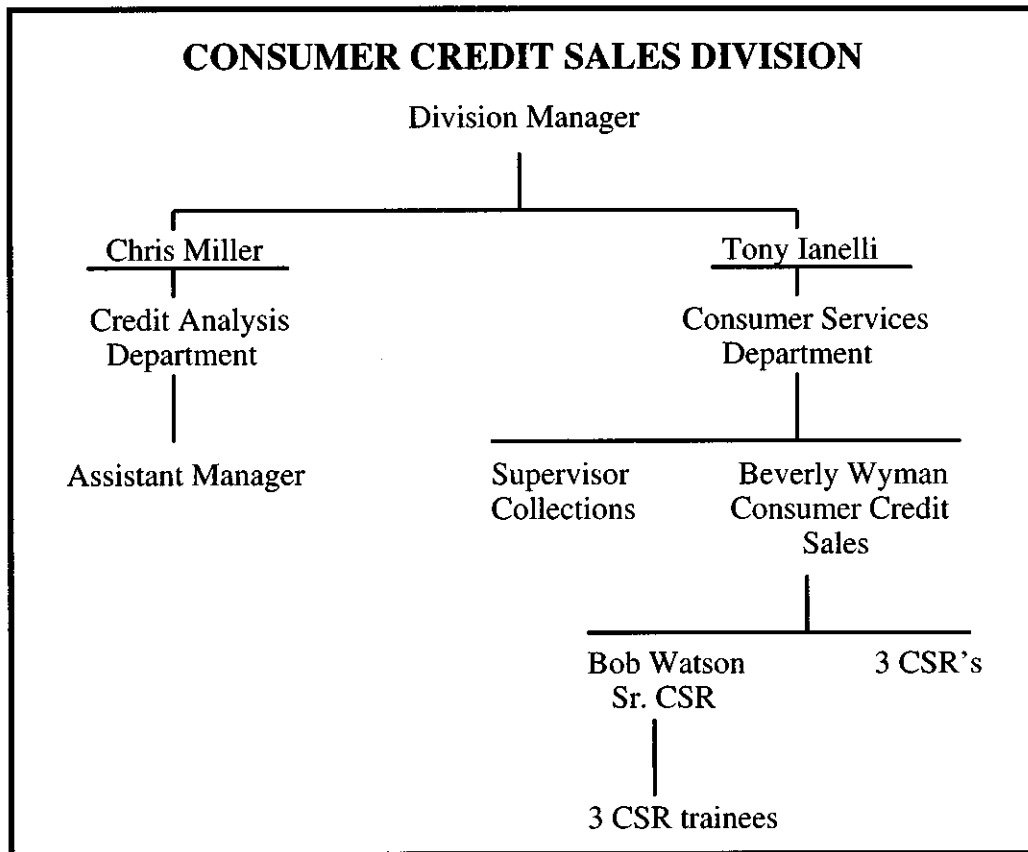
side, but his underlying attitude—apathy, indifference, hostility—became even stronger.

Beverly Becomes Supervisor

All these problems with Bob occurred before Beverly was made supervisor. Tony explained the situation to Beverly before he hired her, because Bob had now been transferred a second time to the newly formed Consumer Credit Sales group as senior representative. He was given the temporary duty of running the sales group until the permanent supervisor—soon revealed as being Beverly—arrived. Bob's job was the same kind of position he had filled in Credit Analysis: to train the sales reps in Beverly's sales group. But now, he was working for Beverly instead of Beverly for him.

During the job interview, Tony told Beverly: "We considered Bob for the credit sales manager's job, but decided we just didn't think he would work out as a supervisor at this time. We did think that more responsibility might be what he needs, though, so we made him senior representative."

Tony told Beverly that as senior representative, Bob would have the three newest sales reps work directly for him as trainees. Thus, Beverly would supervise Bob and the other three CSR's directly; she would supervise the three trainee reps indirectly through Bob. The chart below shows the organization of First Union's Consumer Credit Sales Division.



Four months after Beverly moved into the supervisory position, she was facing a number of problems with Bob Watson. She believed that Bob could consistently be a top performer if only he could get over this "attitude problem." She thought that although Bob realized he blew his chance for a management job because of his erratic performance, he still felt cheated. He applied for other jobs in the bank at every opportunity. He still did an average job, although his sales performance had been falling for the past few months. Beverly was also concerned about his work method: He seemed to do the easiest sales jobs first and then give up too quickly on the more demanding and challenging opportunities. So, while he still performed fairly well, his work was just not up to his potential.

Beverly was experiencing other difficulties with Bob, too. She was alarmed at the way his attitude was affecting the three trainees that worked under him. She sensed their resentment of her. A recent incidence was still troubling her. She had asked Bob to explain to the trainees a new procedure that all the CSR's had to follow. Beverly felt it was a good system and had hoped that Bob would introduce it well. However, she was distressed to overhear one of the trainees complain about the "crappy, stupid new procedure" they had to complete. Beverly could only imagine how Bob must have explained it.

Another of Beverly's concerns was Bob's almost total indifference to her. She could remember a number of times that Bob had gone around her to talk with Tony directly about some questions or concerns. The rest of the time, he seemed to ignore the plans she and Tony made. When asked for his input, he usually complained that the idea would never work.

In particular, he seemed totally resistant to changing some of his practices and bringing them into accord with the newly revised Consumer Credit Protection Laws. Potentially this was Beverly's biggest problem because mistakes under this new law could have cost the bank a lot of money in lawsuits and penalties. She had circulated a flier announcing the changes to all employees, but Bob had not appeared to pick it up. With his experience and ability, Bob was able to work in the gray area between super-selling and regulatory violation fairly easily. He did not seem to appreciate the danger in which he was putting the Bank, though, and his trainees were picking up his questionable tactics.

Altogether, Bob was consuming an enormous amount of Beverly's time and energy. Her productivity was being hampered by Bob's continual problems. Even worse, Tony Ianelli seemed unwilling to take any drastic action, and Beverly felt her ability to act was limited by Tony's sensitivity to "front-office" pressure to keep Bob around. Even though she had not yet broached the subject with Tony, firing Bob did not seem possible.

As her fourth month as a supervisor drew to a close, Beverly sat at her desk, looking at one of Bob's recent sales reports. She shook her head slowly, noticing more of the same errors. Beverly knew that although the problem was not an emergency, it needed correcting. Beverly wondered to herself: "What can I do?"

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the problem(s) which Beverly faces as a supervisor. Identify what specific performance improvement results she should seek.
2. What key rule(s) or principle(s) should Beverly use in solving the problem(s)?
3. Develop at least three different strategies or approaches for resolving this issue.

CASE DISCUSSION: Beverly Comes Full Circle

Summary

Four months ago, Beverly Wyman, 33, was promoted to the supervisor's job of a newly formed sales group. There were seven people in the sales group reporting to her, including Bob Watson (her boss when she first joined the company). Bob was about 10 years older than Beverly. He had been the highest performer in the company for a number of years, until Beverly began to equal his production about 18 months ago. Bob had a long history of personal moodiness and erratic behaviors, though. When Beverly began to equal his performance, Bob's behavior became more problematic. He had finally been given a written disciplinary notice. Consequently, some of the behaviors changed, although the underlying "attitude" problems of apathy, indifference, and hostility did not.

When Beverly was promoted to head up the sales group, Bob Watson was given the job of supervising three trainees in the department in addition to sales production tasks. Now, four months later, Bob had developed into a major supervisory problem for her. Beverly currently had several concerns about Bob's work:

- He gave up on tougher sales chores.
- He was infecting his trainees with a negative attitude about her and the operations of her department.
- He ignored her authority and plans, and is not a constructive contributor to the department.
- He circumvented new regulations and laws, putting the company at risk.

In short, Bob was consuming quite a bit of Beverly's time and attention, while performing far below his potential. He was continually seeking to find another position in the company. It seemed that the "front office" would be protective of him; Beverly assumed that they would not allow him to be fired.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Describe the problem(s) Beverly faces as a supervisor. Identify what specific performance improvement results she should seek.

Beverly's problem is how to respond to a rather unique problem employee: He is a long-term employee who is very knowledgeable and capable. But his work behaviors are just not acceptable—and may actually be risky to the business. He seems to be unreceptive to Beverly's supervision of him.

It is generally unproductive to speculate on what Bob's "motivation" or "psychological" problems are. It is difficult to accurately identify those underlying motivations when there is limited evidence of what is behind

them, and in some ways, using such a "theory" merely "explains" what he is doing without helping you deal with it.

Instead, it is preferable to identify what kinds of improvements in his behaviors she wishes to see. These improvements correspond to the problems noted above; they are listed below in likely order of importance to Beverly:

- Complying with the new laws and regulations
- Accepting her authority and becoming a constructive contributor
- Being a positive and constructive force with the trainees
- More perseverance in working on tougher sales

2. What key rule(s) or principle(s) should Beverly use in solving the problem(s)?

Beverly should keep in mind several rules or principles when approaching these problems:

1. In the final analysis, it is Bob's responsibility to comply with the standards of performance set. While Beverly may be experiencing the problem, it is Bob's problem. Both he and Beverly need to understand that it is his decision about what will happen.
 2. Beverly needs to be clear about what those standards are and what will happen if he does not meet those standards.
 3. She should not make assumptions about what can or cannot be done with Bob. She should prepare the way for action by initiating discussions with the "front office" to obtain their agreement to support her actions. This includes reaching an agreement with her boss, Tony Ianelli, regarding stopping his end-run behaviors.
 4. Open and direct communication with Bob is necessary. In that regard, offering support and assistance is appropriate.
3. Develop at least three different strategies or approaches for resolving this issue.

There are a number of strategies Beverly could pursue. They are not mutually exclusive.

1. Reach an agreement with the "front office" about how Bob will be treated. This will involve notifying "them" of the potential liabilities the company faces and the productivity problems that are likely. She should also present a plan for dealing with Bob, which could include a transfer if firing is not possible.
2. Meet with Bob to set expectations and note future consequences. Beverly should make it clear to Bob what her standards of performance are. She needs to point out that the responsibility for all future outcomes are his; i.e., he needs to understand that it is now his problem. She needs to state what will happen to him if he does not meet those standards. This conversation should be noted and kept as a record in her files. It would be very appropriate to have Tony Ianelli sit in on this meeting.

3. Beverly could refer Bob to the firm's Employee Assistance Program if one were available.
4. An alternative approach to a meeting with Bob would be more of a "counseling" one. In this case, Beverly could use assertive communication and active listening skills to raise the problems at hand for discussion purposes. In such a meeting, she could begin by using "I messages" to raise problems she's experiencing, and then ask for his reaction. By actively listening to him, the underlying reasons for his behavior may become discussable. Plans could be made to address his concerns. It may be that she could work with him to make a transfer to another area.

Other options may also exist.

CASE 13

It Was Really So Simple

Background Information

Brenda Galway leaned back in her chair, sighed heavily and slowly rubbed her eyes in big circular motions. "I don't need all this aggravation," she thought to herself. She had just finished reviewing the report she had requested from her new employee, Bill Stanley. The entire report was incorrect and would have to be redone.

Brenda supervised Unit B of the Audit Department. The Unit B team had earned the nickname of the "Mod Squad" because they were given the unusual, special audit assignments that cropped up. Unit B also had ongoing audit duties over certain operations departments within the company. The five auditing specialists in Unit B had to complete certain reports every month on those operational units. Normally, this workload was manageable enough. Unfortunately, this was not one of those times.

About three weeks ago, Brenda's manager, John Rockland, gave her a major project to complete in three weeks. The "rush priority" nature of the project stemmed from the decision of the company's Executive Management Committee to install a new type of auditing procedure and program. In large part, this meant adapting to an automated information system. Currently, most of the information they needed and used was being collected and processed manually. In effect, the new system required the auditors to switch from being high-priced clerks to being information-system managers. The auditors would be able to examine, "test," and display information more quickly, easily, and clearly—so, at least, was the thinking of Executive Management when it authorized the new procedures. Brenda's assignment was to complete an implementation plan for this new system in three weeks.

At the meeting during which he gave her the assignment, John told her: "Look Brenda, I know it's short notice and that you've got those operations reports due out soon, but you need to get your staff working on this project now. You know I'll do whatever I can to help."

John had paused a minute, leaning against the doorway. "Why not let that new guy, what's his name . . . Bill Stanley? Let Bill Stanley tart working on it."

Brenda could see no alternative. "I guess you're right," she said. "I'll get him on it today."

John had been referring to the new employee Brenda had hired just last month. Bill Stanley graduated two years ago with a degree in accounting and had worked as a junior auditor at a competitor since then. During the interview process, Brenda told him that he would have to be a self-starter and that she expected him to pick up on the work fairly quickly.

She now thought back to her words during that interview: "Look, we're very busy here and we get the plum assignments. I can't baby-sit you. I'll show you your desk and introduce you to the team members. You're going to have to take care of yourself. Of course, I'm here to help and my door's always open. But you'll have to pin me down and get me when you need my help. After that, you're on your own." Brenda had prided herself on her direct, no-nonsense, up-front communication style.

Bill Stanley seemed to agree with her philosophy. He replied: "Sure, that's great. I like to work on my own anyways."

In fact, Bill Stanley had not been Brenda's first choice for the open position in her department. She was looking for someone who had both auditing and computer experience in addition to a strong background in accounting. Unfortunately, she was unable to pay the salary that the few applicants with that background wanted. Bill Stanley was the best remaining choice, even though he had very limited auditing and computer experience.

Bill had accepted the job and had been doing as well as could be expected. During his first week on the job, he was placed on an existing audit project and had managed to perform effectively according to the project leader. He seemed to get along well with the other "Mod Squad" team members and was fairly eager to work on the project, although Brenda seldom saw him stay after quitting time.

Brenda had called Bill into her office shortly after receiving the new assignment from her boss. She told him about the project and gave him the deadline. She repeated that her door was always open if he needed help. Bill seemed honored that she had selected him. He tried to ask her for some details about the kinds of plans he needed to work out. Brenda repeated that it was a simple project plan. After Bill's third question along these lines, Brenda said, with a little irritation in her voice, "Look, you can figure this out. Unless you've any other big questions, I've got to get ready for a meeting."

Bill answered that he had no other questions.

Brenda had drawn the meeting to a close with the remark: "Keep in touch."

In the two weeks that followed, Brenda continued to be as busy as usual. She occasionally saw Bill in the office. While passing through, she would sometimes stop, put her head through the door, and ask how things were coming. Bill would always say "Fine."

On two occasions, Bill asked to see her. In the first meeting, about two days after receiving the assignment, he tried to get her to explain what exactly she was looking for in the report. He produced a detailed outline. Brenda looked it over and made a broad, vague response. Her irritation at having to tell him exactly what to do showed after about 15 minutes. In the second meeting, he asked for some general guidance and help on many of the specifics of the project. She wondered, at one point, why he didn't look up the answers to some of these questions himself. She had to cut their meeting short in order to attend another meeting. After the second meeting, she had no further contact with Bill.

It was now three weeks since she gave Bill the assignment. The deadline had arrived, and Bill had submitted the report on time, dropping it off on her desk at 5 o'clock, on his way home. Looking it over, she had easily seen that it was incorrect. Oh, it was all there, alright; it was just wrong.

For a long time she continued to rub her eyes, as if doing so would change the contents of the report and it would be correct when she looked at it again.

She thought to herself: "Why didn't he come in and check it out with me to make sure that he was doing it right, especially after he completed this first part? It was really so simple and I took so long to explain it."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What is the problem?
2. What should she do about the faulty report?
3. How should she have supervised Bill on this project?

CASE DISCUSSION: It Was Really So Simple

Summary

As supervisor of the high-profile "Mod Squad" Unit in the Auditing Department, Brenda Galway prided herself on her no-nonsense, direct, and independent management style. She wanted hard-charging, competent auditing personnel who could operate independently.

Her most recent hire, Bill Stanley, had seemed to accept these conditions when she interviewed him for the job. He had acquired some background in this field, but was not the most qualified applicant Brenda had spoken with. Nevertheless, because Brenda had been unwilling to pay the salary that fully qualified applicants wanted, Bill ended up with the job.

Brenda was not pleased when she learned that the Executive Management Committee of the company had authorized a conversion of the auditing process from a manual system to a computerized one. She was given the responsibility of preparing a project implementation plan within three weeks. Brenda and her experienced staff were consumed with ongoing audits that could not be dropped, and she was forced to give the new project to Bill Stanley.

When giving Bill the assignment, Brenda made it clear that he was on his own but could call on her at any time. Subsequently, on two occasions, Bill asked for more details about what she wanted in the report, but he did not receive much specification from Brenda. Quite often she saw him in passing, and he always indicated that things were fine. Otherwise, Brenda had no involvement with him on the project. Bill turned the project in on time, but it was incorrect and needed to be redone.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What is the problem?

There are really two problems here, the apparent problem and the underlying problem. The apparent problem is really a symptom of the underlying one and is the faulty report. The underlying problem is Brenda's inappropriate supervision of Bill on this project. She should attend to both problems.

The faulty report was due, finally, to Brenda's failure to provide adequate direction, support, and control to Bill. That is, the faulty report was ultimately a result of her poor supervision of Bill on the task.

2. What should she do about the faulty report?

Since the ultimate reason for the faulty report is Brenda's, she should not penalize or denigrate Bill because of the problem. Rather, she should take responsibility for the problem. Depending upon the degree of urgency involved and the extensiveness of the problems, she may need to make the corrections herself. However, if at all possible, she should use

this situation as a coaching opportunity with Bill. This means spending time explaining to him what the report should be like.

In a meeting with Bill, she should admit that she did not give him the direction he needed and that she is not being critical of his work. Instead, she should detail what the report should contain and where it needs to be corrected. She should work with him to make the adjustments.

Even if she cannot so work with him because of deadlines, she should have the same meeting with him as soon as possible.

3. How should she have supervised Bill on this project?

Bill had a moderate amount of competence for completing this task. His above average motivation to work independently was offset by limited experience with computers and very limited experience putting together a work plan.

Therefore, Brenda should have used a combined directive and participative approach. When giving Bill the assignment, she should have clearly and specifically detailed what the structure of the plan should look like. She should have provided examples, demonstrations, and any published support materials.

Next, she should have set up follow-through meetings with Bill to review progress. At first these meetings should have been scheduled daily or every other day. She should have looked over Bill's progress on the project at those points, given him tips and direction, and answered any questions. As he developed more confidence, the meetings could be spaced out more infrequently, although never more than three to five days apart.

CASE 14

Pain In Claims

Background Information

Sandy Jones supervises a clerical and secretarial pool of eight employees at the American Standard Insurance Company. Her group is responsible for typing and filing the insurance claims and registrations for Standard's customers in the Southern region. It is high-volume work that, although requiring speed and accuracy, is often tedious.

Sandy is proud of her unit because they get the work done well. Generally, Sandy enjoys her job and likes the people she works with. Most of her subordinates are young women who recently graduated from high school, some from the same school. By and large, this is their first regular job.

Sandy has one headache, though, and that headache is Katherine Bruskiwicz. Katherine is a very good worker, perhaps quicker and more accurate than anyone else in the unit. She learned the job very quickly and now finishes her work before the others. The only problem with Katherine, as Sandy told a friend at lunch one day, is that "she's just a pain in the ass."

"For example," Sandy said, "Katherine talks all the time. Now I know the work can be tedious, and I let the girls talk as long as they get their work done, but Katherine can get really loud at times, especially when I'm gone. I know, I've gotten complaints from others." Sandy is worried that Katherine's talkativeness may become an annoyance and distraction to the other employees.

Even more disturbing than the volume of her talk is its content. Katherine seems to delight in verbally harassing and intimidating the other employees in the unit. She brags about all the boyfriends she has. She'll often mock how other employees dress or talk, and will argue with them about doing certain tasks. She even picks on Sharon regularly, teasing her about her weight and lack of boyfriends.

Some of the employees in the unit have become accustomed to Katherine and can now take her in stride, although there are others who have a more difficult time dealing with her, and whom she still upsets. In either case, the employees in the unit have to make adjustments, and morale in the unit stays low. Sandy is certain that if Katherine weren't there, everyone would be much happier.

Sandy has informally talked with Katherine a few times about these matters, and Katherine will behave for a day or two—then pick up again where she left off.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is there a problem? Explain.
2. How should Sandy respond?

CASE DISCUSSION: A Pain In Claims

Summary

Sandy Jones supervises a group of eight clerks who do high-volume, relatively routine typing and filing tasks. The employees tend to be young women who recently graduated from high school. This is their first job.

Katherine Bruskowicz is perhaps Sandy's best performer. However, she tends to be a disruption in the workplace. For example, she is a loud and incessant talker. She is also verbally abusive. She boasts about her boyfriends and belittles Sandy, who has no boyfriends. She also teases Sandy about being overweight.

Although some of the employees take her in stride, others are upset by her. Sandy believes that Katherine causes some morale problems. Sandy has "informally" talked with Katherine about these matters on several occasions. Katherine will make a temporary improvement then revert to form.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is there a problem? If so, what is it?

This is a borderline call. While Katherine is annoying, it is not clear that there are significant productivity problems as a result. Some of her co-workers have adjusted to her. Furthermore, Katherine's job performance is evidently good.

On the other hand, Katherine's talking and rudeness do seem to heighten the level of tension and reduce the group's morale.

Considering the above, the question is whether Katherine's verbal behavior is an annoyance or a problem. This is a determination that each supervisor needs to make individually.

However, Sandy should watch for signs of hostility or stress directed at Katherine. She should also pay attention to the turnover of her staff. If either increases, Sandy will need to act so that the work problems caused by Katherine will not grow even more serious and the work environment further deteriorate.

2. How should Sandy respond?

It is not clear that Sandy now should do much more than she is already doing. Certainly, as noted above, she should begin monitoring the mood of her group more closely. She should also continue to correct Katherine when she gets out of hand.

Sandy should also schedule a formal meeting with Katherine to discuss the problem of her loud and abusive behaviors.

Unless matters grow worse, it is not clear that Katherine's behavior is of sufficient nature to justify a formal disciplinary procedure.

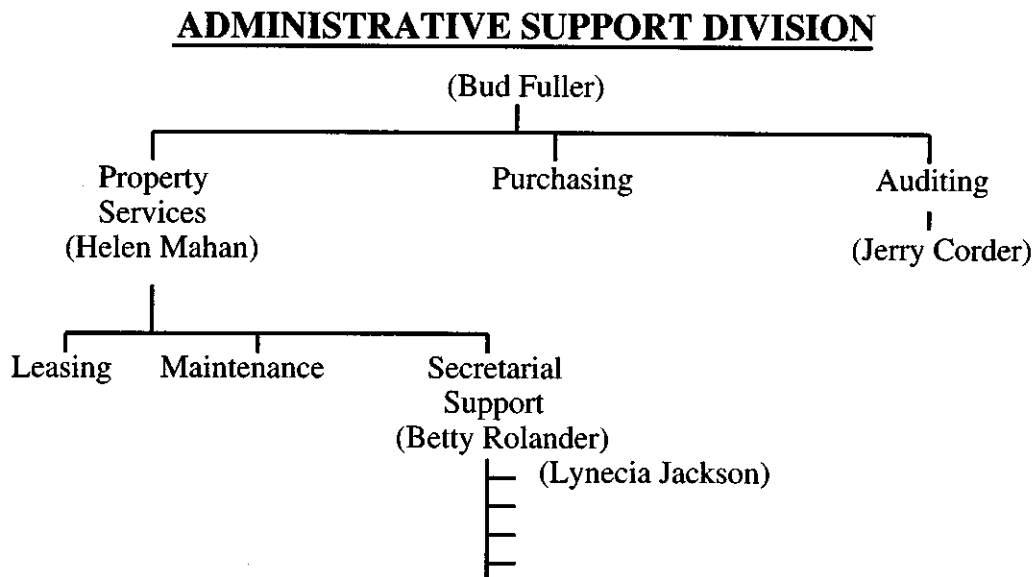
CASE 15

Don't Let Her Get Behind You

Background Information

Part 1. Making Adjustments—NOT!

Betty Rolander was a supervisor of the Secretarial Support Unit in Monumental Services Corporation. The main responsibility of her unit was to provide secretarial support to the three groups making up the Administrative Support Division: the Property Services, Purchasing, and Auditing departments. See the organizational chart below.



Betty supervised the four secretaries in the unit, and during her first year as supervisor, she had to face a major personnel problem in the form of Lynecia Jackson. Lynecia, 28, had been with Monumental for almost six years, holding various clerical and secretarial positions during her career there.

Lynecia had a "bad attitude problem" that drove Betty crazy: Lynecia was haughty, abrasive, and even antagonistic when dealing with other people. For example, when Betty noted problems or errors with her work, Lynecia would fly off the handle and become very defensive.

Betty told her friend Bob Erhard about Lynecia one day: "At first, I thought it was just me, you know, that Lynecia just didn't like me. But I checked her Personnel file. Almost everyone of her previous bosses had written complaints about the poor way she dealt with people. But they never did anything about it—and now she's my problem."

The roots of Betty's problem with Lynecia went back to the reorganization that had led to Betty's promotion. Shortly before Betty was made supervisor, about a year ago, the centralized secretarial support system in use at Monumental's headquarter's office was disbanded and replaced by a more traditional structure. Under the prior, centralized system, all the secretaries in headquarters were hired, managed, and controlled through a single manager Helen Mahan, even though the secretaries worked in other departments. Lynecia Jackson had worked directly for Helen Mahan. They liked each other, got along well together, and Lynecia became a loyal and devoted follower of Helen's.

However, recurring problems with this centralized system caused its demise. Under the reorganized system, secretaries were reassigned to each department and reported to the manager of each division. Helen Mahan was reassigned as manager of a newly formed Property Services Department. To take the sting out of this reorganization, Helen retained the management duties of the secretarial staff in the Administrative Services Division. Betty Rolander was made supervisor of the secretaries, and reported to Helen Mahan.

In reviewing some of the items in Lynecia's personnel file, Betty learned that Lynecia had applied for the supervisory job, but had been turned down. When Betty saw this, she thought it explained Lynecia's hostile behavior. She also hoped that the hostility would subside as they began to work more closely together. Unfortunately, she was wrong. After a few months on the job, the problems with Lynecia grew worse, not better.

One of the most significant incidents that confirmed this trend developed when Betty received a complaint from Neal Coleman. Coleman was an executive vice president in charge of Monumental's Operations Division. One day, he called Betty directly to complain about the rude way Lynecia had talked to Miriam, his secretary, during a phone call that morning. As he explained it to Betty: "She insulted and argued with her. Mariam became very upset, and I don't blame her. You better do something about her." He was angry.

Betty thanked him for the message, then called Lynecia into her office. Betty told her: "We have a problem, Lynecia. I've just received a complaint from Mr. Coleman about how you spoke to his secretary this morning."

"What did you say in reply?" Lynecia shot back.

"I said I would take care of it. You just can't talk to people like that," Betty said.

"You did what?" Lynecia shouted back. "I can't believe it! I didn't do anything! This is your problem. You've got a bad attitude."

Betty was surprised at the intensity of Lynecia's reply but continued to explain what Mr. Coleman said and why Lynecia had to improve her phone manner. Lynecia continued to deny it forcefully. They argued like this for another five minutes. Throughout the entire discussion, Betty felt like she was the one on the carpet for making a mistake, not Lynecia. The discussion finally ended, but not cleanly or decisively.

CASE QUESTION

1. How should Betty have responded to the complaint from Mr. Coleman?

Part 2. Betty's Ears Were Burning

After this confrontation, Betty felt that Lynecia was *more* belligerent and hostile to her. Furthermore, as Betty found out later, Lynecia started talking about Betty behind her back. For example, Lynecia would complain to others, especially any managers who came by, about Betty's clothes or that she was away from her desk too much or how Betty's ability as a supervisor was poor. In staff meetings, Lynecia would try to sound as if she were speaking for everyone else by making comments such as, "We're really having these problems with you," or "None of us thinks that's a good idea." These remarks were then followed by a discussion of all that Betty was supposedly doing wrong. Betty finally stopped having staff meetings because of Lynecia's tirades and criticism.

Lynecia also complained about Betty to Helen Mahan (her old boss and Betty's current boss). Soon thereafter, Helen gave Betty some "friendly advice": Betty should stay closer to her desk. Shaken and unsure, Betty accepted the advice and limited her work to her desk area.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is Lynecia guilty of insubordination?
2. Given what Betty knows at this point, what should she do?

Part 3: The Ice Breaks

Part of Betty's job was to support and serve Jerry Corder's Auditing Department, which in turn depended upon her help a great deal. However, Betty told Corder one day that she could not help him anymore because of complaints about her being away from her desk too much. Corder couldn't believe what he had heard, and marched into Bud Fuller's office with Betty in tow. Fuller listened to Corder's complaint and then asked Betty to explain. She told him about Helen's "advice" and Lynecia's complaint. It was a Thursday afternoon.

The following Monday morning, Bud Fuller called a meeting of his management staff in the Administrative Services Division and made the following announcements:

1. Betty Rolander and her staff no longer reports to Helen Mahan, but directly to Bud Fuller.
2. Betty is the supervisor in charge of that unit and she is not away from her desk too much.
3. If there are problems with Betty, they should be brought first to Betty's attention, and if that is not satisfactory, then to Bud.

Both Helen and Lynecia were shocked by the announcements. Lynecia seemed to improve for a week or two, but eventually began criticizing Betty again. During this time, Betty told Lynecia to train the floater-secretary who was going to sit in for Lynecia during her upcoming vacation. Lynecia indicated she could finish the training quickly, but by the end of that week, Lynecia had not yet trained the floater. Indeed, Lynecia simply ignored her.

Learning this, Betty canceled Lynecia's vacation leave on the grounds that she did not prepare her replacement as directed. Betty gave Lynecia a chance to regain her vacation, though. If Lynecia could train her replacement in the week before her scheduled vacation, she could have it back. Lynecia finally did this—and did it fairly well. During that week, though, Betty received permission from Bud Fuller to give Lynecia a written disciplinary notice.

ASSIGNMENT

Given this information, you are to conduct a disciplinary meeting with Lynecia. Prepare a written disciplinary notice and use it during your discussion.

CASE DISCUSSION: Don't Let Her Get Behind You

Summary: Part I. Making Adjustments — NOT!

For about a year, Betty Rolander had supervised four secretaries who served the three departments within the Administrative Support Division of the Monumental Services Corporation. During that time, she had run into a major problem in the form of Lynecia Jackson, 28, who had been with Monumental for almost six years in various secretarial positions.

Betty was bothered by Lynecia's arrogant and abrasive manner of dealing with other people. When looking through her personnel file, Betty discovered that Lynecia's previous managers had had similar concerns, although no one had taken strong action.

Betty traced her problem back to the company reorganization that had taken place about a year ago. At that time, the centralized secretarial support system in the headquarter's building had been replaced by a decentralized system. The previous system had been managed by Helen Mahan. Lynecia worked for Helen and became a loyal fan of hers. When the company reorganized, Helen was made a department manager, becoming Betty's boss, and Lynecia then began working for Betty. Subsequently, the working relationship between Betty and Lynecia had gone downhill.

One day Betty received a call from Neal Coleman, an executive vice president, who complained about the insulting way Lynecia had spoken to his secretary on the phone that morning. Betty called Lynecia into her office and admonished her for speaking rudely to Coleman's secretary. The discussion was argumentative and unproductive.

Answer to Case Question

1. How should Betty have responded to the complaint from Mr. Coleman?

Betty should have apologized to Mr. Coleman and indicated that she would look into the problem immediately. She should have called Miriam to apologize and hear directly from her what happened. She next should have asked Lynecia to describe how she remembered the conversation. Assuming that the complaint against Lynecia was well founded, Betty should have given her feedback on what exactly she did that created problems.

She also should have restated the standards of appropriate phone courtesy. It would be acceptable to have Lynecia call Mr. Coleman's secretary to apologize, thus reinforcing the importance of courtesy. Betty may or may not want to be present during that conversation. Betty should also make a note or memo of this conversation and keep it in a working file.

Summary: Part II. Betty's Ears Were Burning

After the Neal Coleman incident, Lynecia became more belligerent to Betty. For example, she dominated Betty's staff meetings and criticized Betty's job performance, wording her comments so that it sounded as if she was speaking for everyone present. She would talk about Betty behind her back, especially to managers who came through the area. (Betty found this out later.) Finally, Lynecia complained to Helen Mahan, who was now Betty's boss. Helen suggested that Betty spend more time at her desk. Betty was shaken by this and did so; as a result, she began to limit her work to her desk area.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is Lynecia guilty of insubordination?

There are two issues here. First, what is insubordination, and second, is she guilty?

First, insubordination is usually understood to mean an unwillingness to submit to a legitimate authority. It appears that Lynecia has not refused to do tasks she has been instructed to do. Instead, she is contemptuous and spreads dissension. This is a gray area: While she may technically not be insubordinate, her actions in spirit seem insubordinate.

Second, Betty has no direct evidence of Lynecia talking behind her back. She only knows this from hearsay. But Betty does see Lynecia disrupt meetings and try to convince others that Betty is ineffective. Again, there is a gray area here. She is clearly acting in a disruptive fashion, even if her actions may technically not be insubordinate.

2. Given what Betty knows at this point, what should she do?

Betty may have a difficult time making a charge of insubordination stick. Nonetheless, Betty is faced with an employee apparently intent on creating grief. Betty should meet with Lynecia to establish certain standards of conduct, such as bringing any problems she has to Betty's attention first. This new standard could lay the standard for insubordination charges in the future if Lynecia persists in complaining about Betty without first mentioning the problems to Betty.

Betty should reinstitute staff meetings. She needs to exercise more control over the meetings, especially when Lynecia begins speaking for everyone else. She can do this, for example, by polling the other people present after Lynecia makes such a claim. She can set the agenda for the meetings ahead of time to control what is discussed. She can give Lynecia assignments to fix "problems" she brings up. She can encourage other employees to disagree with whatever Lynecia wants to argue about. Finally, she can censure Lynecia for disrupting her meetings if all else fails.

Betty needs Helen Mahan to clarify what Betty's duties are and what authority Betty has to act in pursuit of those duties. Betty should also raise the issue of Lynecia's "end-run" communications to Helen. Betty should seek clarification from Helen about the proper kinds of commu-

nication "channels" which should run between Helen, Betty, and Lynecia.

Summary: Part III. The Ice Breaks

Betty told Jerry Corder, head of the Auditing Department, which she served, that Helen Mahan effectively restricted what Betty could do, and as a result, she could not serve Jerry in the manner to which he had been accustomed. Corder exploded and talked to the Division manager, Bud Fuller. By the start of the following week, Fuller had removed Betty's unit from Helen's supervision. He now had Betty report directly to him and gave her full supervisory authority. Consequently, Lynecia's performance improved slightly.

In anticipation of Lynecia's forthcoming vacation, Betty directed Lynecia to train a replacement floater-secretary. Essentially, Lynecia ignored that directive. As a result, Betty canceled Lynecia's vacation but gave her the opportunity to earn a reprieve if she could still train the replacement in time. Lynecia did so. At the same time, Betty received permission to issue a formal disciplinary notice to Lynecia.

Assignment

Given this information, you are to conduct a disciplinary meeting with Lynecia. Prepare a written disciplinary notice and use it during your discussion.

In general, it is clear now that Lynecia has been insubordinate in refusing to train her temporary replacement. Given the history of this employee's performance in the department, the discussion with Lynecia should make it clear that her job with Monumental will be on the line if there is any further examples of disruptive or insubordinate behavior on her part.

CASE 16

Kathy Showers

Background Information

Gene Jenkins has been acting supervisor of the Accounts Servicing Department of Wilson's for the past two months. Wilson's is one of the premier department store chains in the region, and the Accounts Servicing Department is responsible for maintaining, updating, and adjusting the credit accounts of Wilson's 20,000 charge customers. Gene was moved into this position after the previous supervisor left abruptly in anticipation of a reorganization. Gene was told to keep the operation running until final decisions about a reorganization could be made.

There are four account service representatives in the department. All four are women in their mid- to late 20's. They have been in the department for an average of five years. Each representative is responsible for approximately 5,000 accounts. In order to complete their duties, they must often deal with other employees throughout the chain of stores as well as with the customer's themselves. Thus, in addition to the skills needed to manage, adjust, and service the accounts, the "reps" must be very polite and tactful when talking with others.

Before being promoted into his current supervisory capacity, Gene worked as a rep for three years. During that time, he mastered the job and knew that with a little concentration and discipline, it could be both challenging and satisfying. Therefore, he could not quite understand Kathy Showers.

Kathy, 27 and single, has been in the department for a little more than two years. During that time, she learned the job well. She can process the paperwork quickly and without error and, indeed, will often finish her work before anyone else. Because Kathy commutes to work over a long distance via public transit, she often arrives early. This explains in part why she finishes her work ahead of time: She frequently starts working half an hour early.

In spite of a good record, though, Kathy's performance has started to slip recently. In fact, Kathy has become a big problem for Gene since he became acting supervisor. As one of her co-workers put it when complaining about Kathy the other day: "She's enough to drive you crazy."

Kathy has become very unpredictable and moody. When a customer or co-worker irritates her, her first reaction is to give everyone the silent treatment. Since her behavior is so obvious and affects everyone who works in the same office space with her, the tension level in the office has risen significantly. When dealing with customers or other employees over the phone, she tends to be abrupt and curt to the point of being rude. Or, when she must deal in person with someone, she will often sigh impatiently as they approach her desk or sim-

ply continue talking on the phone while they wait. Gene has started receiving complaints from both customers and co-workers about this. And when she becomes really upset, she loses all control, shouting and sometimes swearing to whomever is nearby.

The problem seems to stem from her boyfriend. Gene learns from some of her co-workers that she makes personal phone calls to him several times during the day. On a number of different occasions, she has ended the phone conversation by yelling into, then slamming down, the phone. She then will jump up from her desk and leave for a long time, and when she returns, she will cry very easily when asked where she has been.

Some of the other employees in the department now "walk on tiptoes" around her, while a few others enjoy fighting with her. Although, things are far from smooth and harmonious in the unit, Gene knows that something must be done but is not sure how to proceed.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is there a problem?
2. What should Gene do?

CASE DISCUSSION: Kathy Showers

Summary

As supervisor of the Accounts Servicing Unit, Gene Jenkins, manages four account service representatives. The reps must deal with both customers and employees frequently, and in a very tactful manner.

One rep, Kathy Showers, is very adept at her work. However, she appears to be going through a particularly difficult period with her boyfriend. As a result, she is often curt and abrupt, at times acting outright rude to others. Sometimes, she blows up in anger, shouting and swearing at whomever is nearby. She also talks to her boyfriend quite a bit on the phone. These conversations often end with her crying.

The tension in the office has increased dramatically, as co-workers try to tip-toe around her. Gene has been receiving some complaints.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is there a problem?

Yes. Kathy's behavior in itself is not as productive as it can be. Furthermore, she is reducing the effectiveness of co-workers and detracting from the quality of the work of the department.

2. What should Gene do?

In this case, an otherwise competent employee has fallen to an unacceptable performance level because of a personal problem. Gene needs to get Kathy's behavior back to standard level while trying to help her deal with this situation.

Gene should meet with Kathy. He should note that Kathy's behaviors are creating some problems in specific ways and should restate the minimum standards of performance. He should also indicate his awareness of the difficulties she is having with her boyfriend and express a willingness to talk about the problem with her. Kathy responds favorably, they could look into ways to help her through this period, including referral to employee assistance or perhaps temporary assignments to non-contact tasks.

Gene does need to make it clear, though, that Kathy is expected to meet the minimum standards.

Note to Trainers: This situation can be used as the basis for a role-play on employee counseling techniques.

CASE 17

Forgetting Claims

Background Information

Betty Warren, 36, has been supervisor of the Claims Adjustment Unit for the State Department of Unemployment Insurance for over two and a half years. The Claims Adjustment Unit is responsible for processing claimant appeals concerning either incorrect payments or administrative judgments made on their application. Although the work is often frustrating and difficult, Betty nonetheless enjoyed her job and her work until June Williams joined the unit. That is why the current situation with June is so irritating to her.

When the department went through a cost-cutting reorganization not long ago, Betty inherited June Williams, a 54-year-old employee who had been with the agency for over 28 years. June was pleasant enough to get along with and could do certain parts of her job fairly well, but, as Betty came to discover, she just could not seem to master one of the key tasks of the unit that all employees needed to know: how to complete the Adjustment Determination Form 1293.

The ADF 1293 is the basic form used to record the information and decisions made on each applicant's appeal. The procedure associated with this form includes the following steps:

1. Verify that all the information supplied in boxes 6-10 and 14-27 are correct.
2. Look up the individual's eligibility criteria from the appropriate table in the state codebook.
3. Compute the personal exemption rate by using the standard formula:
(number of dependents * 1200) + weeks unemployed rate,
where weeks unemployed rate = number of weeks unemployed * .25
4. Compare the results of steps 2 and 3, and record on the attached Decision Report Sheet.
5. Make a decision and enter reasoning in section 5 of the form.

On the average, Claims Adjustment clerks are expected to complete 15 of these forms a day. Betty had found from her experience that it typically took about four to six weeks for new employees to reach this level of performance.

On June's first day with the unit, Betty showed her how to carry out this procedure. June watched as Betty completed each step. She took no notes, only smiled and nodded her head as Betty worked through the procedure. At its conclusion, she asked no questions and said that she understood. Already a little late for a meeting, Betty left June at her desk to start work.

Three days later, Betty received a bundle of 1293 forms that June had processed, but they were all incorrect. She called June into her office and explained the procedure again. June watched very closely, nodding and smiling and looking very intently at what Betty was doing. Again, June asked no questions. Betty finished the demonstration, and June returned to her desk.

Over the next two weeks, Betty continued to receive incorrect forms that June had processed. Now, after three weeks on the job, June is barely doing 10 forms a day correctly. However, she has been making some slight progress and the number of incorrect forms has been falling.

Betty thinks: "Boy, June sure has a bad memory. She simply can't recall what she was told. She's been bluffing about learning what I told her."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What standards should Betty set for June during her first month on the job?
2. Did Betty do a good job training June? Is June stupid?
3. How should Betty have trained June? Create a training routine for training June.
4. Make a performance aide for the 1293 procedure. (You can make up any details that you need to as long as they are consistent with the procedure outlined in the case.)

CASE DISCUSSION: Forgetting Claims

Summary

Betty Warren supervises the Claims Adjustment Unit for the State Department of Unemployment Insurance. One central task performed by her unit is the processing of Adjustment Determination Forms (ADFs) 1293. The steps for processing this form include:

1. Verifying information supplied in certain blocks
2. Checking the applicant's eligibility criteria
3. Computing the personal exemption rate
4. Comparing steps 2 and 3, and recording the answer on an attached sheet
5. Making a decision and recording the rationale for it.

The Claims Adjustment Clerks are expected to complete 15 of these forms a day.

Not long ago, Betty inherited June Williams, 54, as a result of a cost-cutting reorganization. June had been with the department for more than 28 years and was a very nice person. After some instruction in the ADF tasks, June started processing the forms.

Three days later, Betty had a bundle of 1293 forms returned to her. They were all done by June and were all incorrect. Betty instructed June again in the procedure. But, not unexpectedly, June's work continued to be returned because of errors. Now, after three weeks in the unit, June is only processing a few forms correctly each day.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What standards should Betty set for June during her first month on the job?

Betty should set a standard of performance that is approximately at the level to which new employees are expected to perform. This number may be based on her past experience or determined after she consults with other employees. In all likelihood, the number set would be lower than the standard of performance expected of a fully competent employee.

What Betty should be trying to do is fit the standards of performance to a typical learning curve for that task. The learning curve would describe how long it takes an employee to reach a set standard of performance.

2. Did Betty do a good job training June? Is June stupid?

Betty did not do a good job training June. She just demonstrated the basic procedure with her on June's first day. She did not insist that June take notes, nor did she provide June anything in the way of formalized on-the-job instruction. She evidently made no follow-through with June after that.

The question of June's intelligence is not a helpful one at this point. Almost anyone in a new situation will feel stress, which will in turn lower their learning effectiveness. June probably does not want to appear dumb or slow; unfortunately, by acting in this way and not asking questions, she is creating exactly the impression she wants to avoid.

3. How should Betty have trained June? Create a training plan for June.

The first part of the training process for June should have been a good orientation to the unit and the personnel. Betty should have explained the work that was being done and the larger work plan of the unit. She should have gone through a demonstration of the process as she did; however, she should have done several other things too:

- Required June to take notes
- Required June to complete the 1293 forms on her own while June watched
- Assigned another employee to be June's coach during the learning process
- Provided a set of instructional exercises for completing the 1293 form
- Provided a performance aide for June to use
- Communicated the standards of performance during this training period, including a projection of when June should begin to become fully proficient
- Check in with June regularly to see how she was progressing.

4. Make a performance aide for the 1293 procedure. (You can make up any details that you need to as long as they are consistent with the procedure as outlined above.)

A simplified version of a 1293 form is attached. A performance aide is a visual guide and worksheet for how to complete the form. Participants might create any number of displays. A key point, though, is that any display should be tested and verified prior to use.

ADJUSTMENT DETERMINATION FORM 1293**Section 1**

Date _____

1. Name _____
2. Address _____
3. City _____ 4. State _____ 5. Zip _____

Section 2

6. Current earned income \$ _____
7. Other sources of income \$ _____
8. Savings in bank \$ _____
9. Assistance received \$ _____
10. Total \$ _____
11. Eligibility status code: _____
12. Prior determination: _____
13. Reason _____

Section 3

14. Last employer _____
15. Address _____ 16. Phone _____
17. Date hired _____ 18. Date released _____
19. Reason for separation _____
20. Time unemployed _____
21. Personal exemption: number of dependents _____
22. Personal exemption rate * 1200.00

Section 4

23. Number weeks unemployed _____
24. Factor * .25
25. Weeks unemployed rate _____
26. Weeks unemployed rate (from 25) + .00
27. Recalculated eligibility criteria _____

Section 5

28. Review determination decision: accept decline
29. Reason _____

CASE 18

Answering the Phone

Background Information

Jim Mullens likes supervising the Customer Service Unit. This unit is responsible for updating customer accounts and files as well as for providing information to customers and other employees. Typically, the customer service representatives (CSRs) he supervises answer questions about the services offered, provide information about the customer's account, and modify the files so that they are up-to-date and correct. This unit was formed only recently, to handle the increasing volume of direct customer calls more efficiently by using the newly installed on-line customer information system.

Unfortunately, the planning for the new unit was not done well. The on-line computer system was purchased and installed before the actual operations people were brought in. As a result, Jim was given the responsibility for getting the unit up and running within one week. He had to make some quick personnel selections and take care of a lot of administrative details within a short period of time.

Now, three weeks after receiving the assignment, Jim feels quite a sense of accomplishment. He has been lucky that things have worked out as well as they have. In fact, the only thing Jim is concerned with now is the way in which his reps handle customers over the phone.

Jim knows that good telephone etiquette is essential to the successful accomplishment of his unit's mission, yet his reps use many different styles in answering the phone and do not follow basic rules. For example, the reps commonly neglect to put customers on hold while they search for information. When asking questions, they do not explain the reason for the inquiry; they do not verify information; and, at times, they may react defensively when they don't know the answers. These are the major—but not the only—things they do wrong.

Jim knows that he must train them in the techniques of proper phone etiquette. There is no available training program to which he can send his personnel. Therefore, he must provide the training and coaching to the reps while they are on the job.

ASSIGNMENT

Prepare a training plan for Jim to use.

CASE DISCUSSION: Answering the Phone

Summary

Jim Mullens is given the task of staffing the new Customer Service Unit. This unit was created in response to a newly installed on-line customer information system. Now, the customer service representatives (CSRs) in the unit are expected to handle customer phone calls and answer any of the full range of questions they might have.

Unfortunately, the planning of the unit did not include Jim, and he only had one week to complete his assignment. He was fortunate to have recruited enough people to get the operation going, but after three weeks, he is now concerned about how the reps are answering the phones. He has noticed that the reps make a variety of mistakes in phone etiquette, such as not putting the caller on hold when necessary, not explaining what they are doing, not verifying information, and acting defensively.

He knows they need training but realizes that he must do it himself while the reps are on the job.

Assignment

Prepare a training plan for Jim to use.

There are two fundamental steps Jim should follow in preparing a training plan: defining desired standards of CSR performance, and creating learning experiences to train the CSRs to those standards. Hence, a training plan should contain information on those two broad domains. A more detailed plan could include a job analysis, creation of learning objectives, a needs assessment, a training curriculum, and a means of evaluation. This exercise could be used as a basis for the latter, more detailed plan. However, in a more applied sense, completing the two general steps would be sufficient for Jim's purposes. The particular details of each step are addressed below.

Performance Standards. A reasonable set of performance standards for the CSR job would likely include the following.

The CSR should:

- Efficiently access all customer information using the customer information system
- Accurately interpret the customer information system to report customer information
- Enter information into the system correctly
- Follow established phone procedures and etiquette
- Deal constructively with any conflict or dispute.

These standards are listed in an approximate order of learning acquisition for a training plan. That is, before acceptable phone performance can be expected, CSRs must first be able to use the customer information system.

NOTE: A more detailed training planning approach could include a more formal job analysis. Jim might hold a meeting with the CSRs to define their exact job duties. Further, at this meeting or at a subsequent one, he could complete a needs assessment by identifying what this group needs to learn. In point of fact, though, Jim should expect some turnover in his group; hence, a complete training plan like the one under development here should be prepared for use now and in the future.

Training Plan. Jim's training plan must take into account certain parameters: the training will be done at the worksite; the training may occur during regular service hours; the training will need to use the existing system; and, due to practical constraints, the training will probably not be conducted with everyone together at the same time. Considering these parameters, it is important to work out the plan so that the training program can be grafted onto the existing production process.

There would be two major subsets of the training: how to use the customer information system and how to use the phone in communicating with customers.

A. Using the system.

Jim could create a series of exercises by using the existing customer files. He could also create a set of "dummy" customer files (clearly identified as such). Either way, he could set up a series of inquiries, interpretations, and input exercises to work the trainees through a progressively more complicated set of assignments.

This training could be presented in the form of self-instructional exercises. For example, Jim could prepare a booklet of pages with different assignments. For a brief period of time each day and on a rotating schedule, the trainees could be put "off line" to complete certain exercises. A training schedule reflecting this plan would be easy to create.

Jim should make sure to verify the accurate completion of each segment by reviewing the assignments and directly observing the trainees. He could even give each trainee a "final" exam—that is, a set of new assignments that they must complete while he watches.

B. Using the phones

Once mastery of the system is achieved, the CSRs should be trained to standard in using the phones. This would begin by communicating what those phone standards are: Jim should prepare a list of standards and instruct his CSRs in what they are. The basic etiquette problems he's seen would probably be addressed simply by him doing this. He should regularly monitor phone behaviors to make sure these standards are being met.

The more involved training process involves how to handle difficult customer calls. Jim should identify what kinds of issues seem to most commonly create conflicts. He should then prepare training vignettes around these issues. He should also identify the skills routine that should be used to respond to these calls. A likely skills routine might include active listening, restating customer requests, offering alternatives, fixing problems quickly, and verifying solutions.

The training could proceed as follows: Jim would prepare the skills routine as a training handout. In a general meeting, Jim could review and demonstrate these skills. Either in that meeting or in individualized sessions, either Jim or another CSR would be the "customer" and go through role play exercises, which would be based on the vignettes, with the CSR. He could then coach each CSR on how they used the skills in responding to the situation.

CASE 19

Good News, Bad News

Part 1—The \$3.75 Mistake

Background Information

Ted Banacek smiled as the "I've got some good news and I've got some bad news" refrain kept repeating itself in his mind. "I can really appreciate it now," he thought to himself as he sat at this desk, looking out the window at the empty parking lot.

The good news was that Ted had recently been promoted to the assistant manager's job at State Bank's Westbury Mall Branch. The Westbury Mall Branch, one of the larger, busier branches in State Bank's network, had seven full-time tellers and three full-time new accounts personnel. It was something of an honor to be made assistant manager after starting at the bank less than one year ago.

For the past four months, Ted had really enjoyed his duties; he was learning about new aspects of banking, meeting customers, working with employees. Ted was particularly pleased that his time in the bank's Management Trainee Program had finally paid off. Once in an assistant manager's spot, a branch manager's job was just a matter of time. He wanted to do this job exceptionally well.

The bad news was the job was a lot tougher than he had imagined, and now he was sitting in boiling water with his job on the line—or so he thought. He was upset, nervous, and just plain confused. As he stared out the window, he recalled how it all began.

From the first day he worked for her, Ted thought his manager, Janice Schuster, was a good boss: She was easy to talk to and gave Ted attention and advice. Over time, she had given him increasing responsibility for running the day-to-day operations of the branch as she made more and more sales calls on customers outside the branch. They both grew extremely confident of Ted's ability, so there was no concern or fanfare when Janice began her vacation two weeks ago. Indeed, during her first week away, things went smoothly, and Ted had experienced no major problems.

He thought the second week would be like the first, and it had been, very briefly, until about 10:30 on Monday morning. A customer had just found a charge on his checking account. The charge was four months old, well beyond the normal grace period established by the bank. The

customer explained: "I just got around to looking at my statements and found this charge. I've been a good customer here for a long time and don't think I should have to pay for this one item. I'd like the amount refunded to me."

Ted had handled these situations before. He knew the fee was a legitimate one and that the notification period had elapsed. He also knew that the bank wanted to increase fee income. He felt strongly that there was no mistake on the bank's part and declined to reverse the charge. Ted used his best business manner to explain the situation to the customer nicely, but the customer was not pleased. Obviously upset, the customer finally left Ted's desk and went to the teller line to cash a check.

Ted shrugged his shoulders. "If you'd have brought this in sooner," he thinks, "we might have done something. Tough luck." He then busied himself with other things.

About 10 minutes later, Ted scanned the lobby during a work break. He noticed that the displeased customer was talking to one of the tellers and Judy Miller, a new accounts clerk. He could see that it was an animated discussion. At one point, the customer pointed in Ted's direction. Both the teller and Judy shook their heads in agreement. He notices that other customers and tellers seemed to be listening in on their conversation. He shrugged his shoulders and got back to work.

Later that day, after the branch closed, one of the other tellers asked to talk to Ted privately. Ted listened as she told him: "I think you should know what Judy was talking about with that customer today. The customer was complaining that you did not refund her \$3.75 charge. Judy just happened to overhear the complaint and then started agreeing with the customer that you should have refunded the money and that it was dumb that you didn't. I was embarrassed because some of the other customers heard it, too. Some of the tellers also heard the tale, and now they're making jokes and complaining about your '\$3.75 mistake'!"

Ted said, "Thanks for telling me." He felt his stomach knot a little.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is there a problem here worth dealing with? If yes, what is the problem and how should it be handled? If no, why not?
2. What kinds of customer service standards should exist for all employees in situations like this? How should those standards be communicated and enforced?
3. Is Judy Miller "guilty" of insubordination?
4. Should Ted respond to the situation? If yes, how?

CASE DISCUSSION: Good News, Bad News

Summary: Part 1—The \$3.75 Mistake

As a recent graduate of State Bank's Management Trainee Program, Ted Banacek had been promoted to the assistant manager's job at one of the busier branch offices. One week when Ted's manager was away on vacation, a customer asked for a refund on a charge for \$3.75 made to her checking account. After reviewing the details, Ted decided not to make the refund for various legitimate reasons. The customer, unhappy with the decision, went to the teller line to finish some other business.

Shortly thereafter, Ted noticed that the customer was talking with Judy Miller, a "front desk" new accounts clerk. It appeared that they are talking about Ted and that other employees were listening in. Ted did not think anymore about it.

Later that day, after the branch was closed, a teller came into Ted's office and told him that Judy had been openly critical of the way Ted had handled the customer. Now, after hearing Judy's remarks, other employees were making fun of Ted's "\$3.75 mistake."

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is there a problem here worth dealing with? If yes, what is the problem and how should it be handled? If no, why not?

There are several potential problems here that call for action either immediately or in the future.

The first issue is whether Ted should have refunded the \$3.75 fee. This is in large part a matter of company business policy. In this case, the fees were part of the agreement and the customer's notification was beyond the grace period. Whether the bank has a policy on customer satisfaction to supersede fee collection is the key issue here.

The second problem reveals itself in Judy Miller's apparent ignorance of the bank's fee collection business goals. It appears that the staff is not aware of those goals either, or if they are, they do not accept them. This is a potential problem that needs to be corrected soon.

The most obvious problem, though, is the behavior Judy Miller exhibited when she openly spoke ill of another employee rather than seeking to fix the problem. She also stirred ridicule of the manager among the rest of the employees. This situation should be dealt with directly and immediately.

2. What kinds of customer-service standards should exist for all employees in situations like this? How should those standards be communicated and enforced?

There are two main standards that apply here. The first has to do with how customer fee complaints should be handled. This should be a matter

of bank policy, and basically involves the decision about whether fee collection is more than customer satisfaction. Whatever the decision, front-line service employees should be notified of it and trained in how to apply this policy.

The second standard has to do with how employees should react to customer problems "caused" by another employee. There are two kinds of behavior that should be included in this standard. First, employees should respect one another, and one employee should not "bad mouth" another employee in front of a customer, much less other employees. Second, the employee hearing the complaint should either work at resolving the problem or support and explain the decision if it is not possible to fix it. Again, all employees should be notified of this standard and trained in how to apply it. Violations of this important action should be grounds for disciplinary action, depending on its severity and magnitude.

3. Is Judy Miller "guilty" of insubordination?

At this point, it appears that Judy has violated what should be common standards of customer contact. However, there are two issues: does Judy know what those standards are, and did she in fact do what was alleged? These actions are serious. However, "insubordination" usually means an employee's willful and open refusal to comply with legitimate directives issued by a superior. Technically, that does not seem to be what happened. Judy was not being insubordinate in this case.

4. Should Ted respond to this situation, and if so, how?

Since Judy's actions are potentially very serious, Ted should investigate this situation more closely. It would be appropriate to informally ask another teller what happened. If there was a general confirmation of what Judy did, Ted should meet with Judy. During that meeting, he should indicate that he has learned from several sources about what she has done and that he would like to hear her explanation. He should state the standards of behavior expected and that he does not appreciate her. He should indicate that in future situations, he expects her to either support his decision or to bring it to his attention by offering a solution.

Ted should then call a meeting with the staff to review the bank's policy on collecting fees and to review this particular incident. He can, with good humor, refer to the "mistake" and indicate that it was not a mistake but rather an application of the bank's policy. He could also use the meeting as a time to conduct some training in how to handle similar situations.

NOTE TO TRAINERS: This situation would be a good role-playing opportunity for trainees.

CASE 20

Good News, Bad News

Part 2—Judy, Judy, Judy

Background Information

Four months ago, Ted Banacek completed State Bank's Management Trainee Program and was assigned as assistant manager of the busy Westbury Mall Branch. Pleased with Ted and confident of his abilities, his manager took a two-week vacation. The first week went smoothly for Ted, but on Monday of the second week a problem developed when a customer asked Ted to refund a \$3.75 fee that was four months old. Complying with bank policy, Ted refused politely. The customer, angry over the refusal, later engaged several branch employees, including a new accounts clerk, Judy Miller, in a conversation in which Judy belittled Ted and inspired ridicule of Ted among the tellers in the bank.

Even though, at age 27, Judy Miller was just a few years older than Ted Banacek, she had been working at State Bank almost five times as long. While Ted was completing his college degree, Judy married, had two children, and started working at State Bank as a teller. Smart and hard-working, she had slowly but surely progressed up the ranks. She had been a new accounts clerk for a full year before Ted even came to the Westbury Mall Branch.

Judy went through a divorce not long ago. Needing more income and wanting a more professional career, she was very interested in being promoted and thought she was as capable as the next person for a manager's job. She also let it be known to everyone in the branch that she thought that she—and not Ted—should have been given the assistant manager's job.

Whenever Ted dealt with Judy, he could detect a resistant, competitive edge to her. However, he never felt that their working relationship was impaired. He could recall many examples when they worked closely together to solve a customer problem or complete a special project.

Indeed, until the recent incident with the customer regarding the matter of the \$3.75 refund, Ted had no reason to give Judy Miller a second thought. If Ted had any insecurity, it stemmed from his lack of teller experience: In the bank's Management Trainee Program, the trainees did not work as tellers. He believed that anyone, including Judy, who had experience as a teller had a real advantage, and he was very self-conscious about this area of weakness.

Late Monday afternoon as he looked out at the bank's empty parking lot, Ted wondered whether he should do something to respond to what had happened with Judy and the customer. He decided to let things ride, not rock the boat and see if the problem might simply go away.

On Tuesday morning, he came to work with a "clean slate." Fortunately, it looked like it would be a quiet, slow day. He diligently got to work. In going through his mail, he spotted a document that Judy had sent to operations—and that had been completed incorrectly.

There were only a few customers in the lobby. He went to Judy's desk; she was chatting with a co-worker as they processed some paperwork.

Ted began: "Judy, I just opened this document back from downtown. It's the one you filled out yesterday. Unfortunately, you did it incorrectly." He carefully continued, "It's okay that you made a mistake. It's a long and complicated procedure. Let me show you how to do it correctly."

Ted proceeded to show Judy how to fill out the document, thinking he was helping her. He also considered this his way of saying: "I'm not letting yesterday's events with the customer bother us. Let's continue to work together." Yet, as he talked to her, Ted could sense that Judy was uncomfortable and defensive.

Finally, Judy blurted out an explanation of why the mistake occurred: "I was rushed, there were a lot of customers." The other back-office person piped in that there had been a big rush of people yesterday.

Ted finished the discussion by asking Judy to redo the form and send it back to operations. However, for the remainder of the day, Ted sensed that Judy—along with some of the other employees—was angry at him and avoiding him. By the end of the day, Ted knew that something was wrong with the staff, and his spirits started to sink.

Now it is Wednesday, which picks up where Tuesday ended. By mid-morning, though, the situation has gotten worse. "Something is definitely wrong here," Ted tells himself. "There's too much whispering among the tellers and no one is talking with me." The tension in the branch office is almost tangible. He starts to think that he is failing: "I'm blowing this. If I don't do something, I'll lose my job."

He calls one of his friends, Sandy McGill, a manager at another branch, and explains what has happened. "What should I do, Sandy? I feel like things are out of control. Should I say anything, call a branch meeting, talk to Judy individually, or what? I need some help."

Sandy can tell that Ted is anxious and very concerned.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What kind of problem does Ted have here?
2. What events have occurred to lead to this state of affairs?
3. How should Ted proceed? What should he do now?

CASE DISCUSSION: Good News, Bad News

Summary: Part 2—Judy, Judy, Judy

Although only slightly older than Ted, Judy had been a bank employee much longer. She started as a teller and by virtue of hard work, progressed up the career ladder. Because of a recent divorce, Judy wanted more money and a more professional position. When Ted was given the assistant manager's job, she let everyone know that she felt she should have been given the job, not Ted. Nonetheless, Ted believed that they should be able to work together effectively enough. He felt a little insecure, though, because Judy had much more practical experience in day-to-day banking than he did.

Ted decided not to react to the "\$3.75 mistake" incident. The next day, he discovered that a document which Judy had sent downtown had been returned because of an error. Ted brought the document to Judy's desk, where she was talking with a co-worker. Ted interrupted, carefully pointed out Judy's error, and explained how she should have completed the document. For the rest of the day, Ted sensed that Judy, as well as several other employees, were avoiding him.

Now on the following day, the tension among the staff has grown even worse. Ted calls a friend who manages another branch, and asks for help.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What kind of problem does Ted have here?

Ted has two problems. First, it appears that he has alienated Judy. Second, it also appears that at least some of the staff members are now supporting Judy and that there is a serious morale problem among some of the staff.

2. What event(s) have occurred to lead to this state of affairs?

The immediate cause was Ted's "friendly" coaching of Judy. Even though Ted did not see it as a humiliation, Judy experienced his coaching as a rebuke because it was played out before another employee. Ted violated a primary rule: that corrective or coaching generally be done in private.

This embarrassment undoubtedly fueled Judy's long-standing simmering resentment of Ted. She apparently has been stirring up some other employees and turning them against Ted.

3. How should Ted proceed? What should he do now?

The focus of Ted's actions should be Judy. While he cannot expect to change her resentment of his promotion, he can expect her to behave in certain ways.

He should meet with Judy privately. It would be appropriate to begin the meeting by admitting that he was not as considerate as he should have

been in dealing with the documentation problem. Second, he should note that he is concerned about the apparent morale problems Judy is creating among the staff. He should indicate that he does not know why Judy has a chip on her shoulder about him and that, although he is willing to talk about those reasons, he also expects her to behave properly. This means that if she has a problem with him, she should bring it to his attention and not spread dissension among the other employees. He should also indicate that if there is any further indication of her doing so, he will proceed with disciplinary action.

NOTE TO TRAINERS: This situation would be a good role-playing exercise.

CASE 21

Good News, Bad News

Part 3: The Storm Breaks

Background Information

As a recent graduate of State Bank's Management Trainee Program, Ted Banacek is now working as assistant manager in one of the busier branches. While his manager was away on vacation, a customer asked for a \$3.75 service charge refund, which Ted politely refused. Shortly thereafter, the customer complained to Judy Miller, a new accounts clerk working for Ted. Judy, who believes that she should have been promoted into the position Ted now occupies, agreed with the customer and ridiculed Ted's decision. Ted ignored this incident, but the next day, he counseled Judy in front of another employee about a processing error she had made. Since then, it seems all the employees in the branch are giving Ted a cold shoulder. Ted feels he is failing as a manager and calls Sandy McGill, a friend who is also a manager, for advice.

Sandy suggests privately talking to Judy the next day. Even though Ted does not like the idea, he agrees.

Early the next morning, shortly after the branch opens, Ted asks Judy to come into his office. He begins: "Judy, I'm feeling like there's a real problem here. I know there's been a lot of discussion about my decision not to refund that woman's \$3.75 service charge the other day. Now I can understand why people might disagree with it, but it is my decision to make. I can't have my employees second-guessing my decision, and I resent your talking with the customer about the decision the way you did. In the future—"

With the force of a dam bursting, Judy jumps into the middle of his sentence. She's already hot and angry. "What are you talking about?" she asks loudly and vehemently. "You don't know what I said to that customer! You don't have any proof!"

She catches her breath. Even more loudly, to the point of shouting, she continues: "You're always picking on me! The other day, you really embarrassed me in front of the other employees. You don't have the right to talk to me like this!"

Ted is speechless.

Judy draws her breath and vigorously stands up. "I don't have to listen to this. I'm going to quit!" She storms out of his office, picks up her purse at her desk, and walks out of the branch.

For a long time, Ted sits at his desk, stunned. When he finally walks into the lobby, the tension is almost unbearable. He tries to continue throughout the day, but his concentration is destroyed and his energy is drained.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What went wrong? How should Ted have handled this discussion with Judy Miller?
2. Now that Judy has stormed out of the branch, what should he do?
 - with the staff that remains?
 - in notifying Human Resources?
 - with Judy Miller?

CASE DISCUSSION: Good News, Bad News

Summary: Part 3—The Storm Breaks

Acting on advice from a colleague, Ted meets with Judy the next morning. After a brief statement expressing his concerns, Judy explodes and accuses Ted of picking on her and embarrassing her. She quits and storms out of his office. Ted is stunned and the tension in the branch is almost unbearable.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What went wrong? How should Ted have handled this discussion with Judy Miller?

If there was a problem, it may have been that Ted came across as a bit too confrontational and accusatory. Judy obviously was a powderkeg and was ready to explode. Since this was the first meeting since events began deteriorating, Judy had been holding in a lot of pent-up feelings.

Ted perhaps could have salvaged the meeting by using more assertive communication skills. He could have signaled his intentions more clearly at the outset.

Example:

"Judy, I need to talk with you about what's been going on in the branch recently. I have a feeling that you and some of the tellers are upset. I'd like to find out what's going on and what we need to do to fix it. I also realize that I may have made some mistakes. Can we talk about these matters openly and freely?"

2. Now that Judy has stormed out of the branch, what should he do?

- **With the staff that remains?**
Ted should hold a quick meeting with the staff to explain what happened and what will happen next.
- **In notifying Human Resources?**
Basically, the decision facing Ted at this point is whether to accept her resignation as is or to seek to retain her. Although it would be easy to let her quit, he should consider the alternative of keeping her. Judy is experiencing a lot of stress at this point, but she is a trained employee, and with help, she may be salvageable. This decision should be made in conjunction with Ted's boss or the next higher authority.

Ted should notify Human Resources of the situation and the preferred course of action, that is, whether to accept her resignation or to put it on hold temporarily.

- **With Judy Miller?**

If the decision is to accept her resignation, Human Resources should send a letter to her confirming that action and notifying her of any final steps.

If the decision is made to put her resignation on hold, she should be contacted by Human Resources (and not by Ted) to that effect. That is, a Human Resources officer should indicate that the Bank recognizes the stress of the moment and would like to hold off taking final action for a period of time—a "cooling off period"—if Judy prefers.

CASE 22

Customer Service in Conflict

Background Information

Brad Franklin had been supervising the Customer Service Unit of the Wilson chain of department stores for just over three years. The unit fulfilled an important function at Wilson: issuing company credit cards. Brad liked his job and was considered good at it. He had started as a credit analyst in the unit and, as a result of his hard work, did quite well. Now he was in charge of the unit's six credit analysts.

Almost half of all sales at Wilson were paid with Wilson credit cards, and there were always incoming applications. These applications, which had been completed by customers either at store locations or in response to mailings, went directly to the Customer Service Unit for credit analysis. The credit analysts did all the background-information checking. They would identify credit references, double-check the accuracy of the information, and collect supporting information; then, they would use the information to make a credit judgment. When an applicant qualified, the analysts would initiate a credit agreement and issue a credit card.

Because contracts and potential losses were involved, applications had to be handled carefully and precisely, and although the work was fairly routine, each application was somewhat unique. The job required an eye for detail, initiative, and skills in investigating and analyzing information. It also demanded a certain level of information needed for a credit judgment to be made, and it was not uncommon for both store managers and customers to call the unit to ask about the status of an application or account.

Although an employee could be trained to carry out these job requirements, Brad liked to hire candidates who already had some experience, and for quite some time, the credit analysts in his unit had all been young men with backgrounds in banking or financing. When in March two positions simultaneously opened up in the unit, Brad was faced with a potentially disastrous situation. Fortunately, he found two fairly good workers, who both started their jobs on the same day. Because they were both trainees, he had them work together at adjacent desks. There they could work from the same files and could share the same phone.

One of the new employees, Don Fowler, 22, had been working with the Ace Finance Corporation for the previous nine months as an assistant credit investigator. He was very outgoing and hard working, and he soon fit in well with the other young men in the unit.

The other new employee was Karen Wilkens, who, at 20, had just completed an associate degree at an area community college, with a speciality in

business management. She was reserved and a bit shy. Even though she had no previous credit analysis experience, her work was very strong, and Brad felt she had the potential to be a good analyst. If she felt uncomfortable about being the only woman in the unit, she kept it to herself.

During their first two weeks on the job, Brad spent a lot of time training and working with both Don and Karen. He repeatedly showed them how to check references and carry out investigations. He always answered their questions, and he often told them to ask more questions if they were not sure what to do.

When they had finished their second week on the job, Brad told them to start answering phone calls about the applications and that he would still be available if they needed help. Since the phone was positioned between Don and Karen, on their adjoining desk space, Brad expected them to alternate at this job, which entailed receiving the phone call, finding out the answers to the caller's questions, and then relaying the answers to the caller.

After a week or so, though, Brad began to notice something curious: Don always seemed to answer the phone. After he found out what the caller wanted, he would get up, look in the files, ask Brad questions, and take care of the call. Brad realized that he was now spending more time working with Don than with Karen, and that Don was learning more because the phone calls led him into different types of investigations, thus broadening his knowledge. In Brad's estimation, Don was showing a lot of initiative and learning well.

But Brad also noticed that Don and Karen seemed to be arguing a lot. Their arguments were low-key enough to start with, but as the weeks progressed, they became more pointed and tense. Brad noted, too, how Karen often seemed to be angry and withdrawn: She never took part in the occasional joking among the unit's other men, nor did she join them on coffee breaks or for an after-hours drink.

Brad was particularly upset, though, when coaching Karen on investigations. He would try to talk with her, prefacing his comments with something like: "You remember when I taught you how to do this." Karen would stop him and say: "You never trained me to do that, but you did train Don." Karen responded like this on a number of occasions.

There was no change in the situation until the last week of May, when Brad reviewed some work with Karen. Brad was mentioning how well Don had handled a similar application when Karen angrily interrupted him: "It's no wonder Don did so well! You trained him to do it and not me. You always spend time talking to him and never to me." Her voice grew bitter. "You didn't train me as well as you did him. And I think it's because I'm a woman." She pulled out a piece of paper from a file she was holding and shook it. "Look, I want to do a good job—and I have! I've been keeping a record of the investigations Don and I have done over the last two weeks. Look, I've been doing about five more each day than Don—he's always too busy talking on the phone and answering questions!"

Brad was shocked. That accusation, Brad believed, was very wrong. He knew that Karen's gender didn't make any difference to him: He had tried to help them both. He wasn't sure how to proceed.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What is the problem?
2. Are there any possible problems here for Brad under Equal Employment Opportunities laws?
3. Why would Karen react as she did?
4. What precautions might Brad have taken during the training process to avoid this problem?
5. How should Brad handle this problem?

CASE DISCUSSION: Conflict in Customer Service

Summary

Brad Franklin supervised the customer Service Unit for the Wilson chain of department stores. When two positions in the unit opened up in March, Brad hired two new employees, Don and Karen. Don had some prior experience in this work, while Karen, who was a recent community college graduate, had none. She would be the only woman in the group.

Brad had them sit at adjacent desks for training and support reasons. He spent a lot of time training them during the first two weeks on the job. After two weeks, he instructed them to answer the phone and handle customer questions. Shortly thereafter, he noticed that Brad seemed to be doing more phone work than Karen. He also noticed that Brad and Karen seemed to argue a lot. Finally, Brad became concerned when Karen, a more shy and reserved person than Don, started to complain that she was not being trained as well as Don because she was a woman. Brad felt he was training them equally well, and was surprised by Karen's remarks.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What is the problem?

The problem here is Karen's perception and belief that she is being treated unfairly compared to a male peer, Don. Whether or not Brad has been treating her unfairly is not as important as the fact that Karen feels as if he has. His immediate problem is how to respond to this issue so that Karen can get beyond these feelings and become a fully functioning member of the team.

2. Are there any possible problems here for Brad under Equal Employment Opportunities laws?

Yes, there could be a problem. Karen feels like she has been discriminated against in terms of a major condition of employment (training) because she is female. If she could "prove" that this discrimination did happen, Brad would be in violation of equal employment laws.

3. Why would Karen be reacting as she did?

It is generally unproductive to speculate on a person's motivation. However, there are several possible factors that may be at play here.

First, Karen might be correct: Whether wittingly or not, Brad may in fact have given her less adequate treatment than he did Don. If this turns out to be true, Brad will need to correct that problem immediately.

Second, Karen may be feeling stress because of her unique status as a woman within the group. This feeling could tint her perceptions of how she is being treated. Again, the reason for her reaction is in general not as important as the need to address that feeling quickly and effectively.

Concerning the issue of sexual harassment, there does not appear to be a problem in Brad's unit. There is no evidence of a sexually offensive environment here nor of any expectation of sexual favors for work benefits.

4. What precautions might Brad have taken during the training process to avoid this problem?

Brad should have prepared a written training plan for both Don and Karen. Since they would both be doing the same job, the ultimate training results should be the same for each. However, since they came into the job with different backgrounds, they might start at different points. They would be expected to complete the training at different rates and speeds. This should have been explained to both during an orientation meeting. By noting check-off or completion stages on the training plan, Brad could have a record of the amount of training given to both. To review their progress, Brad should have established regular (weekly) review meetings with both Don and Karen, conducted on an individual basis.

Brad also should have given them specific phone coverage assignments. For example, Don might have been given the responsibility of handling all calls in the morning, and Karen, all calls in the afternoon. Those schedules would have been rotated regularly.

As the only woman in the group, Karen may feel particularly vulnerable and under stress. Brad should have attended to her comfort level with the group of men. He should have resisted any pressures on her that might increase her discomfort level.

5. How should Brad handle this problem?

Brad should meet privately with Karen to discuss the matter. Brad should indicate that her concerns are very important to him and that he will do all he can to address them. He should also indicate that he had no intention of any differences in their training. Brad could also note, though, that Karen has to take some responsibility for her training, including initiative.

Brad should ask her to talk about the kinds of additional training she thinks she should receive. He should avoid talking with her about what in fact did happen and stay focused on what should happen in the future, going forward. The goal should be to produce a written training plan and a timetable that will keep him in regular contact with her and that will help her improve her skills.

CASE 23

Don't Let an Old Flame Die

Background Information

Brenda Dawson worked hard, liked what she did and was good at it. Brenda was the senior customer service associates trainer with American Products, Inc., a state-wide retail service organization with over 90 branch outlets. Typically, there were about four to six customer service agents (CSA's) in each branch office.

Brenda reported to Bill Abbott, head of the Training Department. Bill and Brenda started working in the Training Department at about the same time two years ago. Since then, Bill had noticed Brenda's natural talent for training. In his opinion, she had considerable potential for higher levels of responsibility, too—which was why he became concerned when Brenda started showing signs of becoming bored, stressful, and, in general, unenthusiastic about her work. Bill wanted to deal with the problem directly but was not sure how to do it.

Late one day, after everyone had already left the offices, Bill took a break from a report on which he was working to recall some of the history and circumstances surrounding Brenda:

Brenda was initially hired to work as a CSA and compiled a strong record of performance. After three years as a CSA, she was promoted to a position as a CSA supervisor in one of the busier branch offices. When the position of CSA trainer opened up, Brenda was a natural choice. She took over the CSA trainer job just a few months before Bill Abbott was hired. So, when Bill moved in, Brenda was still learning the basics of training.

During this period, American Products was undergoing a lot of changes itself as it struggled to meet new a variety of new competitive challenges in the marketplace. For example, in the boom economy of the time, CSA turnover was high. At one point, Brenda had to teach 12 people in classes that were designed for eight. And even with this 50 percent increase in training output, there was still a six-week waiting list to get into the training. Brenda would teach the class in the usual three-week period, take tests home at night to grade, use two days to finish up class records and order supplies, then get right back into the next class. When Bill finally received approval for a second trainer, Brenda had to train that person in addition to her hectic workload.

Small wonder, Bill thought to himself, that she's ready to do something else.

He reviewed the current situation in his department. There were five people in the Training Department: in addition to Bill and Brenda, there was the second CSA trainer Chris, a management trainee program coordinator and the departmental secretary. All reported directly to Bill, who was now swamped with other projects.

Bill thought about what he wanted: fewer people reporting to him directly, a reinvigorated Brenda with new, more challenging assignments, and the entire CSA training effort coordinated and managed at a lower level.

As he sat staring out the window, absently toying with the pages of the report on which he was working, Bill made a list of some additional pieces to this puzzle:

1. Brenda had supervisory experience and the potential to supervise others. She already was serving in a senior, lead-worker capacity with Chris, the other CSA trainer.
2. Both he and Brenda were aware of the need for other CSA training programs. Some already existed, but could not be given because of time limitations, whereas others needed to be developed. For example, programs in customer relations, product knowledge, and sales skills had been "simmering on the back-burner" for six months and were waiting for someone to put them together and deliver them.
3. The rate of CSA turnover was subsiding, and Bill knew that soon there would be a need for only one three-week CSA training class. This would cut out the need for running two classes at a time, as was done now.
4. There was a need for a new program for training CSA supervisors in branch service and supervisory tasks. This program would have to be developed.
5. Bill handled virtually all administrative and political issues in order to avoid burdening the staff. For example, the budgets for Brenda's CSA Training Center came directly to him each month, and Brenda never saw them. He did all the budget planning for her, too.
6. Likewise, Bill fielded all the problems and questions that the Branch Operations people had about CSA training. He had instituted the Advisory Committee of Branch personnel to meet with the Training Department in order to act as conduit for branch office complaints and to serve as a sounding board for departmental ideas. He knew this was a good approach. Brenda, while interested, said she'd never seen anything like that done before, and claimed not to have time to get too involved.
7. Chris, the second CSA trainer, had been doing an acceptable job, but he needed help and coaching. Bill had neither the time nor the background to do that. Given these factors, Bill wondered what he could do to restructure Brenda's job in order to make it more challenging and satisfying while also improving the productivity and effectiveness of the department.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is job enrichment an appropriate solution to this situation? Explain your answer.
2. Identify how you would redesign Brenda's job to enrich it. Write both a job description and a mission statement for Brenda's new job.
3. Identify how you would implement or go about completing this process. Think about how you would deal with the following: Brenda, Brenda's co-workers, other departmental staff, Branch Operations personnel and the Personnel Department (for job evaluation). Create an implementation plan.

CASE DISCUSSION: Don't Let an Old Flame Die

Summary

Both Bill Abbott and Brenda Dawson moved into the Training Department at American Products, Inc., about the same time two years ago. American Products was a state-wide retail service organization of about 90 branch offices. One of the main activities of the Training Department was to train the customer service associates (CSAs) that staffed the branch offices. Bill headed the department, while Brenda was the senior CSA trainer.

Brenda started working at American Products as a CSA herself several years earlier. During that time, she proved to be a strong employee and had been promoted into a supervisory role within the branch. She was a natural choice for the CSA trainer's job when it opened. Once there, she worked very hard to keep up with the demand for training. Bill recognized that Brenda had some natural skills as a trainer and felt she also had significant potential for further promotion. Recently, however, Bill had noticed that she was becoming "burned out," and he was quite concerned about what to do.

Bill surveyed some other characteristics of the situation. There was now a second CSA trainer in the department. This person needed more coaching and attention than Bill could provide. Brenda was already acting in a senior mentoring capacity with that person. There were also a variety of new training programs that were also in need of development. The rate of CSA turnover was subsiding; as a result, the demand for CSA classes had been cut in half. Bill handled all administrative matters for CSA training, such as budget preparation and review, program planning, and the like. He had started an Advisory Committee on the CSA training program, but Brenda said she had no time to become involved with it.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is job enrichment an appropriate solution to this situation? If so, why?

Yes. There are several reasons. First, Brenda is beginning to show signs of "demotivation" in the form of burnout; without some kind of response, Brenda may move on. Second, Brenda shows clear promise of development: Learning new skills will help nurture those talents. Finally, Bill's ability to manage the department could improve by delegating more responsibility to Brenda.

2. Identify how you would redesign Brenda's job to enrich it. Write both a job description and a mission statement for Brenda's new job.

Under a job enrichment approach, Brenda would move into a new job with higher levels of duties and responsibilities. The following duties are all candidates for her new job; these duties would be the core of any new job description.

Duties:

- Assuming full supervisory responsibility for the CSA Trainer (Chris)
- Preparing and monitoring the budget for CSA training
- Designing and implementing additional CSA training programs as needed
- Leading the CSA Advisory Committee
- Providing back-up CSA training as needed
- Managing (plan and evaluate) the CSA training and improve as indicated

The mission of this job would be to manage the CSA training function to provide quality training on a timely basis to all branch offices.

3. Identify how you would implement or go about completing this process. Think about how you would deal with:

- Brenda — Bill should schedule a meeting with Brenda to express his interests in her career and well-being, and to suggest a way to realize those interests through a job enrichment effort. He would explain how the initiative would work and enlist her involvement in the transition.
- Brenda's co-workers — The biggest concern will be Chris who is used to reporting to Bill directly. After the plans for Brenda's transition are underway, Bill should explain to Chris what the plans are and the new reporting relationships. This should include a detailing of timing as well as listening to any concerns that Chris might have.
- Other departmental staff — Bill should notify the rest of his staff accordingly.
- Branch Operations personnel — The main customers of CSA training are the various personnel in the branch system, especially the operations managers. Bill should schedule a meeting with the key managers in that group to inform them of the news. Brenda should be at that meeting. This meeting would be a good opportunity to review the quality of service provided to date, identify any recurring problems, and develop common solutions to resolve those problems. Brenda should be the focus so that she will manage in response to these issues. Furthermore, Bill should expect to spend time with Brenda over the following months, coaching and helping her into this new management job.
- The Personnel Department — Finally, Bill should notify Personnel that Brenda's job has been redesigned and that it needs to be regraded. Because of the higher levels of responsibility and skill required, Brenda should expect to receive a salary adjustment.

Create an implementation plan. Generally, the plan of implementation would be something like this:

1. Present the option to Brenda and enlist her agreement.
2. Begin developing new job description and plan for transferring duties. Notify Personnel.
3. Notify Chris and other employees in unit.
4. Begin coaching Brenda and preparing her for the transition.
5. Meet with Branch Operations and signal change.
6. Complete the transition; Bill continues to coach and support Brenda during the period.

CASE 24

The Contradiction of Business

Background Information

First State Financial Services was the third largest banking institution in the state. It maintained an extensive branch and ATM network to service its diverse retail customer base. Even with First State's size, though, the business success of the bank was extremely dependent upon the trends in the local economy. Two years of recession meant two years of poor loans, and First State fell into deep trouble. To limit and reduce overhead expenses, there were some extensive layoffs. A new executive management expected rapid, better results with fewer resources. Everyone at First State feared being fired even though the Bank was inching back to improved profitability. There was still the pressure to "perform—or else."

Lucy Winters managed the six-person Spring Hill Branch for First State. Spring Hill, fully equipped with an ATM and a freshly redesigned lobby, stood in the parking lot of a new suburban mall. The mall, anchored by a store from the largest grocery chain in the area, included about twenty different small retail stores. In addition, a major hospital was located just down the street, and a large manufacturing plant (with about 3,000 employees) was situated in a convenient, nearby industrial park. Many of the branch's customers worked at those locations.

Lucy was promoted to her current job about 18 months ago. She had been serving as an Assistant Manager at another branch in the region until that time. During the past year and a half, Lucy had learned her job as a manager well. She enjoyed her work and did an effective job.

"I *used* to enjoy it, in any case," she thought to herself. She was sitting at her desk, 6 p.m., looking at the night closing in. "I just wish I could leave here *once* before 5:30. These layoffs really hurt, the pressure is too great and no one really cares whether I'm here or not." Lucy knew she was in a bad—no, depressed—mood.

The layoffs she was thinking about had taken place six months ago, but their full impact was only now being felt. Lucy's Spring Hill Branch was a busy one; previously, there were nine positions authorized for it. Now, there were only six: two New Accounts positions (including Lucy's) and four tellers. One teller could alternate between the teller line and back-office duties.

The problem was that there were too many customers. Lucy smiled at the contradiction. "Here the bank wants more customers, and we can't service the ones we already have." On almost any day at almost any time, there were three or four customers in line. It did not seem to matter that most of them simply

wanted to cash a check or make a deposit: By the time they got to the teller, they were curt or rude, demanding, and sometimes hostile and aggressive.

Lucy clearly remembered an incident that had occurred just two days ago. A customer had been waiting for about 20 minutes to pay a utility bill. When he finally reached the window, he started berating the tellers for being so slow, and condemning the bank for being so inept. By the time he finished, the teller was in tears. Lucy remembered talking to her after he left. The teller said: "We work so hard, and no one seems to appreciate what we do. I just can't work like this."

Lucy started to hear a lot more complaints—from everybody, it seemed. Customers complained about poor service, the tellers were complaining about the pressure, and "downtown" was starting to complain about the large number of mistakes, errors, and shortages being made at the branch.

Tomorrow, Lucy had to hold one of her monthly "sales meetings" with the staff. These meetings were required by "downtown." Lucy dreaded them because they always seemed to drag on and on and nothing ever got accomplished. Lucy was supposed to talk about a product for 15 to 20 minutes or so, and she could envision everyone else sitting there, fidgeting in their seats or looking at the floor. There would be no questions, but there would be occasional complaints about how "we need more help" or "the customers yelling at us."

Lucy was not looking forward to tomorrow's meeting and wondered if there were ways she could work on the real problems in the branch and produce real results from her meeting.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Can Lucy use this meeting to help solve some of the problems at the branch?
2. What kinds of general strategies can Lucy pursue to help solve these problems?
3. Describe the process that Lucy can follow with her staff to address productivity and quality problems.

CASE DISCUSSION: The Contradiction of Business

Summary

Lucy Winters managed a branch bank office. The office was located in a good location and had many customers. However, the bank itself had been under severe pressure to improve profits. As a result, the staff in Lucy's office had been reduced by a third.

Now there seemed to be a constant backup of customers in the branch. Because of long waits, customers were often abusive to the tellers when they finally reached the window. The staff was feeling increasingly stressful, and the quality of work began falling off.

The contradiction of this business was that, as things stood now, Lucy had more customers than she was capable of handling.

Two days after a particularly disturbing incident, Lucy prepared to conduct a mandated "sales meeting" in the branch. These meetings seldom went well as far as Lucy was concerned. She wanted to find some way to deal with the real problems of the branch, and felt she had to come up with something before the meeting on the following day.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Can Lucy use this meeting to help solve some of the problems of the branch?

Absolutely. But it is very likely that it will take a series of meetings with the staff to dig a way out of these problems.

The basic problem is that the current configuration of staffing and customers is out of balance: the demand for services exceeds their ability to serve the customer. The key to improving the productivity of the branch is to reconfigure the service and customer mix.

2. What kinds of general strategies can Lucy pursue to help solve these problems?

Lucy has several options that she can pursue to help solve this problem.

First, she can request additional staff from her management. Along with asking for full-time workers, she could suggest a number of options such as part-time positions or sharing staff with another branch. She could even pursue the latter option on her own initiative with friendly peer branch managers.

Second, part of the productivity problem involves customers using tellers for transactions that could be completed through other, more efficient channels. There are several ways that customers could be approached and encouraged to use more productive methods, such as direct deposit of payroll checks and use of automatic teller machines (ATMs). Since her branch is near a number of employers, she could recommend a marketing strategy to contact these employers for the purpose of establishing

direct payroll deposit. She could also work with Marketing to create in-branch promotional campaigns to increase ATM usage.

Third, she needs to work with her staff to find ways to improve service. This latter approach would involve the staff in looking for recurring problems and appropriate solutions to them.

3. Describe the process that Lucy can follow with her staff to address productivity and quality problems.

Basically, Lucy should launch a quality circle or productivity improvement initiative with her staff. There are several major steps involved in implementing such an initiative:

1. She needs to explain the program to her staff and indicate that this is one way they can try to improve their situation. She could indicate some of the things she is already trying (see answer to Question 2). She should indicate that this process will be an on-going one.
2. She should obtain training for her and her staff in quality and productivity improvement techniques. She should also develop the practice of providing performance reports to the staff.
3. She should use regular meetings to identify problems and brainstorm solutions.
4. Part of her actions should be to improve the training of her staff. This can occur in two areas: dealing with difficult customers and technical areas of branch work. She would need to seek training support for these areas.

CASE 25

Problems Behind the Counter

Background Information

Bob Cramer, 36 and recently divorced, manages the Oak Street Branch for the Second National Bank and Trust. The Oak Street Branch has six tellers and does an average amount of business. Bob has been with Second National since he graduated from college and joined the management training program there. Bob is well liked and generally enjoys his job, although now, at the height of summer, he is carrying out the difficult job of preparing a disciplinary warning for one of his staff members.

Eight months ago, in January, Bob hired a new teller by the name of Connie Tremont. Connie was 23 years old and a graduate of a local high school. Connie had experience working as a claims clerk with an insurance company prior to coming to Second National. Bob spent about 15 minutes interviewing her, and although he had a few reservations about her appearance and communication manner, he desperately needed someone who could start soon, and she was available immediately. Bob decided to take a chance.

She started in Second Bank's three-week teller training school the next Monday and finished it successfully. On her first day at the Oak Street Branch, Bob gave her his standard five-minute welcome, then turned her over to the head teller. The head teller introduced her to the other tellers, helped her get set up, told her to ask if she had any questions, and then went back to her job. Connie began serving customers soon thereafter.

Like all new tellers, it took her a long time to get adjusted and settled in. During these break-in periods, Bob would wonder whether the teller training was really needed because it always seemed to him that the tellers forgot everything once they walked in his door. Nonetheless, he noticed that in spite of these difficulties, Connie picked up the essentials of her work and began performing at an acceptable level relatively quickly.

Unfortunately, Bob was also finding that the initial concerns he had about Connie during the interview process had been well founded. While she could complete the technical aspects of her work acceptably, she had a major problem with presenting herself to, and working favorably with, the bank's customers. Bob wondered almost daily when she would recognize this problem and do something about it, but she seemed oblivious to the matter and simply would not change. After six months, Bob knew that if she did not come around quickly, he would have no other choice but to release her. Although he dreaded the thought of being short-staffed again, he thought to himself: "I've been short-staffed so many times before that I should be used to it."

Connie's major problem is really a result of several factors. One factor is her physical appearance: She is pretty and if slightly overweight, pleasingly so, but she is obviously inattentive to grooming and personal hygiene—and Bob does not have any sympathy for poor, sloppy grooming. Indeed, after seeing repeated examples of her neglect, Bob has been forced to conclude that she is simply a slob. Her long hair is frequently disheveled and uncombed; it often seems to be unwashed. Her style of dress is plainly inappropriate, too: She often wears clothes that are either too loose and low-cut, or too tight and revealing.

Over the past eight months, a number of incidents related to Connie's poor grooming habits have occurred. Bob could easily recall an incident that happened three weeks ago, on July 18, when the branch was filled with a lunch crowd. Bob, standing near the front of the teller counter with a customer, saw Connie bend over to get some supplies from under the counter. Her dress hiked up substantially, revealing her upper legs and underwear. He saw that many of the customers had noticed, too, and were looking away in embarrassment.

Bob knew that this kind of image was not acceptable for the kind of business establishment he was expected to run. He talked with her privately the next day and told her what had happened, why it was a problem, and that she must be careful. However, in the days and weeks that followed, he has detected no changes in her grooming or hygiene.

Another reason for her customer contact problem is her poor manner of communicating with customers: she is often just plain rude. Bob has regularly heard her argue with customers in a loud and contentious voice, at times cutting them off rather abruptly. It is as if she has a chip on her shoulder and almost anything a customer might do will knock it off.

Bob has received frequent complaints from customers regarding her abrasive behavior. For example, last Monday, August 2, when a customer asked to borrow a pen, Bob overheard her tell him: "Well, I don't like to give up my pen because whenever I do, customers always keep it. Be sure to give it back to me." He called her to his office as soon as the customer left and admonished her about what she did and told her she had better improve her conduct.

Bob was reaching a point of decision. The final straw occurred yesterday, Thursday, August 5, over Bob's "No barefooting it" rule. The background to the problem is this: Many of the tellers take off their shoes, especially towards the end of the day, in order to be more comfortable. Usually this poses no problem. However, throughout the summer, Bob received a growing number of complaints from the tellers that Connie's feet and shoes smelled terrible. Two days ago, on Wednesday afternoon, Bob personally verified the problem. Yesterday, before the bank opened, he told the tellers that they should keep their shoes on.

Not an hour later, Bob was amazed to find Connie barefooted. He told her to put her shoes on. Later in the afternoon, he again found her barefooted, but this time, he decided to give her a written warning notice. Issuing such a warning is the Bank's last major step before terminating in the bank's disciplinary procedure. Unless there was clear and immediate improvement after Connie received the notice, Bob intended to fire her.

Now, on Friday morning, Bob reads over the following rules for completing a written warning notice in the bank's policy and procedures manual:

- The expected standards for performance must be stated.
- Specific examples (with dates, times, locations, examples) of the offending behavior must be identified.
- A deadline for improvement must be set.
- The employee should sign the form, or if he or she refuses, a note to that effect must be added. The employee may add remarks to the document. The employee keeps a copy, with the original sent to Personnel for filing in the employee's folder. It is kept for two years and removed from the folder if there have been no other problems during that time.

He picks up his pen and gets to work, aware that he will be discussing the warning's content with Connie later in the day, after she receives it.

ASSIGNMENT

Given the information presented in this case and using the form provided, prepare a written warning notice and conduct a discussion with someone who plays the role of Connie.

NOTE: At one point during the discussion, Connie writes the following comments on the notice:

My boss Bob Cramer is a real jerk. He picks on me and upsets me. I would do a much better job if I worked for a good boss. I want a transfer.

Case Conclusion

After the discussion is completed, Connie signs the form and is handed a copy. As she starts to walk from Bob's office, she tears it up into little pieces and throws it on his desk.

CASE QUESTION

What should Bob do now?

SECOND NATIONAL BANK WRITTEN WARNING NOTICE

Employee Name _____

Department/Branch _____ Date _____

This warning is to notify you that you are not meeting minimal acceptable standards of performance for your job. Continued performance below standard may result in your termination. Immediate improvement is needed to avoid further disciplinary action.

Standard of Performance: _____

Example(s) of Inadequate Performance: _____

Improvements Needed: _____

Prior notice of problem to employee: Verbal Written

Date _____

Employee Remarks: _____

Signatures

Manager

Employee

CASE DISCUSSION: Problems Behind the Counter

Summary

Bob Cramer manages a branch bank office and is experiencing problems with a staff member. Eight months ago, he filled an open teller's position with Connie Tremont. Connie, 23, had been working as a claims clerk since graduating from a local high school. Bob spent fifteen minutes interviewing her for the job. Although he had some reservations about her, he needed the help. She began the bank's training program the next week. Upon finishing the program, she returned to the branch. Bob welcomed her and then his head teller gave Connie a quick orientation and set-up, after which time she began serving customers.

After a month or so, it became clear to Bob that his initial concerns about Connie were well grounded. Connie had pronounced problems with making a favorable impression on customers. There were several ways in which these problems manifested themselves—and are still manifesting themselves. One issue is poor personal hygiene and grooming. A second is the inappropriate style of clothing she wears to work. A third issue is her rudeness to customers. He has started receiving complaints from customers although he had informally counseled her about improving her performance in these matters several times before.

A "final straw" occurred yesterday. After receiving some complaints from the other tellers about Connie's foot odor, Bob ordered the tellers to keep their shoes on. On two different occasions that day, Bob found her disobeying his directive. Now he is ready to issue her a written warning notice, the last step before termination in the bank's disciplinary policy. He has a copy of the procedures.

Assignment

1. Prepare a written warning notice using the form provided and the information given. Use this form in conducting a discussion with "Connie."

NOTE ON CONNIE: Connie writes the following comment on the form when Bob gives it to her: *"My boss Bob Cramer is a real jerk. He picks on me and upsets me. I would do a much better job if I worked for a good boss. I want a transfer."*

Employees have the right to make whatever comments they please on the form. Even though this comment is inflammatory, Bob cannot have it removed. Bob could tell Connie, though, that she will need his recommendation for any transfer and that she needs to improve no matter what she thinks of him personally.

Answer to Case Question

What should Bob do now?

At the conclusion of the discussion, Connie signs the form but then shreds it and throws it on Bob's desk before she leaves. If Connie did this act in full view of other employees, her behavior could be considered gross insubordination and could be grounds for immediate dismissal.

If it was done in private, Bob has two options:

1. He could just ignore it.
2. He could take further action.

The first option, while no doubt difficult to do, might be indicated if she was particularly upset. However, he could instruct her to return and pick up the material for disposal in the wastepaper basket. In and of itself, the document was her copy to do with as she pleased, and there was nothing inherently wrong in tearing up the document. The offense would be in throwing it on his desk rather than in the garbage.

Given the symbolic nature of her action, though, a stronger response is needed. In this context, he could call her back into his office and issue yet another notice, this time for insubordination, including a clause about grounds for immediate termination for any future insubordinate acts of this kind.

CASE 26

Wanted—Good Secretary

Background Information

For over three years, Bernard Malinowski had been the manager of the Customer Service Department at Buford department store. After nearly six years working in various customer service assignments, he still enjoyed the work of responding to the inquiries, requests, and complaints of Buford's various retail customers. He felt it was a way to help the customers and Buford at the same time.

He supervised five service representatives who dealt directly with the customers. At times, the service representatives would also support different marketing programs and initiatives. There was one secretary for the department who provided the administrative and clerical support needed to keep the department running efficiently. Bernard realized all too well how important it was to have a top-performer in that position.

That was why he was so concerned—and surprised—by the recent performance of his new secretary, Betty Lyons. Bernard's expectations had been high when he hired Betty two months ago. He thought she would be the one who might stick around and solve the "revolving door" problem he had experienced with every former occupant of that job. But now, he started to think about replacing Betty.

When she started in Customer Service, Betty seemed to be the ideal worker: She was energetic, cared about doing a good job, worked hard, and got along well with her co-workers. But here she was, making the same old mistakes all her predecessors had made. He ticked off in his own mind the by-now familiar list of problems:

- Letters to customers always looked sloppy and poorly composed. The recent addition of a word processor to the unit had not resulted in any improvements.
- The turnaround time for producing the letters was too long, often seeming to take two or three days from the date of submission.
- Filing and recordkeeping duties piled up and never seemed to be completed on any sort of timely or up-to-date basis.

To make matters worse, recently she had started complaining of being "overworked." Indeed, Bernard overheard her say to one of the service representatives just yesterday: "Have they ever told you what they expect you to do or what the priorities are around here? I'm so busy and pulled in so many directions, I can't do everything. And I don't know what I'm supposed to do first."

Bernard knew she was not performing up to standard, and that he would have to act soon. He thought to himself: "It's funny, but the good ones always seem to have the most problems. When they do their work well, we give them more to do and then, bang, their work falls to pieces. The mediocre ones always stay mediocre—just getting the job barely done." Bernard felt the people should derive satisfaction from completing a job done well—and if not, well, he did give them a pay raise once a year. "That should be reward enough," he thought.

And that was all the reward he gave them.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is there a performance problem?
2. Describe the issues.
3. How should Bernard respond?

CASE DISCUSSION: Wanted—Good Secretary

Summary

Bernard Malinowski supervised the five service representatives and one secretary in the Customer Service Department at Buford department store. The secretarial position provided important support to all the service representatives. There had been a pronounced turnover of personnel in this position. When Bernard hired Betty Lyons two months ago, he thought things might be different, and was at first, he was actually pleased with her work.

However, he was now concerned about her performance: letters looked sloppy, correspondence took too long to get out, and filing and recordkeeping were behind schedule. Moreover, Betty was complaining about being overworked and not having any direction. Bernard thought that he might need to terminate her if things didn't improve.

Bernard believed that the good employees always seemed to be the most disappointing. They did well, were given more work, and then, their performance failed. He believed that annual merit raises were sufficient rewards for good work, and that was the only kind of reinforcement he gave them.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is there a performance problem?

Yes. There is a problem with Betty's work output and quality. There is also a problem with the staffing of the secretarial position: High levels of turnover in a position indicate problems in the management of that position.

2. Describe the issues.

There is a quality (and productivity) problem with certain aspects of Betty's job. Presumably, these problems arose after an initially successful period of job performance. There is evidence, then, that she can technically perform the job under certain conditions.

However, it appears those conditions have changed: she has been given an excessive workload without any corresponding sense of priorities or appreciation for the work she has done. It also appears that she has received inadequate training.

Although not described in the case, it is reasonable to suppose that the frequent turnover of personnel in this position may be due to the same underlying causes. And those causes come back to Bernard's inadequate efforts to manage the position and the person in that position.

3. How should Bernard respond?

Bernard has two matters to which to attend. First, he needs to work on the immediate problems of Betty's performance. Second, he needs to

manage the position more effectively in order to remove the underlying reasons for poor performance.

On the first point, Bernard should meet with Betty to identify the exact production problems she is facing. It is likely that he will need to do the following with her:

- Provide additional training
- Identify priorities
- Reinforce good performance
- Give her some temporary support to clear out any backlog of work.

Second, he needs to manage the position. This means looking at the work done in the position and determining whether there are more productive and efficient ways to do it. He should seriously look into ways to reduce the workload or, if that option is not possible, to find ways to do the job more easily. Part of this effort can be done cooperatively and participatively with Betty, and perhaps with the full staff, as part of an "employee involvement" productivity improvement. Modeled along the lines of a quality circle, he could schedule a series of meetings with the staff to look for ways to reduce the nature of the problems.

CASE 27

Another Staff Meeting

Background Information

June Hanks had worked for Jim McLin for almost one year now, but she still was not used to these last-minute staff meetings. It was difficult to predict when they would occur. Some meetings might come within days of each other, whereas other meetings might be months apart. No matter when they were scheduled, though, she could count on one thing: They would be set up at the last minute. June knew that most of the other six managers in the department, who also attended these meetings, felt the same way she did: Jim's supervisory style could be somewhat frustrating.

Although not yet accustomed to Jim's last-minute meetings, June was not particularly surprised to learn that a meeting scheduled had suddenly been scheduled for that afternoon at 3:30. She asked Rudy Bronstein, the co-worker who told her of the meeting, what it was about. Rudy just shrugged his shoulders as if to say "Who knows?"

Jim's staff were assembled in their meeting room at 3:30. As was common, Jim arrived about 10 minutes late, apologizing profusely. As he settled into his chair, he said: "It's been a while since our last meeting, and I felt like we all needed a chance to catch up on what was going on in the department and throughout the rest of the company."

June caught Rudy's attention and rolled her eyes. All of their meetings started like this, she thought, and they usually led nowhere. She soon discovered, however, that this meeting would be different.

After going around the table and obtaining a brief report from each of his staff members, Jim announced: "We have got to take care of this red-tape problem."

He paused as if to let the message sink in, but there was nothing shocking about it. Since the first day June worked for Jim, she had heard him complain that his department spent too much time on "red tape"—his code word for a lot of detailed procedures that he felt people followed too closely. Jim liked to expand on this topic at every occasion, although almost everyone else felt there was no effective way to reduce or cut out the variety of organizationally required forms and procedures they had to complete. June felt like telling him that there were far more important issues to focus on.

"I'm really serious about it this time," Jim continued. "I want each of you to bring me at least three ideas for how we can cut down on the red tape we have here. I'll expect them in writing on my desk first thing tomorrow morning."

June could not hold her tongue any longer. "Jim, that's a very difficult task to complete. I was planning to work late tonight on that Howard Project you as-

signed me last week. I just can't do them both. Besides, if we have an urgent problem to take care of, it's this new VIP service program. It's causing a lot of problems for everyone at this table."

The VIP service program was an initiative Jim had begun a few months ago. The intent of the program was honorable: to provide the best service possible. However, in practice, the program was a nightmare. It obligated anyone in the department to stop whatever they were doing in order to fix a problem of any magnitude. Jim did not see the need for addressing why the problems occurred to begin with or for trying to distinguish major from minor problems. As a result, his staff had their work interrupted more frequently, which in fact led to more errors in their ongoing work. June knew that all of her co-workers had been complaining about these problems, and she noticed supportive smiles and nods from others around the table.

Jim paused for a minute, looking at June. He then said, "June, you know that you haven't had that much experience with this program yet, and besides, I know that what you'd propose can't be done and wouldn't work anyway. No, let's stick with the red-tape problem."

Jim looked around the group. "Now, let's see what else is going on. Who'd like to share any further ideas or suggestions?" There were no volunteers, and Jim had to do some considerable coaxing to receive any additional comments.

He finally ended the meeting after 15 minutes of forced, half-hearted discussion. Everyone left quickly without saying a word to him.

CASE QUESTION

Evaluate how well Jim managed this meeting. What could he have done differently to make it more productive?

CASE DISCUSSION: Another Staff Meeting

Summary

Jim McLin called staff meetings on the spur of the moment. His staff could not predict when these meetings would occur or what the meetings would cover. Sure enough, June Hanks just learned that there would be such a meeting at 3:30 today.

As usual, Jim arrived about 10 minutes late. He began by asking for any general catch-up information. After everyone spoke for a few minutes, he brought up a subject that he frequently talked about: the departmental red-tape problem. In Jim's opinion, the department spent too much time on red-tape procedures. He said he really wanted to do something about it this time and told everyone to submit at least three suggestions to him first thing the following morning.

June Hanks spoke up, pointing out that if they had a real issue to address, it was Jim's VIP program. Jim had installed this program a few months ago to improve service. Under this program, his employees were expected to drop whatever they were doing whenever a problem developed and to fix the problem before resuming their work. In practice, this program was creating more problems than it was solving. Jim refused to discuss it. He tried to move on to other matters, but after no success, the meeting was adjourned. Everyone left quickly.

Answer to Case Question

Evaluate how well Jim managed this meeting. What could he have done differently to make it more productive?

As presented, Jim did a generally poor job of managing this meeting process. Staff members were given a chance to talk briefly about what was going on in their units, but otherwise, the meeting could not be judged a success. First, Jim did not give his employees time to prepare. Second, he forced a response to a situation that had no apparent sense of urgency. Third, he did not encourage a frank discussion of his employees' concerns. Finally, he created a climate that inhibited a full discussion of employee concerns.

In short, whether by design or by accident, Jim operated as if according to a "hidden agenda," and it seemed he was not open to changing this agenda for any reason, not even to respond to valid employee concerns. However, the primary purpose of a meeting like this should be to facilitate the free flow of information and thus improve the performance of all concerned, and in this respect, the meeting was a failure.

There are several steps Jim could take to improve his meeting management skills:

1. *Commit to a regular schedule of meetings.*

By scheduling meetings at the last minute, Jim is signalling the low priority these meetings have for him. While it is not imperative for him to

establish a regular meeting time (such as every Monday at 9:00 a.m.), he should at least conclude each meeting by scheduling the next meeting on a specific date and within a reasonable period of time.

2. *Empower the team to call meetings on their own.*

Jim has tended to allow his staff to become passive in this area. He should give them the authority to call meetings even if he is unavailable.

3. *Prepare an agenda of items that should be covered in the meeting.*

Jim should distribute the agenda to staff members in advance of the meeting. He should flag any items that require staff preparation and provide them with any necessary reference materials.

4. *When the meeting begins, ask if anyone wishes to add to the agenda.*

By involving staff members in this way, Jim would update his knowledge of problems they were experiencing, and stay abreast of the resurgence of any former problems that he had considered resolved. He also indirectly conveys to his staff that their input is important to him and that each of them is a vital member of the team.

5. *Budget time for each agenda item and inform staff of the desired resolution of the discussion.*

For example, if Jim wants to discuss a certain problem, he should indicate that the desired resolution of the discussion is a problem statement with someone designated in charge of further researching it.

6. *Respond constructively to participant remarks. Encourage open, and even dissenting, views rather than discouraging them.*

In this particular meeting, Jim's reaction to June's comments about the VIP program essentially shut down the conversation. In cases like this, he should have asked the other staff members if this was an important issue to discuss. If they answered yes, he could have solicited their opinions and suggestions. If only some members were interested or there was no time to pursue the matter, he could have tabled the discussion until the next meeting or have spoken to staff members independent of any meeting.

7. *Use the meeting to brainstorm ideas about the problem rather than asking participants to complete a separate assignment on the problem.*

Jim could have used this method to address the red-tape problem. In general, he should improve his basic group problem-solving skills and use them more effectively.

8. *Take time to consider why the meetings are held and whether there is a better alternative.*

For example, if Jim's idea is simply to get his subordinate managers together regularly to exchange information about their projects, he should ask how critical that information is and whether there might be easier ways to exchange that information.

CASE 28

The Case In Case Analysis

Background Information

Jerry Brown, 42, was promoted to supervisor of the Case Analysis Unit just three months ago. The Case Analysis Unit was a special investigation group with the city's Department of Social Services. The four employees in this Unit investigated suspected fraud cases and researched various special requests for exemptions and services.

The investigations conducted by the case analysis representatives typically began by verifying data obtained from applicants during the intake process. Then, field agents as well as employers or claimants would be contacted as necessary for additional information. The information gathered from all these sources would be reviewed, and a recommendation for either "no further action" or "prosecution" would be issued. While the unit's workload fluctuated somewhat, the average standard of production was 12 completed cases per week and four backlogged cases cleared.

Jerry believed that everyone in his unit was doing an acceptable job except Frank Harrison. Frank, 46, had been with the department for 22 years, the last eight of which were spent in this unit. Frank's usual rate of performance was seven cases a week, with one or two backlogged cases cleared.

Jerry remembered a conversation with Sullivan Hart, the previous supervisor of this unit, whose retirement had opened up the supervisory opportunity for Jerry. The conversation took place about four months before Sullivan's last scheduled day, when they were having lunch together. Jerry had just been named as Sullivan's replacement, and they were discussing different aspects of the transition and the operations of the Case Analysis Unit.

Jerry remembered Sullivan's remarks very clearly: "Frank just doesn't have the motivation to do an adequate job, and to be honest with you, I'm too close to retirement to rock the boat."

Sullivan had paused, putting down his fork.

"You know," he continued, "I finally got to the point with Frank that I'd be pleased if I got seven or eight completed cases from him each week. Everyone else ended up taking up the slack."

After that conversation, Jerry began to watch Frank more closely. Sure enough, Frank seemed to move more slowly, stop more often, put aside more challenging tasks, and ask for help more frequently than his co-workers in the unit. Otherwise, though, Frank was a model employee. He was seldom absent and arrived at work on time every day. The quality of his work was almost as good as the work done by the other employees. He was polite and considerate, even if he did not socialize as freely as the others did.

Jerry looked in Frank's personnel folder. He found no record of any previous counseling or disciplinary procedures, but did find Frank's most recent performance appraisal, which had been conducted by Sullivan Hart about a month before he left. Jerry was disturbed but not surprised by what he saw: Sullivan had rated Frank as an "above average" employee (a 4 on a scale of 5). According to Sullivan, Frank's productivity was in line with the unit's standards. He had written: "Frank does his job well and has a long history of good performance with the city." There was no indication in the appraisal or in the file that there had ever been a notice given to Frank about work standards or a discussion with him about how he could improve his work performance.

Under the city's merit review system, the higher the evaluation rating, the bigger the salary increase an employee was entitled to. For example, employees rated as doing an acceptable job would receive an average increase of about 4 percent; those rated above average, 6 percent; and those rated superior, 8 percent. Sure enough, Frank's salary had been adjusted by about 5.5 percent as a result of this last review.

Jerry was learning about another problem related to Frank's performance. Shortly after assuming the supervisor's job, Jerry began sensing how much anger and hostility the other employees in the unit had toward Frank. At first, he would overhear side comments directed at Frank during meetings or discussions, but recently he had noticed that Frank's co-workers were making these comments more openly. For example, in a recent staff meeting, an initial joke about how slowly an applicant responded to a fraud claim was compared to Jerry's processing of cases. While he sat there, obviously uncomfortable, the others ridiculed him contemptuously. Before Jerry could regain order, there was a lot of psychological "blood" on the floor.

As a result of that episode, Jerry became concerned about the long-term effects this situation would have on the morale and performance of the unit if he let the situation continue.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the problem(s) that Jerry is facing.
2. Should Jerry do anything about the less-than-standard performance of Frank Harrison? If so, what should his performance management strategy be?
3. What should Jerry do about Frank in relation to the other employees in the unit?

CASE DISCUSSION: The Case In Case Analysis

Summary

Jerry Brown was made supervisor of the Case Analysis Unit of the city's Department of Social Services about three months. There were four employees in the unit. They were expected to complete 12 cases and clear four backlogged cases each week.

Jerry was pleased with every employee except Frank Harrison. Frank was a long-term city employee who had been in this department for the past eight years. Frank was polite and likable, but his usual level of performance was seven cases and one or two backlogged cases weekly. After watching Frank's work more closely, Jerry observed that Frank worked more slowly than his co-workers.

Before Jerry's predecessor and boss, Sullivan Hart, retired, he told Jerry that Frank just lacked motivation. However, his boss also said that he didn't want to rock the boat over Frank. Sure enough, when Jerry finally looked in Frank's personnel folder, he noticed that no counseling or disciplinary actions had been recorded and found that Frank had been given generally good performance appraisals. Indeed, Frank was given a better-than-average merit pay increase the month before Jerry moved in as supervisor.

Jerry also noticed how the other employees began to disparage and make fun of Frank. During one meeting at which he was present, they openly ridiculed him before Jerry could regain control of the situation. Jerry became concerned about the long-term effects Frank would have on the morale of the unit.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Describe the problem(s) that Jerry is facing.

Jerry is facing two immediate problems. These two problems are related. Furthermore, by dealing with these problems, Jerry could face a third problem. The two immediate problems are (1) Frank's less-than-satisfactory performance and (2) the dissension this poor performance is creating among the other employees. Given Frank's age, if Jerry begins to take action and is not careful, he could run into accusations of age discrimination.

2. Should Jerry do anything about the less-than-standard performance of Frank Harrison? If so, what should his performance management strategy be?

Yes, Jerry should take action for two reasons. First, the productivity of his unit is suffering because of Frank's slow performance, which in turn is reducing the quality of service provided by the unit. Second, Frank's poor performance is triggering problems among other employees, which could generate an even more serious problem.

To manage this situation, Jerry should first create a record of Frank's performance in terms of the typical performance of the unit. Even if he

goes back for just a few months, Jerry can clearly demonstrate how poorly Frank's performance measures up. Second, once a clear pattern is graphed, he should meet with Frank. The purpose of this meeting is not punitive; rather, it is to begin a discussion of the issues.

In the meeting, Jerry should state that he needs to talk with Frank and get the issue on the table, that this is an informal meeting, and that no adverse actions toward Frank will result from the meeting. Jerry should explain why Frank's performance is a concern, then ask for Frank's feedback. They can discuss ways to overcome the problem, such as Jerry keeping a weekly record he would share with Frank. Jerry should ask whether Frank needs training and coaching, then provide it if necessary. Frank's ideas on how to improve his performance should be requested and discussed. Jerry should also make it clear in writing what the acceptable standards of performance are and how Frank will be rated next year if his current level of performance continues. Later, he should make a note of this meeting and keep it in a file apart from Frank's personnel record.

If Frank's performance does not improve, Jerry should be ready to move into a more formal counseling mode with Frank. During these discussions, Jerry could raise the issue of career placement with Frank: If Frank is not performing this task well, perhaps it is time for him to think of moving to another position. Or, if circumstances permit, Jerry might redesign Frank's job to make it easier to do—and seek a regrading downward.

Given Frank's age-protected status, Jerry should be in close consultation with the Human Resources Department office and should be keeping good notes on discussions with Frank and actions taken.

If none of these tactics work, Jerry may be forced to terminate Frank's employment.

3. What should Jerry do about Frank in relation to the other employees in the unit?

This is a tough position. It would be inadvisable for Jerry to say anything about Frank and his counseling to others in the unit because there is a chance this could lead to defamation problems. On the other hand, he could assure them that there will be improvements in matters, one way or another, and that Jerry does not want to hear backbiting comments during their meetings. He could also encourage the employees to offer support.

CASE 29

A "No" in the Field

Background Information

Marjorie Brown supervised the Northwood local office of the Helping Hand, Inc. Helping Hand was a nonprofit, private service agency that provided transportation and housing services to people throughout the metropolitan area. Marjorie was responsible for overseeing the work of five administrative assistants who supported the work of the office. This meant they would take care of such clerical matters as recordkeeping, data verification, forms processing, client scheduling, accounts payable and receiving, and the like.

Marjorie had been in this position for two years and was just now feeling comfortable with her ability to supervise others effectively. By and large, she got along well with her subordinates, and they did a reasonably good job. The only exception was Valerie Lucas. Valerie was 39 and the sole head of her household, which included two teenage children. Valerie had been with Helping Hand for almost 11 years.

In looking through her personnel file, Marjorie discovered that Valerie had never received an outstanding evaluation; at best, her evaluations were average. About six years ago, it appeared, Valerie had become more of a marginal employee, cycling in and out of disciplinary warnings, counseling memos, and related matters. Even after all this time as an employee, Valerie had virtually no accumulated sick leave. She was often late to work by 15 minutes. She also occasionally got into shouting matches.

On this particular day, Marjorie was looking for Valerie because there had been some problems with the bus scheduling and they needed to be cleared up as soon as possible. Even though it was just before lunch, there were some important deadlines and waiting riders involved. Marjorie needed Valerie's immediate help on this special task.

Marjorie saw Valerie near the filing cabinets and walked over to her, saying, "Valerie, I'm glad I found you. I need you to check some of the rider schedules and bus driver alternatives on the Broadway Street bus breakdown problem. I told the clients that we would get right back to them with the solutions." She handed Valerie a form and started to walk back to her desk.

In a strong voice, Valerie said, "You're the damn supervisor, you do it." Her voice was loud enough to attract the notice of some nearby co-workers at their desks.

Margaret was so surprised that she stopped, turned around, and responded: "What did you say?" Her voice combined disbelief and anger.

"You heard me," Valerie replied defiantly, her voice even louder. "You're the damn supervisor. You do it."

Marjorie was standing in front of Valerie. She was aware that there was now a group of employees standing nearby, staring. Valerie is staring at Marjorie. She had thrown down onto a nearby table the form Marjorie had handed her.

CASE QUESTION

What should Marjorie do?

CASE DISCUSSION: A "No" in the Field

Summary

Marjorie Brown supervised five administrative assistants in a transportation and housing services nonprofit organization. One of her employees was Valerie Lucas, a long-time employee with the organization. For the past few years, Valerie had been a marginal employee and often involved in various disciplinary proceedings. She would continually come to work late, and argued with employees. She did an acceptable but seldom outstanding job.

On this day, some problems with bus scheduling required Marjorie to ask for Valerie's help. It was shortly before lunch, but there were a number of clients waiting for this problem to be resolved. Marjorie saw Valerie near the filing cabinet and directed her to help with the problem.

As Marjorie turned to leave, Valerie said in a loud voice that she would not do it. Other employees heard her and began looking to watch them. Marjorie asked for clarification, Valerie defiantly repeated what she had said. Marjorie was now face to face with Valerie, aware that a group of employees had gathered near by and were staring at them.

Answer to Case Question

What should Marjorie do?

This is a case of gross insubordination. Marjorie should remove the discussion from a public arena by instructing Valerie to step into a private office. For good measure, Marjorie should ask her assistants to join them.

Marjorie should ask Valerie why she refused to do the assignment, to determine whether there might be some legitimate reason for the refusal. If there is no valid reason, Marjorie should then state that unless Valerie immediately begins to work on this assignment and complete it in a timely fashion, she will be fired on the spot for gross insubordination.

If Valerie does not comply, Marjorie should then tell her that her employment is terminated and that she is to vacate the premises immediately. Marjorie and the assistant should collect her keys and any other organizational property, and supervise her as she cleans out her desk. Marjorie should indicate that Valerie will hear from the personnel office regarding future payment and related matters.

If Valerie agrees to do the assignment, Marjorie should immediately issue her a written warning notice about her behavior, with the provision that any additional insubordinate behavior will be grounds for immediate termination.

Valerie's conduct was completely inexcusable. Furthermore, because of its blatant nature, there should be no room for compromise. Not only Valerie but all the other employees must see that such behavior will not be tolerated.

CASE 30

Buddy Jefferson

Background Information

Margaret Williams believed very strongly in working hard to do her best. During her four years in the Accounts Payable Department, she did just that and was rewarded with good evaluations and two promotions. Indeed, just three months ago, she had been made assistant manager of the department. This was a newly created position that involved managing the daily operations of the department's four-member staff. Margaret had immediately liked almost everything about her new job assignment, including the challenge and additional responsibility. However, she also had suspected that this promotion signalled a further deterioration of her boss' standing with the company.

When her boss, Bill Mobley, was terminated two weeks ago, she was not really surprised. The strains between Bill and the company, which had been churning beneath the surface, finally erupted, and the events that led to his release happened very quickly. As a result, Margaret was made acting manager of the department. She was told that this situation was temporary and would change when "all the dust settles." Nonetheless, she hoped and expected the promotion to be made permanent soon.

Things seemed to go well during her first week on the job. She was busy, but she liked the challenge of learning and doing new things. She thought that if the the first week was any indication, managing the department would be both easy and rewarding. However, her optimistic outlook began to fade during the second week, when Buddy Jefferson entered the picture.

Just four weeks ago, Bill had hired Buddy to work on some special projects. This was two weeks before Bill was fired. At first, Margaret had limited contact with Buddy and knew very little about him or his assignments. During her second week as acting manager, though, this all changed very quickly as she started to receive complaints about Buddy from various employees in the department. She started to pay more attention to him, and discovered that the complaints were well founded.

Buddy seemed to do three things that were creating problems. First, Buddy's work often was late and contained a number of errors. Even though Buddy had prior bookkeeping experience in Accounts Payable, that experience was in a different industry. Margaret knew that the systems and procedures used here were somewhat advanced and unique to this industry; anyone new to this system would have problems. On the other hand, Margaret felt he had been on the job long enough so that he should be doing better than his recent work indicated. She also knew that Bill Mobley had always done a notoriously poor job

in orienting and training new employees. She gathered that Buddy was no exception and that he was most likely inadequately prepared for this job.

Buddy's second problem was, as a few of his co-workers put it, he didn't "pitch in." Rather than help answer the phones, for example, or volunteer to help someone else look up information or complete a report, Buddy seemed content to sit at his desk and let others do it. Yesterday she had watched him let the phone ring at the desk next to his as he got ready to go to lunch.

Finally, Buddy did not seem to get along very well with the others in his unit, and made no apparent effort to get to know them or to be friendly. Since his co-workers were busy anyways, just the slightest hint of a cold shoulder from him meant they would make no effort to meet him even halfway. Through a confrontation that Margaret had just heard about, he had even made an enemy of one of his co-workers.

Margaret knew that she needed to take some action, but was not quite sure how to proceed.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What is (are) the problem(s)?
2. What should Margaret do about the situation?

CASE DISCUSSION: Buddy Jefferson

Summary

Margaret Williams was made acting manager of the Accounts Payable Department after her boss was terminated. In this new capacity, Margaret began to deal with a new employee, Buddy Jefferson, whom her former boss had hired just before he was let go.

Shortly after taking over, Margaret began receiving complaints from other employees about Buddy Jefferson. In looking into matters further, she found that there were three problems with Buddy:

- He submitted his work late and with a number of errors.
- He didn't seem to pitch in and help with the work in the office.
- He didn't get along well with his co-workers.

Margaret knew that her former boss had always done a poor job in orienting and training new employees. For example, Margaret knew virtually nothing about Buddy during his initial entry period.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What are the problem(s)?

It would be easy to assume that Buddy is simply a poor performer and to begin the procedures to release him. However, given the circumstances of his introduction into the work group, he is showing the signs of poor orientation and integration. All of his problem behaviors can be explained as the result of not being properly managed as a new employee. Therefore, one problem is the lack of effective orientation. His performance would be considered a second problem, though, for Buddy is not performing at an acceptable level.

The real problem for Margaret is to decide whether it would be better to try to manage his orientation more effectively or to start over. This decision rests on the comparison of the relative costs of her managing him better as opposed to the costs of releasing him, hiring a replacement, and then training that replacement. In this context, the preferred course would be to try to train him better initially. If that does not work out, she still has the opportunity to pursue the second option.

2. How should Margaret handle the situation?

Assuming the solution to try at this point is to manage his orientation and training more effectively, the following steps are indicated:

1. Margaret should meet with Buddy to restart the working relationship. This would include discussing the following:
 - What the previous boss told Buddy about the job

- Problems and difficulties Buddy is having now
- Problems that Margaret is noticing
- How to restart the working relationship
- Margaret's expected standards of performance
- An orientation and training plan

2. Margaret should initiate a more effective orientation to the job. She may need to facilitate a meeting between Buddy and his co-workers to repair any ill will. Beyond that, though, Margaret should make sure Buddy is receiving a good introduction to the firm and to their work. Buddy should be given more opportunity to interact and get to know the others in the unit, and Margaret should look for ways to include him in department activities. Assigning him to another employee who will serve as his orientation guide would be an appropriate action.
3. Finally, Margaret needs to make sure he is receiving adequate training on his tasks. She should also supervise fairly closely to see if he is responding to the training and the encouragement he is receiving. If his performance does not improve, Margaret will probably need to initiate termination proceedings.

CASE 31

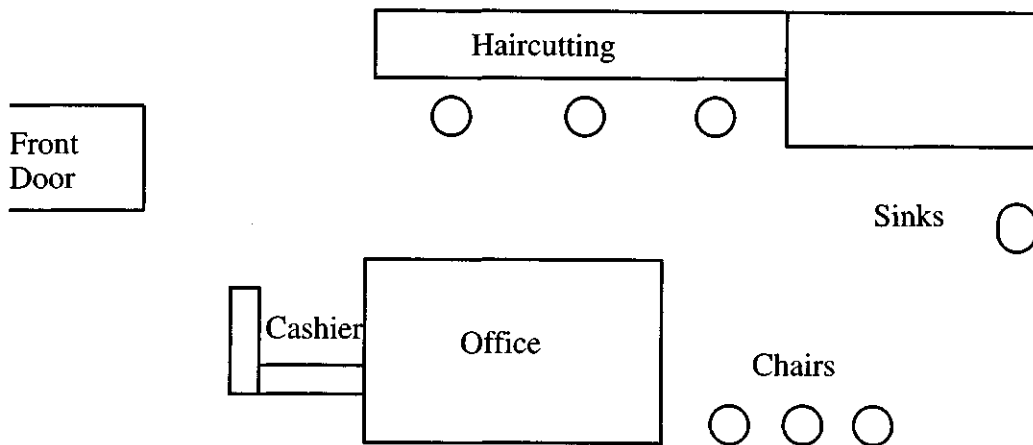
A Wet Pain in the Neck

Background Information

About a week before Christmas, Tom Brown and his family made their annual trip to stay with his parents for the holidays. The weeks prior to the trip had been very busy for Tom and, despite his wife's good-natured scolding, he had not been able to find the time to get his hair cut. When they arrived at his parents' house, it was clear he needed a haircut. Tom's sister recommended a hair-cutting salon in a nearby shopping plaza.

Tom walked into Hair Locks about 10 a.m. on the day before Christmas. Much to his relief, it was not crowded. One of the two haircutters who were working on customers near the front of the salon looked at Tom and asked in a straightforward manner what he needed.

Tom snipped at the back of his head with this fingers and said, "Just a haircut." She motioned toward the rear of the shop and told him to go on back for a wash. About that time, a person who apparently was the receptionist came walking up and suggested that Tom hang his coat on the coat rack near the entrance. Tom did so, then walked to the back, not quite sure exactly where he should go, whom he should see, or what was going to happen once he got there. A diagram of the floor plan is shown below.



This work area included a haircutting section with a few chairs and a hair-washing section with a row of sinks and chairs along the back wall. A few people were milling about. A young woman was sitting in one of the haircutting chairs, reading a magazine.

No one looked at Tom when he arrived, so he just stood there, waiting, trying unsuccessfully to catch someone's eye. He leaned against a partition. After a few minutes, he started to get irritated.

Finally, the haircutter who had first spoken to Tom earlier noticed that he was waiting and signaled to the young woman reading the magazine that she should wash his hair. She casually put down the magazine, got out of her chair, and in a low-key, impersonal manner told Tom to sit in one of the hair-washing chairs. She did not make any eye contact with him nor act in a friendly manner. Indeed, she was rather blunt and abrupt in her actions.

After Tom sat down, the young woman wrapped an apron around his neck and placed his head back against the sink. She began washing his hair without comment. After a few moments, Tom asked her how much the haircut cost. She flatly replied: "Fourteen dollars." Tom was used to paying nine dollars for a haircut at his hometown barber shop. While washing his hair, she lifted Tom's head, carelessly exposing his neck. A fairly large spray of water ran down his neck, soaking his shirt collar.

Finally, the young woman finished. She escorted Tom to an empty chair in the haircutting section and walked away without comment or explanation. Tom was seated next to another man whose hair was being cut. Again, Tom waited for about five minutes, not knowing what would happen next. There was nothing to read or look at.

Finally, the man next to Tom was done and went to the front desk, accompanied by the woman who had cut his hair. She went behind the receptionist's desk, seated herself in front of a personal computer, entered some information, and took his payment. He left.

She then walked towards Tom and finally spoke to him, saying she would be back in just a minute. She disappeared around the corner in back. Tom waited. After a couple of minutes, the woman returned and without introducing herself, asked Tom to move into the chair where she had been working on the previous customer.

After Tom was seated, she began straightening his apron, then realized that it was on backwards. She took it off, reversed it, and put it back on him. There was little conversation during this time. Tom's irritation with the service he was receiving had grown into outright anger.

As she picked up some scissors, she began to talk about the weather, but Tom cut her off. In an abrasive tone, Tom told her: "Wait a minute. You need to know what I want." The woman paused, somewhat taken aback. He proceeded to tell her what kind of haircut he wanted. She listened but made no effort to inquire how he had been treated so far.

She then began cutting his hair, and was very proficient in that regard. While it was not a superior cut, Tom was still pleased with the results. She dusted off Tom's head, then began applying a jelly-like substance to his hair. This last step was new to Tom, and he was not only perplexed by it, but pretty sure that he did not want it. He asked her what the substance it was. She said it was a styling gel.

When the woman finished, she took off Tom's apron. They walked to the receptionist's desk, and she again seated herself at the computer. She asked

Tom's name and entered the information into the computer. The system worked slowly, as she explained in a friendly tone.

"That will be fourteen dollars," she said. Tom was surprised. He assumed that the young woman who had washed his hair was incompetent and uninformed, and he was expecting a different price.

Tom gave her a two dollar tip. She thanked Tom for coming in and wished him a good holiday. She did not ask about the service he had received.

Tom rendezvoused with this sister and wife at the car. His sister asked how the salon was. Tom didn't hesitate to speak.

"It was very lousy service," he said. "Don't ever recommend that place to anyone again."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the various points of contact (or "moments of truth") which Tom had at Hair Locks. Evaluate the adequacy of each moment of truth. Define the standards of service which should have existed at each point.
2. How should this service cycle be managed to insure that these standards are consistently maintained?

CASE DISCUSSION: A Wet Pain in the Neck

Summary

Tom Brown arrived in his parents' hometown shortly before Christmas. He needed a haircut and, on his sister's recommendation, went to Hair Locks, a haircutting salon in a nearby shopping plaza. It was the day before Christmas, in the morning, and there were no waiting lines. A haircutter who was working on a customer asked what he wanted. When he said he needed a haircut, she motioned him toward the rear of the salon. After hanging up his coat, he followed her instructions, unsure of what was supposed to happen next.

The salon's interior was divided into two work areas: a haircutting section and a hairwashing section. A few people were milling about, and a young woman was sitting in a chair, reading a magazine. No one acknowledged his presence, so Tom leaned against a wall, feeling irritated. Finally, the haircutter who had spoken to him earlier instructed the young woman to wash his hair. She reacted indifferently to him, even coldly, and made no eye contact with him. As she washed his hair, she carelessly exposed his neck, soaking his shirt collar. Afterwards, she escorted him without comment to the haircutting section, where he took a seat. Next to him, the haircutter was still working on her customer. Tom did not know what to expect.

At last, the haircutter finished with her customer and went to the front desk to take his payment. She then passed through the section, telling Tom that she would be back in a few minutes. Tom waited growing even more irritated. She returned and asked him to move into her previous customer's chair, making no effort to introduce herself. By now, Tom was extremely angry. When she started cutting his hair, he interrupted her and bluntly told her what kind of haircut he wanted. She did an adequate job of cutting his hair, but later applied a styling gel to it without explaining what she was doing. She did not ask for his reactions then, nor when he paid her at the front desk.

When Tom met his wife and sister afterwards, he told them that he had received lousy service and that his sister should never recommend that place again.

Answer to Case Questions

1. Describe the various points of contact (or moments of truth) which Tom had. Evaluate the adequacy of each moment of truth. Define the standards of service which should have existed at each point.

Jan Carlzon, who became President of Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) in 1981, introduced the concept of "moments of truth" (in a book by the same name) to describe each point of contact the customer has with the business. Carlson calculated that, each year, 10 million SAS customers had contact with an average of 5 SAS employees, for an equivalent of 50 million times when the quality of SAS would be made—or broken—in the minds of these customers. These points of contact are moments of truth because they reveal how committed the

business is to providing excellent service. It is possible to use this core idea to analyze the operations of a business.

In that framework, there were four main points of contact that Tom had with Hair Locks. (If he had called on the phone for information, that would be a fifth moment of truth.)

The analysis of Tom's experience is listed below:

1. Entrance and welcome

Standard: Welcome customer in a friendly manner, put the customer at ease, ask what the customer wants, move the customer to the next step as quickly as possible.

Performance: Generally, the business performed acceptably. The welcome could have been better, though.

2. Hair washing

Standard: Treat customer in a friendly manner, respond rapidly to customer's needs, ask for any customer requests, explain procedure, provide professional treatment without negative side effects.

Performance: The business was a complete failure on all accounts.

3. Haircutting

Standard: Respond rapidly to customer's needs, treat customer in a friendly manner, explain procedure, ask what the customer specifically wants, provide professional treatment.

Performance: At best, this was a mediocre experience. The only part of the experience that would be considered positive was the actual haircut itself; all other aspects of the experience were below standard.

4. Completion of the service

Standard: Perform competent completion of billing and collection, express thanks, ask about quality of service received, give proper response to any expression of dissatisfaction.

Performance: Mixed. There was no inquiry about the degree of satisfaction with the service received.

2. How should this service cycle be managed to insure that these standards are consistently maintained?

First, the manager/owner should think in terms of this four-phase service cycle, and communicate standards of performance for each stage. Where necessary, employees should be trained in how to meet those standards.

Second, the manager/owner should actively watch how the service is being delivered.

Third, the manager/owner should make a much better effort to assess customer satisfaction. This should at least include inquiries at the point of payment. For example, the customer can be asked seriously and sys-

tematically about how satisfactory the service was or could be given a satisfaction card that could be left at the time of payment. It is also possible to give the customer a mail-back satisfaction card or to make follow-up calls to customers. For example, the name of the customer is obtainable from a check or credit card, and a phone number could then be tracked down. Or, if the business keeps a customer file, that information would be available through that database.

CASE 32

"Well, Excuuuse Me!"

Background Information

Samson and Son Plumbing recently received a copy of the letter below from Alan Johnson. The contents of the summary mentioned in the letter are presented on the following pages.

ALAN JOHNSON
123 Oak Lane
Arlington, ST 55546

February 10, 1994

Owner or President
Samson and Son Plumbing
6660 Dobbin Road
Arlington, ST 55546

Dear Owner:

My wife and I recently used your business services. It was a very unsatisfactory experience, and I want you to know why we will never use S&S Plumbing again. Furthermore, we will also go out of our way to counsel friends and acquaintances to avoid using your services.

I prepared the enclosed summary of what happened during that service visit so that I would have a record of my experiences. I offer it to you for your information. No reply is, of course, necessary and would be in character with the quality of service received to date.

A very unhappy customer,

/s/ Alan Johnson

Enclosure

After recently refinishing our main bathroom and installing a new toilet, we found three remaining problems: the new toilet wobbled, the shower cut-off knob dripped, and a water stain appeared on the basement ceiling tiles, underneath the bathroom. Because we had a coupon ad from your business, I called your office around 9:00 a.m. The woman with whom I talked was very nice, and I was pleased to learn that a plumber could come that afternoon. She called me back later that afternoon to confirm that the plumbers would arrive sometime soon.

Within half an hour or so, the doorbell rang. I opened the door to find two men waiting. I said hello and invited them into the house. The taller, younger of the two said, "S&S Plumbing." The second, older man followed him in, but made no eye contact or any other acknowledgement. Both men stood in the foyer, waiting impatiently, communicating an attitude of "Don't mess with me. Just hurry up and move it." They did not introduce themselves further or make any conversation. After no more than 30 seconds of being exposed to them, I was uneasy.

I asked: "Did they tell you what we need?"

The younger man grunted some sort of noncommittal response. There was still no comment or acknowledgement from the other man.

I continued: "Well, let me show you the projects we have in mind." I led them into the bathroom around the corner. As I started to explain what we wanted, the older, silent man walked over to the box containing the shower fixture replacement kit we had purchased. Without any comment, he opened the box and began taking it apart. He had still not looked at or said anything to me.

I was becoming more and more irked.

Without saying a word, the younger partner walked out of the bathroom and began to search for the access box to the shower pipes. He looked in the closet, which was loaded with coats. He started walking back towards the bathroom.

When he finally did speak to me, his voice was just barely audible, and at first I thought he was talking to his associate. His tone was domineering and abrasive. Because at first I didn't know he was talking to me, I didn't hear exactly what he was saying, but it was something to the effect that I had to move those coats. It came across as an insulting command.

I wheeled around and said pointedly, "Are you talking to me?" By now, I was mad and was deciding whether to throw these bozos out of the house. We all froze.

I think that the younger man may have realized that a problem was developing, and his demeanor softened slightly. I waited, then decided to go ahead. I led the younger man downstairs to see the water damage on the ceiling tiles and told him I would be removing the ceiling tiles and replacing them while he and his partner worked upstairs.

They removed their tools and supplies from their truck, then began working. During the next half hour or so, I could hear them talking to—or rather arguing with—each other. The younger man seemed to be making argumentative, belittling remarks to the other man, who seemed to be doing his work. The quarrel seemed to revolve around how to remove the plaster standing around the pipes—whether they should just go ahead and "knock the crap" out of the plas-

ter, ignoring any other consequences, or should take a more gentle approach. It occurred to me that the reason they may have been so rude was because they simply didn't like each other. Whatever the reason, it was extremely unpleasant to have to listen to them work together.

After about 20 or 30 minutes, the older man came downstairs and, for the first time, talked to me. He said there was a problem. I followed him upstairs and found the younger man sitting cross-legged in front of the access box, gently chiseling away the plaster caked around the pipes. The older man explained that they had to remove the plaster in order to install the new fixture. However, there was a "50-50 chance" that the tiles in the shower stall might be knocked loose in the process. He wanted to know whether I would authorize them to proceed.

I asked him how difficult it would be to reset the loose tiles. He said it could be tough going and costly. I was not encouraged and wondered whether I wanted these guys doing this work. On the other hand, I knew the fixture had to be replaced, the plumbers were here, and the plaster was definitely caked around the pipes. So I told him to go ahead with the work.

The older man started to walk away. I asked whether it would make sense to put a towel in the tub to catch any falling tile. He said that if they fell, they would probably break, but then he shrugged his shoulders and added, "Why not?" Otherwise, he was completely indifferent to the tile problem. It was as if he were saying to me: "Tile is someone else's problem, like yours. It's not mine. If we break 'em, we break 'em."

After putting a towel in the tub, I left the bathroom, expecting them to break three or four tiles and leave me with holes in the shower. I returned to my work downstairs, dejected and angry. They continued working together and arguing. I concluded that the fate of my bathroom tiles was in the hands of men who could care less. They were more interested in doing the job fast than in protecting my property. I thought of what it would be like to be in the hands of a doctor who was more concerned about making a 3:00 p.m. tee-off date at the golf course than about attending fully to my needs.

During this time, I would occasionally go upstairs to see how things were going. On one visit, I found, much to my surprise and relief, that there were no missing tiles in the tub. It would have been nice if the plumbers had let me know.

I returned to my work downstairs. The two men upstairs seemed to be working together more smoothly, and I began to sense that they were finishing up. At one point, the older man came down to look at the ceiling/bathroom drainage problem, but did not look at it again.

Finally, the younger man called to me from upstairs. He had a dust pan in hand. The closet had been returned to a normal state, the tools and equipment were gone, and the older man was in the truck. The younger man, much more personable now, indicated they were finished. He seemed like he was ready to go, so I asked him whether I should pay him or send a check to S&S. He replied that the other guy was in the truck, writing up the bill. I followed him outside, thanking him for the work and apologizing for our old and difficult plumbing. He laughed it off, saying that it was not my fault.

I went back inside and looked in the bathroom. There was still a lot of crumbled plaster lying in the tub. The nozzle flange around the showerhead was hanging loose, and I could see small cracks in two pieces of tile near the handles. The towel I had placed in the tub was still sitting there, soggy and dirty. I waited in the kitchen.

The older man returned with the bill. He led me to the bathroom and explained that they had reseated the toilet in order to stop the leak into the basement. He told me to caulk around the base of the toilet as a way to anchor it to the floor. He also told me to caulk around each of the collars around the faucet, handles, and showerhead. He also suggested using caulk on the cracks in the tile.

I pointed out to him the loose collar around the showerhead. He jiggled the head, showing me for the first time that the head itself was still somewhat loose. He advised filling the hole with caulk and then trying to sit the collar to the wall.

We chatted while I wrote the check. He handed me a copy of the invoice, and after a few more pleasantries, he left.

After my wife returned, we noticed that the pipes throughout the house sounded funny. (Obviously, during the course of the installation, it was necessary for them to cut off the main water supply.) We think—and hope—that this problem is just a temporary one due to air in the pipes. However, the plumbers left without either advising us about this or, even worse, making sure there was no problem.

Here's the outcome. The new shower fixture was installed, but at the cost of two new small cracks in shower tiles. This scenario was explained to me in advance. However, to complete the installation, it is now my job to buy caulk and put some around the collars and the toilet. The collar around the showerhead hung loose, and the showerhead itself was loose. The tub was left dirty, although the closet was cleaned. The toilet now has a new seal, but it is not clear whether that will fix the leak onto the basement ceiling. I had a very unpleasant and stressful time working with these two guys.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What should the owner of the company do upon receiving this letter?
2. Prepare a service quality training plan for plumbers.
3. What kind of management practices should be instituted to create and maintain service quality?

CASE DISCUSSION: "Well, Excuuuse Me!"

Summary

The owner of the Samson and Son Plumbing Company received a letter from a very unhappy customer, Alan Johnson. Included with the letter was a summary of his experience with the plumbing service he had received at his house. The customer promised never to use their services again and that he would advise others to do the same.

As Alan explained it, he had several problems that needed a plumber's attention after he and his wife remodeled their bathroom. When he called Samson and Son, Alan was pleased to learn that the company could send a plumber to his house that afternoon.

When Alan answered the front door, there were two plumbers there. They were less than polite as they entered the house, and were unresponsive and rude to Alan as he showed them the bathroom projects. After a very short time, Alan was just about ready to tell them to leave because of their attitudes and behavior. The younger man, who was doing all the talking, was abrasive and dictatorial. The older man made no contact with Alan at all.

Alan finished showing the the tasks to be done, then went downstairs to do some work on his own. He heard the men working together, apparently in an abusive and argumentative fashion. Alan began to think that they did not like each other.

At one point, the older man told Alan that there could be a problem on one project: Some tiles might be knocked loose, and they wanted his approval to proceed. Alan, feeling little choice in this bad situation, said to go ahead with the work. He expected disaster.

Finally, after about an hour and a half, the plumbers finished. They were more cordial now. However, Alan noticed that parts of the job were still left undone and that they had only partially cleaned up after their work. The older man, presenting the bill to Alan, indicated what Alan could do to fix the problems. The plumbers then left.

Answers to the Case Questions

1. What should the owner of the company do upon receiving this letter?

First, he should call Alan Johnson and apologize. He should also offer to send over his best plumber at a time of the customer's choosing to examine the unfinished work and complete it at no charge.

Some service specialists recommend stronger actions, like a partial or full refund or a voucher good for an equal amount of service at a future date. The owner should follow this communication with a letter of apology.

Second, he should ask the two plumbers to describe what happened during the visit before showing them the letter. When he has heard their explanations, he should let them read the letter and ask for their reactions.

Barring a convincing rebuttal from them, the owner should clearly communicate that their behavior was inappropriate and unsatisfactory. Suitable disciplinary action may be indicated, which might include a personnel letter of apology from each to Alan Johnson.

The owner's third step should be to review his company's customer service training programs. These employees should be required to attend the training. The owner should make sure the training is being conducted effectively for all applicable employees.

2. Prepare a service quality training plan for plumbers.

The training plan should be designed around the "moments of truth" or points of contact that the service personnel have with the customer. This begins with the phone call requesting service and extends through the post-service call assessment.

The training should establish a procedure for greeting the customer (on the phone or in person), for listening to customer service requests, for clarifying what the service will involve (including time involved, materials needed and costs, potential hazards, and so forth), for cleaning up after the job is finished, and for checking up on the level of customer satisfaction after the service is completed. The training should also include instruction in how to maintain a pleasant working climate (including how to handle disputes if there are two or more plumbers present) and how to resolve difficult customer situations. The training should combine standards of performance with practice exercises for each of these skills.

3. What kind of management practices should be instituted to create and maintain service quality?

There are several steps which the owner should take:

1. The selection practices used to hire plumbers should be evaluated to make sure that there is adequate attention to customer service skills (either in terms of hiring criteria or in terms of expected job performance if hired).
2. The owner should make sure all customer contact and service personnel receive adequate training.
3. A process of regular customer satisfaction assessment should be instituted after a service call. This could take the form of a leave-behind customer satisfaction mailer or a call from the office the next day. This information should be reviewed promptly by a senior official.
4. There should be some process in place for a supervisor to make spot inspections/visits to work sites to see how the plumbers are performing.

Beyond these immediate management actions, the management of the business needs to send clear signals to all employees that quality customer service is essential and a top priority. Senior management can do this in little ways—through the actions noted above and through such

things as employee recognition and reward programs that reinforce service excellence, regular training, management involvement in customer satisfaction reports, and the like. One very important way that management can signal the importance of quality service is through how it pays people. Incentive compensation programs that reward quality service is a powerful way for a company to put money where its mouth is.

CASE 33

The "B" Is Back

Background Information

About 25 years ago, Bill Johnson began Johnson Properties when he bought a 20-unit apartment complex. With hard work and shrewd investments, the business grew into a multimillion-dollar company managing over 2,000 units at 33 sites across a large regional area. To handle this volume, he relies on five different property managers. Each manager is responsible for the renting, maintenance and rental collections of about six different sites. Three of the managers work out of an office at Johnson Properties headquarters, which is situated near the center of the metropolitan area in which most of the properties are located.

Now nearing retirement, Bill Johnson has reduced his workload and responsibilities, relying on the five property managers to keep things running smoothly. With a basically hands-off approach, his normal workday is now from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with an hour off for lunch. Fortunately, each manager is experienced and does his or her job well.

In addition to the three property managers at the headquarters office, there is a small staff of secretaries and an accounting group. The secretaries provide the administrative support for the property managers. The accounting group is headed by Wayne Black, and includes four accounting clerks. This group maintains the accounting records for the business, taking care of accounts payable, payroll, and the like.

Molly Kurstenburg, 55, has been a permanent fixture at Johnson Properties, logging in 21 years of service. She has served as a secretary throughout that time. Two years ago, Molly was made the secretarial support for two of the property managers in the headquarters building.

During this long period of service, Molly gained a reputation among her co-workers for being a "bitch." In large part, this reputation came from her tendency to act as if she was the boss of the entire operation. An incident that occurred between Molly and her previous boss, Wendy Samikura, illustrates this problem. Before Molly moved into her current assignment, she and Wendy had ongoing problems and confrontations. One day, Molly ordered Wendy to finish up some authorization forms in 20 minutes, or else.

Wendy, busy with some other paperwork, replied without looking up: "I'll finish them when I get some time."

Molly turned and walked back to Wendy's desk. "I said for you to do them now!" she commanded.

Wendy put down her pen, stood up, and leaned across the desk. "Who the hell do you think you're talking to? I'll do them when I'm goddamn ready." Wendy's blood went into an instant boil.

Molly leaned forward and replied: "Don't curse at me, you little Jap."

At that point, both Molly and Wendy started shouting at each other. As luck might have it, Bill Johnson just happened to be walking by Wendy's office, and he came in to separate them. He transferred Molly to her current job shortly thereafter. Wendy has not talked to her since then.

Over the years, it seemed Molly had some kind of confrontation like that with everyone. She was universally disliked by her co-workers and distrusted by the property managers. In fact, the only person she seemed to get along with was Bill Johnson. She was always nice to him, getting him coffee in the morning, attending to his requests, and performing similar acts of kindness. This "Dr. Jeckle and Mr. Hyde" behavior produced speculation about whether there might have been some kind of affair between the two in the distant past, although there is no evidence of that now. Whether it was a love affair long ago, a current sense of loyalty to a long-time employee, or some other reason why she was nice to him, Bill Johnson offered Molly Kurstenburg some job protection.

Beth Williams, 20, joined Johnson Properties about one year ago as an accounting clerk. This is her first full-time job after graduating from high school. She is technically good at what she does, although in temperament she is very formal, aloof, and even rigid—a set of traits that contrasts with the informal atmosphere of the Johnson Properties office.

One day, Beth discovers that she needs some divider tabs for a new manual she is preparing. Not finding any in her work area, she dutifully looks around the corner of an office partition, and seeing Molly, asks her if she has any tabs. Beth has had little prior contact with Molly although she is aware of Molly's reputation.

Molly looks up slowly from her typewriter, staring at Beth over the top of her wire-rimmed eyeglasses. "What do you need those tabs for?" she shoots back at Beth.

Betty is not sure what to say. "Well, I, I need them for a manual I'm . . ."

Molly cuts in: "You know those things are expensive, don't you?"

Beth stammers: "Well, I, I . . ."

Molly interrupts again. "They're in there," she says, pointing to a nearby cabinet.

Beth walks to the cabinet and starts to open the drawer.

"Don't you dare touch that!" Molly roars at Beth. Beth freezes. Molly pushes back her chair and walks over to the cabinet, stepping in front of Beth as Beth backs away. She searches through the drawer, finding a set of tabs.

"There, take these." She tosses the packet at Beth, hitting her in the face with the tabs. Beth is so angry that she starts crying. Beth then begins screaming at Molly and a royal shouting match erupts which is heard throughout the office.

Wayne Black, Beth's manager, comes quickly. After sizing up the situation, he sends Beth back to her desk, where she continues crying. Wayne and Polly start talking, and again, a shouting match erupts—this time between Molly and Wayne.

Wayne walks back to his desk, passing Beth's desk without making a comment. Beth, expecting some kind of comment, can't believe Wayne did not at least ask how she was doing.

Beth follows Wayne into his office. "Well, what happened?" she asks.

Wayne barely looks up from his desk. "I took care of it," he says. "Now, get back to work."

"But I want to hear what happened," Beth insists.

Wayne replies, with a tension to his voice: "I told you I took care of it. Now get back to work."

Beth stands there. Her anger is now overriding the tears in her voice. "Tell me what happened or I'll leave."

Wayne stares at her. "You leave and you're fired."

Beth pauses for a moment, thinking. She stares at Wayne as she replies: "I quit."

She goes to her desk, gets her purse, and stalks out of the office indignantly.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Assume you are a property manager in the headquarters office. How should you respond to this situation? What can you do to correct this situation?
2. How should Wayne Black have responded to Beth?

CASE DISCUSSION: The "B" Is Back

Summary

Johnson Properties, founded by Bill Johnson 25 years ago, is a property management company that oversees over 2,000 apartment units at more than 33 sites in a large metropolitan region. Johnson is nearing retirement and relies on his property managers to run the business. Three of the property managers work out of the same central headquarters office. The headquarters also houses a secretarial support group and an accounting function of four clerks, headed by Wayne Black.

Molly Kurstenburg, 55, is a long-term employee of Johnson Properties, having served there as a secretary for 21 years. During that time, Molly has earned a reputation as a "bitch" because of her arrogant, confrontational manner with everyone.

Molly also acts as if she is in charge of everything. An incident between her and her previous boss, Wendy Samikura, illustrates the problem. One day, Molly ordered her boss to finish up some authorizations. Wendy indicated she would when she had some time. Molly told Wendy to do them immediately. During the ensuing shouting match, Molly called Wendy a "Jap." Bill Johnson happened to walk by at the time and separated them. He transferred Molly shortly thereafter. Some speculate that Bill Johnson and Molly Kurstenburg were lovers at one time.

One day an accounting clerk, Beth Williams, 20 asks Molly for notebook dividers. After grilling Beth about why she needed them and scaring her when she looks into the supply cabinet, Molly finally retrieves a set of dividers and throws them at Beth, hitting her in the face. Beth begins crying. Then she and Molly get into a shouting match, which is heard throughout the office.

Beth's manager, Wayne Black, comes running, and sends Beth back to her desk. Soon, everyone can hear him in a shouting match with Molly. Finally, Wayne returns to his office, walking past Beth without any comment. Beth, wanting some support and feedback asks him what happened. Wayne, acting noncommittal, simply says he took care of things and that Beth should get back to work. Beth refuses to leave until Bill tells her what happened. A brief standoff occurs, culminating in Beth's on-the-spot resignation.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Assume you are a property manager in the headquarters office. How should you respond to this situation? What can you do to correct this situation?

Molly Kurstenburg appears to be a major source of friction and inefficiency in the office. Localizing and/or removing her as a source of the problem is in order.

There are several steps that could be taken in line with this goal. The most obvious step would be to have the property managers to whom she reports supervise her more carefully. They could include a disciplinary

track to either promote better behavior or to remove her from the company. However, there is some good reason to assume that Bill Johnson might protect her from termination.

A second step would be to confront Bill Johnson with the problem and to ask him to manage her more carefully if he will not permit her termination. It appears that his motivation to control her is low, though, so this option may be unproductive.

The solution then would fall back on the actions of the managers in the group. For good or bad, some of these solutions would require an informal arrangement among the other managers in the office. They could band together to confront her with a united front whenever there are problems. They could also act to isolate her, ensuring, for example, that their employees never need to go to her for anything. They could try to reason with her to find a solution.

2. How should Wayne Black have responded to Beth?

When Wayne arrived, he should have asked Beth for an explanation of what happened. This could have been done in private, out of Molly's hearing range. He should have requested the presence of one or both of her bosses to explain the situation.

When he returned to his office, he should have talked with Beth about what happened. He should have sympathized with her situation and explained what would happen next.

CASE 34

Accidents Happen

Part 1. Selecting the Best

Background Information

Betsy Wheeler had been a supervisor in the Data Production Center of American Security, Inc. for two years. She was responsible for six data entry clerks who worked the 4:00 p.m. to midnight shift. Four of the clerks worked full-time in a keypunching capacity and two of the clerks combined some keypunching with clerical and administrative chores.

The Data Production Center was responsible for keypunching data taken daily at the 65 office locations spread across the state. It was a production job with high and demanding standards (150 items per hour). Betsy had worked three years as a data entry clerk before assuming her current job. She knew that after a reasonable training period, these standards could be met by most anyone.

Betsy had done well as a data entry clerk and was doing well as a supervisor. She liked supervising others, especially dealing with the multitude of "people problems" that came her way during each shift. Nonetheless, she was not prepared for the latest problem that had developed. There seemed to be no solutions for it, and it was starting to wear her out.

Betsy's problem was centered on Bob Jenkins, a recently hired data entry clerk, although Betsy was not sure whether the problem was caused by Bob or by her boss, Sharon Leigh. Betsy reviewed the situation, going back two months to the very beginning.

At that time, one of Betsy's data entry clerks had quit, and she had sent a hiring order to Personnel. Three days later, one of the interviewers in Personnel called to say that they had found "a good applicant" by the name of Bob Jenkins. The interviewer explained that Bob was disabled (confined to a wheelchair) and had been referred by the State Rehabilitation Department.

The interviewer told Betsy: "He has been extensively trained by the State in keypunching. I think you'll like him."

The next day, Betsy went to Personnel about 20 minutes before her shift started in order to interview Bob Jenkins. Rather than ask a lot of questions, she listened to Bob talk about himself. He said he was finishing his associates degree in finance at the local community college and that this night shift job would allow him to go to school while he worked. He also mentioned that he had had a colostomy (removal of a portion of the bowel, which required him to wear a collection bag for his waste matter). Betsy asked if Bob would have

transportation problems getting to work and he assured her there would be no problem.

Betsy liked Bob. She was also in a rush to start her shift and decided to end the interview on that note. Although Bob was the only applicant she interviewed, she decided to rely on her intuition and offered Bob the job. He accepted and began working the following week.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Given Bob's disability, what kinds of questions should Betsy have asked during the interview? What legal considerations exist?
2. Evaluate how well Betsy interviewed Bob and completed the selection process.
3. What kind of selection procedure should Betsy have used in order to identify the best candidates for her data entry position? Design a complete selection process.

Part 2. Learning the Ropes?

As supervisor of six data entry clerks on the night shift at the Data Production Center, Betsy was eager to find good quality employees. She thought she had found one in Bob Jenkins, a wheelchair-bound student. After a brief interview, she hired him, and he began working a week later.

On Bob's first night on the job, Betsy wondered whether she made a mistake in hiring him. After showing Bob around the area and introducing him to co-workers, she took Bob to his keypunch station and briefed him on the work. She gave Bob her usual orientation speech and then left him alone to start work.

By mid-shift, it was clear to Betsy that Bob was not doing well. He was laboring at the job and was very far behind in the work, even for someone's first day.

She came over to Bob's station. "How's it going, Bob?" she asked. She was clearly worried.

Bob sensed concern in her voice. "Oh, I'm coming along," he said. "It will just take me a little time to get used to this machine." He waited a moment as Betsy looked over his shoulder at the pile of work still needing to be done. "You see, although I received two weeks of keypunch training with the state, this is my first job as a keypuncher."

Betsy's expression registered the surprise and worry she felt inside. Bob realized he may have said the wrong thing. He added hurriedly, "Look, don't worry, I'll get the hang of it real soon."

Betsy did not look very relieved. Bob looked at her rather desperately: "I really need this job. I promise that with some time and practice, I will be the best keypuncher you've ever had."

Betsy still liked Bob and admired his courage and conviction. She was sympathetic to his plight. But, she also realized that she did not have much time to spare in training him. Her unit had a demanding production schedule, and she needed to have a fully capable production team as soon as possible. Although there was some leeway in the schedule due to varying weekly and monthly loads, her flexibility was limited.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Does Betsy have a problem here?
2. Evaluate her coaching and orientation of Bob.

Part 3. An Explosive Problem

Betsy decided to cross-train Bob for some of the clerical and administrative duties her unit had to perform. In this way, he could still do limited keypunching while also getting other important work done. For three weeks, this strategy worked well. Betsy was very impressed with Bob's general work habits. He worked very hard and on many occasions even refused to take breaks. Betsy told one of the other supervisors: "If it weren't for his handicap, he'd be an ideal employee."

Then came the night of the accident. As Betsy later told a friend, "Wouldn't you know it would happen on the night I was off!"

The problem was this: Bob's colostomy bag ruptured. There was nothing special leading up to the event. Bob was doing his work as usual. At one point, he reached across his desk for some papers, wedging the bag at a bad angle, and it just ruptured. He tried to be calm and matter-of-fact about it as he headed to the restroom. At one point, a co-worker visiting the restroom saw Bob.

"I've had a slight problem," Bob stated. "I'll be in here for a while."

Bob spent about an hour in the restroom, trying to clean up. When he came out, his co-workers could see that he was upset and that, despite his efforts, Bob had not been able to clean his soiled clothing or the evidence of the accident in the restroom. To make the situation even more difficult, there was a pronounced odor hanging in the air. Bob was embarrassed and so were his co-workers. They tried to ignore the situation until the end of the shift.

When the day shift arrived the next morning, the restroom was still unpleasantly soiled and smelly. The manager of the day shift received many complaints, and he had to arrange for a cleaning crew from building maintenance to clean up the restroom. The day shift manager called Sharon Leigh, the night shift manager (and Betsy's boss) at home and woke her up. He was belligerent and caustic as he complained about "the mess that cripple left."

Sharon was angered by the phone call and was still angry when she came to work that evening. Sharon immediately called Betsy to her office and angrily complained to her about what had happened. She concluded the ten-minute lecture by announcing to Betsy that "if that kind of accident happens again, I'll fire him." Betsy left Sharon's office, shaken and unsure what to do.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What should Betsy do now:
 - With Bob?
 - With the other co-workers in the unit?
 - With her boss Sharon Leigh?
2. Is there any legal problem if Bob is terminated because he had ruptured another bag?

CASE DISCUSSION: Accidents Happen

Part 1: Selecting the Best

Summary

Betsy Wheeler supervised the 4 p.m. to midnight shift of six keypunching operators at the American Security Corporation. This work required a high level of performance (at 150 items per hour). Betsy had started in this department five years ago. While she liked the work, she was now facing a difficult problem concerning a recently hired employee, Bob Jenkins.

Two months ago, Betsy had to hire someone to replace an operator. She was told by Personnel that Bob was a good candidate and that he was disabled (in a wheelchair). The Personnel interviewer told her that Bob had received extensive training by the State Rehabilitation Department.

Before the start of her shift, Betsy met with Bob briefly. She did not ask many questions and let Bob describe himself. He was finishing his associates degree at a local college and he needed a night shift job to help him finish. He also indicated that he had a colostomy (surgical creation of an artificial anus, possibly in response to the removal of a portion of a cancerous intestine). In response to Betsy's question, he said he had no transportation problems.

Even though Bob was the only applicant she talked to, she liked him and offered him the job. He began work the next week.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Given Bob's disability, what kinds of questions should Betsy have asked during the interview? What legal considerations exist?

The main legal framework applying here would be the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination against qualified disabled individuals. As a general rule, Betsy should ask no questions about Bob's disability.

Instead, the focus of Betsy's selection procedure should be to determine if Bob is qualified and able to perform the essential functions of the job. In this case, the essential functions of the job would likely be keyboard data entry. She could also inquire whether Bob would be able to meet the attendance requirements.

2. Evaluate how well Betsy interviewed Bob and completed the selection process.

Betsy relied on Bob and Personnel to assure her that he had the skills needed to perform the job. She did not probe into his training or experience background in these skills, however. In general, her interview and selection procedure was poor.

3. What kind of selection procedure should Betsy have used in order to identify the best candidates for her data entry position. Design a complete selection process.

There are four important ingredients that should form the basis of selection procedure. Note that she should follow this procedure for all applicants for the position. Those steps, in approximate order of occurrence, are as follows:

1. *A standardized interview to determine the exact amount and nature of training and/or work experience in keyboard data entry*

Betsy should set some minimum level requirement; applicants who did not meet that level would be rejected. By working closely with Human Resources, she could have the Personnel interviewer complete this step and refer to her only those candidates meeting the minimal qualifications.

2. *A keyboard data-entry test.*

Applicants should report to her department to meet and talk with Betsy. She should then administer a standard keyboard entry test. It should be a simple standard test in which the applicant must show the ability to keypunch at a certain level of accuracy a certain minimum number of entries within a certain period of time. For example, a mock-up sample of forms used in the data-entry process could be given to the applicant; this should not be a large number, just enough to determine keypunch ability. Then, the applicant could be given unlimited time to finish all forms (in which case time would be measured) or given a fixed amount of time (say, 10 minutes) to complete as many forms as possible (in which case number of forms completed would be measured). Presumably, the number of errors made could also be determined.

The hiring standard could be set either as a minimum standard or as the top standard among all candidates. For a minimum standard, successful applicants would need to enter, say, all forms within 10 minutes with no more than 5 percent error. For a top standard, the candidate with the best performance would be selected.

When using a test like this, all applicants should be given a practice and warm-up opportunity. In this way, they have the chance to become familiar with the keyboard, to understand the form to be used, and to "warm up" with a practice round.

3. *A realistic job preview.*

Applicants who pass the entry test, they should be given a realistic job preview. Here, applicants should learn about the "warts" of the job. This can be done in several ways:

- The visit to the department shows them where and how the job is done
- Betsy should explain how she supervises and what she expects

- Betsy should talk about any unusual aspects of the job, such as staying at the machines until all the work is done or what happens during emergencies
 - Allowing the applicant to talk privately with other operators
4. *Reference checks.*
Finally, for an applicant who would be offered the job, Human Resources should do a reference check to confirm any key items in the applicant's employment record.

Part 2. Learning the Ropes

Summary

On Bob's first night on the job, Betsy wondered if she made a mistake in hiring him. After a standard orientation introduction, Bob began working but fell far behind. When she asked how things were going, Bob admitted that although he had been given two weeks' training with the State, this was his first job as a keypuncher.

Betsy's surprise and concern showed on her face. Bob, sensing he may have said the wrong thing, quickly added that he really needed this job and that he would master it with some time and practice.

She admired Bob's courage and conviction. However, she also had to get the work out.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Does Betsy have a problem here?

Betsy may be troubled, but it is not clear whether she has a performance problem, especially after just one night. She is troubled to learn things that she should have picked up during the selection procedure. New employees should be expected to produce at levels below seasoned employees.

2. Evaluate her coaching and orientation of Bob.

At best, her coaching and orientation procedure was minimal. She should expect to spend some time with him on a regular basis for a number of days, until he has established himself on the job and as a member of the group.

Part 3. An Explosive Problem

Summary

Betsy decided to cross-train Bob in some administrative and clerical duties so that he could help with the overall performance of the department while not having to do as much keypunching. Betsy liked Bob's work habits, and commented to one of the other supervisors: "If it weren't for his handicap, he'd be an ideal employee."

Then, one night when Betsy was off, Bob accidentally ruptured his colostomy bag as he reached across the desk. He tried to be casual about things as he spent an hour in the restroom cleaning up. He told one of his co-workers what he was doing. Nonetheless, it was obvious that he was upset and that he had not been able to clean up either his clothes or the restroom after he had finished. There was a pronounced odor in the air. Everyone tried to ignore the situation.

When the day shift arrived, there was still a problem, especially in the rest room. The day shift manager, acting on complaints, had to call in a cleaning crew. The day shift manager then called Betsy's boss, Sharon Leigh, at home to complain about "the mess that cripple left."

When their shift started, Sharon was angry and called Betsy into her office to lecture her about the problem. She told Betsy that if this problem happened again, she would fire Bob.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What should Betsy do now:

- *With Bob?*

She needs to talk with Bob to reassure him that the situation will work out all right. He is probably very embarrassed. Betsy should discuss what happened in an open, nonjudgemental way, and include how to deal with such a situation in the future.

One option she should mention is for him to leave a set of clothes on-site (in a private location) as back-up.

She should also tell him that she will talk with the other employees in the unit and clear up the situation. She should assure him that she will be discreet, and she should invite Bob to sit in if he wishes.

- *With the other co-workers in the unit?*

His co-workers were somewhat sensitive to Bob's plight. When Betsy talks with them, she should again bring out the obvious point that a difficult situation happened and that she appreciates their forbearance in responding to it. She should also indicate what steps are being taken to minimize the chances of this condition occurring again. She should also indicate that if it were to happen again, she would again count on their understanding. If Bob were present, she might want to ask him if he wishes to say anything. This discussion should be short and matter-of-fact.

- *With her boss Sharon Leigh?*

Betsy should ask to meet with Sharon at a time when Sharon has calmed down. Betsy should indicate that she understands Sharon's anger, but she should point out the potential legal problems they could face if Betsy were to fire Bob. Betsy should also indicate what actions she has taken to prevent and/or control the problem in the future. If necessary, Betsy may invite a human resources representative to the meeting to provide additional information.

2. Is there any legal problem if Bob is terminated because he has ruptured another bag?

Probably. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a handicapped employee is protected from employment discrimination based upon the disability. To terminate Bob because of his handicap-related bag, given that he is otherwise performing his job, would be to invite—and lose—a law suit.

A prudent course of action would be to anticipate the potential for this problem occurring again and to make any reasonable accommodation. There are several simple and inexpensive actions that could be taken to offset any problems:

- Provide a cleaning table/platform along with an emergency clean-up kit (cleanser, disposal bag, air freshener) that Bob could keep under his desk for private use
- Alter the workstation (by moving files, for example) to remove the need for Bob to move in the manner that caused the problem.

CASE 35

A Leadership Challenge

Background Information

Mary Herzen could not have been happier when she was hired to supervise the Patient Services Department at Northside Hospital. At age 45, Mary had been in various patient and bookkeeping capacities for more than 15 years, and she enjoyed both the work and supervising others. This new opportunity came at a perfect time: Just three months earlier, she had lost her job as part of a general reorganization at Central Hospital.

As Patient Services supervisor, Mary oversaw a department made up of a senior services representative and two service reps. It had taken five months to fill the position. The delay was caused in part by the internal job-posting process of notifying and interviewing internal applicants before advertising outside the organization.

Two Northside employees had applied. Both worked in the Patient Services Department. Juanita Ramirez, 32, had been with Northside for 10 years. She was the senior services rep, with over eight years experience in this department. Sue Williamson, at 26, had less time with Northside and, therefore, less experience in the function. Although both were interviewed for the supervisory position, neither were seen as strong enough candidates for promotion.

When Mary arrived for work on the first day, she met her boss, Chris Sapiro, after completing the new employee paperwork in Personnel. Chris was the one who had interviewed Mary and decided to hire her.

After going over some general guidelines and providing further details about the department and its personnel, Chris mentioned to Mary that two of her employees had applied for her job.

Chris continued: "I just mention that because there could be a possible problem with Juanita. I don't know, she might be resentful. Handle it the way you see best."

Chris then took her to the Patient Services Department, where he introduced her to the other employees and showed her the office. Mary began to settle in.

Later that afternoon, Mary set up individual meetings with each of the employees. She wanted to get to know them personally, learn what their job duties were and how they did their jobs. All the meetings went smoothly except the one with Juanita.

Mary could tell from the start that there would be difficulties. Juanita came in reluctantly, sat down, and did not look at Mary. Her crossed arms and unyielding stare at the ceiling conveyed the message: "Don't mess with me."

Mary was barely able to get complete sentences from Juanita in response to her questions.

Mary tried to press Juanita on what her job duties and responsibilities were. After a few vague replies and more questions, Juanita said: "Look, I've told you what I do. It's your job to tell me what to do. I don't know beyond that."

This kind of exchange went on a little longer, until Mary finally said: "Juanita, if this is as well as we are going to communicate, we're going to have some real problems."

That seemed to catch Juanita's attention.

"Don't try to frighten me," Juanita replied tensely. Juanita was clearly chewing over something in her mind.

Mary paused, unsure of what to say next.

"The only reason you got this job is because you're Anglo," Juanita finally said. "I should have had that job. This hospital is afraid to promote a Chicano into management."

Juanita halted for a moment, her bottom lip starting to quiver. She began crying.

"I've been discriminated against. . . . You're the boss. You're the one who's supposed to know it all. I'm not going to answer any more of your dumb questions. You tell me what I'm supposed to do."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Should Chris have informed Mary about the internal applicants before offering Mary the job?
2. Was meeting with each employee as part of Mary's orientation a good idea?
3. Evaluate the agenda Mary used. How could it be improved?
4. How should Mary respond to the issues Juanita is raising?
5. What are some general issues new managers and supervisors may face when assuming responsibility for a new job?

CASE DISCUSSION: A Leadership Challenge

Summary

Mary Herzen felt lucky to be hired for the supervisory position in the Patient Services Department at Northside Hospital. She had lost a similar job at Central Hospital three months earlier. Chris Sapiros was Mary's boss and had conducted the selection process. It took him five months to fill the position as a result of the internal job-announcement and job-interviewing procedures.

Two employees in the Patient Services Department had applied for the supervisory job: Juanita Ramirez, 32, who had been in the department for eight years, and Sue Williamson, 26, who had less experience. Both were rejected because they were not seen as strong enough to be promoted.

Chris told Mary about this when he met with her on Mary's first day on the job. He suggested that Juanita might be a problem and told Mary to handle it the way she saw best. He then took her to the department, introduced her to the staff, and left her to settle in.

Later that day, Mary held meetings with each of her new employees. The meeting with Juanita turned out as predicted: She was defensive, uncommunicative, and noncommittal. For example, Mary wanted to learn what Juanita's job duties were, but could not get adequate replies. Finally, in exasperation, Juanita began arguing that it was Mary's job to tell Juanita what to do. Mary replied that they would have problems if this was as well as they were going to communicate. Juanita then told Mary that she had not been promoted because she was Hispanic, and accused the hospital of discrimination. She began to cry and said she was not going to answer any more questions.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Should Chris have informed Mary about the internal applicants before offering Mary the job?

Yes. It is important to give job applicants all relevant information about the job for which they are applying. This is especially true for information that might be considered negative. The bulk of research in this area makes it clear that "realistic job previews" are very important for creating the most favorable initial job conditions.

2. Was meeting with each employee as part of Mary's orientation a good idea?

Although Mary's idea was backed by good intentions, problems resulted. In general, individual and group meetings both have advantages and disadvantages, and whether one would work better than another for a new supervisor is a matter of personal judgment.

One obvious advantage of a group meeting is that certain messages from the new supervisor can be given to everyone at the same time. Another advantage is that the presence of a group has the potential to pressure

employees into opening up and sharing what is on their minds. In Mary's situation, a group meeting could have been especially helpful in this regard, creating an environment in which Juanita felt additional pressure to be more forthcoming.

It should also be noted that a new supervisor can also follow up a group meeting with individual meetings, thus combining the two methods.

3. Evaluate the agenda Mary used. How could it be improved?

Again, the general intention was appropriate, although the execution was not as good as it could have been. The purpose of introductory meetings is to initiate dialogue. Mary needed to share information as well as receive it.

A more suitable agenda would have Mary *share* information on such matters as her background and goals, her leadership style and practices, her priorities for the near term, and how she would like to work with the employees. She should *ask* each employee for information on their job duties, where they stand on projects, any particular problems they are experiencing, and anything else they can tell Mary that would help her supervise.

4. How should Mary respond to the issues Juanita is raising?

Mary cannot say whether in fact Juanita is correct or incorrect in her belief that she was a victim of discrimination. It is a discussion that Mary cannot win. Furthermore, she cannot prevent Juanita from taking action on her complaint if she wishes to do so. Mary therefore should not try to argue with Juanita. Indeed, Mary might simply say something to the effect that she cannot respond to Juanita's opinion but finds it difficult to believe that there was discrimination.

Instead, Mary does need to deal directly with Juanita's intransigence and belligerence. Mary should pause until Juanita is composed, then tackle this matter head on. She should make it clear to Juanita that although she cannot talk about the discrimination matter, she is concerned about Juanita's current behavior. She should indicate that she expects employees to be forthcoming in dealing with her, just as she wants to be open with them. That is, she should establish a standard of how she wants to be treated by her employees. She should share any other information about how she will supervise.

She should then indicate that while Juanita's behavior is perhaps understandable, given her beliefs, it is nonetheless unacceptable. She should indicate that there can be serious problems if Juanita decides to follow a course of action like this. She should present Juanita with a decision about how Juanita wants to proceed. She should then tell Juanita that they will meet again tomorrow, at which time Mary will expect a decision from Juanita.

5. What are some general issues new managers and supervisors may face when assuming responsibility for a new job?

There are several common issues facing people when they move into a management or supervisory job. These are issues beyond the traditional orientation concerns facing any new employee.

First, there is the issue of understanding what the structure of the unit is: Who is doing what? Second, there is a concern about evaluating both the functions of the unit and the personnel involved. Third, the new manager is interested in learning about any specific problems or opportunities needing quick response. Fourth, the new manager is concerned about how to begin influencing employees to receive results in line with his or her goals and priorities.

CASE 36

It Was Either Some Dress or Some Stain

Background Information

Sondra Green was one of the three floor managers for Wilson's Women's Wear Mart, a large retail establishment that carried an extensive inventory of women's clothing sold at discounted prices. Sondra had been with Wilson's for more than four years. She started as a part-time sales associate and was steadily promoted. As floor manager, Sondra had general authority to manage displays, customer service, sales, inventory, and the like. She shared supervisory duties with the other floor managers.

The sales associates at Wilson's tended to be younger women, ages 25 to 30, who were high-school graduates. Presently, all of them were either single or divorced. The associates were expected to handle any and all aspects of the operation of the store as needed and as directed by the floor manager.

Sondra was inspecting some inventory in a display area when Betty Philips, a sales associate, asked to talk with her. Since Sondra had little prior experience with Betty, she was a little surprised. "Sure, let's go over to my office," Sondra said.

Once in the office, Betty said: "I just overheard a conversation between Sue and Mary Jane. I think you should know about it."

Sue and Mary Jane were two other associates in the store. Sondra knew they sometimes "hung out" together after work. "Go on," Sondra said.

"Well, I was over near the shoe department, helping a customer, when I looked over and saw Sue and Mary Jane talking together about three aisles over." Betty paused. "It looked like they were angry with each other, so I kept an eye on them while I waited on the customer."

"What happened?" Sondra asked.

"Well, they started talking loudly to each other. Sue was really angry and was leaning forward into Mary Jane's face." Betty leaned forward in her chair.

"From what I could hear, I think they were out partying the other night and Mary Jane spilled something—I think it was some kind of food—on Sue's dress. There must have been a problem with it because Sue was still mad about it."

Sondra thought for a minute. "Did any of the customer's hear this?" she asked.

"I think so," replied Betty. "I know my customer looked up and asked what was going on."

"Thanks for mentioning this to me," Sondra said, thinking Betty was done. "I'll be sure to say something to them both."

"Well, that's not the end of it. There's more." Betty looked out the door to see if anyone was nearby.

"They kept arguing for another minute or so, when Mary Jane started to walk away. Sue reached over, grabbed her arm, and yanked her back. She pointed a finger in Mary Jane's face and said something like—these aren't the exact words but they are close—'Listen, you little bitch, you better make sure I get a new dress or I'll knock the living daylights out of you before we leave here today.'"

Sondra leaned back in her chair.

Betty concluded: "Mary Jane pulled her arm free and just turned and walked away. Frankly, I'm a little scared. I think there could be trouble."

CASE QUESTION

What should Sondra do to respond to this situation?

CASE DISCUSSION: It Was Either Some Dress or Some Stain

Summary

Sondra Green was a floor manager for Wilson's Women's Wear Mart. She has general responsibility for all aspects of store operations, including sales, merchandising, and supervision. Most of the sales associates were young unmarried women.

One day, a sales associate employee with whom Sondra had little prior contact asked to talk with her. They went into Sondra's office. The employee, Betty Philips, described a situation she had just observed between two other sales associates Sue and Mary Jane:

While waiting on a customer, Betty watched an apparent argument between Sue and Mary Jane. It seemed that Mary Jane had spilled something on Sue's dress while at a party the other night. Their argument was loud, and Betty's customer looked up and watched before leaving.

They continued arguing. Then Mary Jane started to walk away, Sue pulled her back and threatened to "knock the living daylights out of her" if she didn't get a new dress from Mary Jane before leaving work that day. Mary Jane pulled free and walked away.

Betty is a little scared about what might happen.

Answer to Case Question

1. What should Sondra do to respond to this situation?

Additional Questions to Discussion:

- Should Sondra do anything or is this matter none of her business?
- Would Women's Wear Mart have any liability if there is violence between the two?

This question might prompt the immediate response that Sondra needs to do nothing. After all, the argument goes, the matter is between Sue and Mary Jane and does not concern business matters.

However, there are at least two reasons why Sondra should be concerned. First, this adversarial relation between the two employees has affected—and would likely affect in the future—the service and sales atmosphere of the business. Sondra has a business necessity for seeing this matter resolved. Second, if this situation escalates to violence at or near the workplace, Women's Wear Mart might be liable for any adverse consequences.

Therefore, it would be prudent for Sondra to have a meeting together with Sue and Mary Jane. Rather than create complications for Betty, Sondra could say that she noticed the argument between the two of them and that this is the first chance she's had to confront them. She should

restate the common-sense standard of customer service: Don't argue in view of customers. She should indicate that this matter is so serious that any future displays will be grounds for immediate termination for either or both parties. Any disreputable employee actions on Women's Wear property or adjacent facilities (such as parking lots) would fall under this standard.

She should make it clear that any private matters must be handled apart from work and this facility. While Sondra should not position herself as a referee or an arbitrator in the matter, she might invite both parties to explain what happened. By functioning as a listener, she might be able to suggest a solution that could resolve the crisis. However, this option should only be taken if she has an effective relationship with both people, that is, if she can influence both and both will respond to her. Barring this condition, it would be unadvisable for Sondra to become more involved in the particulars of the dispute.

Sondra should keep her eyes open for the next several days to see how the situation is resolved. She should also inform the other floor managers about the situation and alert them to the possible problems that might develop. If there is no resolution, Sondra and the managers should be extra vigilant in watching Sue and Mary Jane when they are together.

CASE 37

Bad News in Budgets

Background Information

First State Financial Services, Inc., was the largest institution of its kind in the state, with over 150 branch offices at various locations throughout the state. The company provided a variety of banking, investment, and insurance services to both retail and commercial clients in its metropolitan market areas. As such, the Budget Department played an essential role in monitoring the costs and income of the company and in preparing the budgets for the various departments. Because accurate budgeting was so crucial to effective company management, the Budget Department had been given the additional assignment of preparing selected budget specialists for greater responsibilities in the Auditing Department. In effect, the Budget Department was also a management trainee department.

Nancy Johnson had been appointed head of Budgeting two years ago. Nancy had been working in one aspect or another of this area for the last six years. As a result of her hard work and attentiveness to budget matters, she had reached this management position.

Her approach to managing the "Budget Shop" was captured in one of her favorite quotes: "I keep my office door open. If my employees are having any problems, they will come in and tell me." And with that said, she tended to stay in her office, doing her work. As a result, she seldom saw or talked with the budget specialists under her charge.

Typically, the specialists would prepare budget reports for submission to other departments in the company. These reports contained very detailed analyses about spending or revenue patterns. The business and accounting graduates who were recruited by the company considered an assignment in the Budget Department a prestigious appointment, and as a result, the Budget Department could hire or select eager, energetic employees; however, to these ambitious "go-getters," the reports were boring and tedious. Their view was quite different from Nancy's: She saw these reports as invaluable training exercises.

After preparing a draft work-up of the report, the specialists would send the draft to Nancy for review and inspection. Busy with many other tasks, Nancy would glance them over, then have her secretary return the report back to the specialist who prepared it. The specialists, young and eager to learn, were expecting some feedback on how well they had produced the reports, so that they could learn enough for their future auditing tasks. Nancy felt she was too busy, though, and did not add any commentary to the reports.

Because Nancy just glanced at the reports and did not give the specialists any helpful instruction in preparing them, the reports were often sent out with

errors. The department head who received a faulty report would directly call the specialist who prepared it. After a few faulty reports, the communications from the higher ranking department head to the junior specialist became hostile and rancorous. Since Nancy was completely bypassed in this communication, she could not learn of any problems, much less act to help correct them. Over a period of a few months, the number of errors grew, and the relations between the departments heads and the specialists became tense and hostile.

The specialists shared the same open office space. Whenever a specialist experienced problems with a department head, everyone quickly knew about it, and all specialists experienced problems. Moreover, they felt they were getting no support from Nancy. As they experienced more hostility from outside departments, they became more antagonistic towards Nancy. They would often sit together and discuss how badly things were going. They believed that Nancy was ignoring and not helping them, and that there was a lot of information she was keeping from them.

Over the months, the specialists spent more time talking together, sympathizing and complaining. Indeed, the more they talked to one another, the bolder they became in talking with friends—or anyone else who would listen—outside their department. They made no secret of their dissatisfaction and displeasure with Nancy. The same kind of disgruntled communications spread among the different department heads. However, they complained to one another about the poor quality of the budget reports they were receiving and about how Nancy had things "screwed up." But as far as Nancy knew, everyone—specialists and department heads alike—was happy and satisfied with the work of the Budget Department.

After about five months, enough news of the problem had reached Nancy's boss to move him to act. Finally, on a Monday morning as Nancy was walking to her desk, her boss asked to see her in his office. She was shocked when he said: "Nancy, what in the hell's gone wrong in Budget? I'm getting calls from department heads who say they can't get a correct budget report. And I keep hearing rumors about all these budget specialists who are threatening to quit the first chance they get. Get this problem fixed soon, or I may need to take some strong action myself."

Nancy left, visibly shaken. When she reached her office, she uncharacteristically closed the door, dropped her briefcase on the floor and sank into her chair. She stared straight ahead, focusing on nothing in particular, and thought: "What in the hell happened? And what do I do now?"

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Describe how Nancy's assumption about employee problems affected her management practices.
2. Her job required her to wear two different hats: that of producer and that of trainer. Describe her methods for managing both of these responsibilities.
3. How adequately did she have controls in place for managing both the production and training of her staff?
4. Given the communication patterns between her, her staff, and other department heads, how should her communication and management situation be described?
5. Design the controls she needs to put in place to manage more effectively both the production and the training functions.
6. What steps should she take to improve her training responsibilities?
7. What should she do now, after her boss' lecture, about dealing with the situation at hand?

CASE DISCUSSION: Bad News in Budgets

Summary

Nancy Johnson had been managing the Budget Department for First State Financial Services, Inc. Because the work experience gained here was so helpful, much of the budget analysis work done in the department was performed by a group of management trainees. The trainees tended to be recent college graduates who were ambitious; they expected the budget work experience to be the pathway into the more prestigious Auditing Department.

Nancy managed under the assumption that by keeping her office door "open," her employees would bring any problems to her attention. As a result, she stayed in her office and seldom met with the trainees. Instead, she would glance over the budget reports they submitted and return them through her secretary without comment.

The reports often contained many errors, which the trainees would be expected to make but which Nancy's quick review did not catch. The department heads throughout First State who received the erroneous reports would complain directly to the trainee who prepared it. Over time, relations between the department heads and the trainees deteriorated.

The trainees, who worked the same office area, easily shared their frustrations about the work and about Nancy. These "bitch" sessions became more common and openly contemptuous of Nancy. Once these "bitch sessions" became a common practice, the situation became adversarial: Us (the trainees) vs. them (Nancy). And since she made no effort to hear from them, they made no effort to speak. Likewise, dissatisfaction with Nancy's department spread among department managers.

The pressures of poor budget work and disgruntled employees continued to build until Nancy's boss talked to her one day, demanding to know what had gone wrong. Nancy, shaken by the news and unable to answer the questions, wondered what she should do now.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Describe how Nancy's assumption about employee problems affected her management practices.

Nancy's assumption that employees, either subordinate or otherwise, will bring her information allows her to operate passively. She does not seek out information, especially in regard to what her employees are thinking or doing. She also assumes that written feedback is sufficient. In general, these assumptions lead her to manage others in a "hands-off" and depersonalized manner.

2. Her job required her to wear two hats: that of producer and that of trainer. Describe her methods for managing both of these responsibilities.

She used the work of the trainees to meet the production goals of her department. While this practice was condoned and understood by management, she did not have sufficient controls in place for quality control over the production, nor did she undertake adequate training to improve performance levels.

3. How adequately did she have controls in place for managing both the production and training of her staff?

She did not have adequate controls in place to stay on top of what was going on either in production or training.

4. Given the communication patterns between her, her staff, and other department heads, how should her communication and management situation be described?

Even though Nancy occupied the center of a communication net, she was isolated from important information flows around her. She did not receive feedback from either her staff or other line managers. Neither did she share information with her staff.

5. Design the controls she needs to put in place to manage more effectively both the production and the training functions.

She should institute some kind of more rigorous quality control on production reports before they are released. She should also establish a regular pattern of periodically checking with line managers about the reports. She could institute a procedure whereby both line managers and her staff bring all complaints or problems to her attention first.

She should also institute some method to monitor the learning progress of her trainees. This may be done by establishing a file for each trainee in which the cases the trainee worked on are noted and an assessment of performance is recorded. Then, perhaps monthly, she should meet individually with each trainee to review progress and identify weak spots so that a development plan can be prepared. Learning progress could be monitored against the development plan.

6. What steps should she take to improve her training responsibilities?

She could do a variety of things. First, introduce more formal training "brown bag" seminars for the trainees in which either the trainees or line personnel could lead discussions of topics of interest. Second, she should track learning progress (as discussed in item 5). Third, she should make a better effort to provide thorough feedback and counsel to the trainees. Fourth, she should make efforts to link trainees with senior specialists or line managers.

7. What should she do now, after her boss' lecture, about dealing with the situation at hand?

She needs to meet with the trainees as a group to acknowledge the problems and to take responsibility for them and for resolving them. During this meeting, she should describe what she will do in the follow-up, including:

- Meeting with each trainee individually to develop a learning plan (see item 5)
- Improving the training process (see item 6)
- Meeting with line managers to work out problems

Nancy also needs to get out of her office more and talk informally with trainees and others.

CASE 38

Out of Control

Background Information

Judy Wheeler was coming to really dislike the third Tuesday of each month. This was the day of the monthly status briefing of the Special Operations Review Committee. Judy sat at the head of the conference table, looking out the window at the other buildings populating this office park. As head of the Committee, Judy was always the first there, waiting for everyone else to arrive. However, the situation had not been like this in the beginning.

When the Special Operations Review Committee had been formed four months ago, she was very proud to be appointed to head it. With the competitive pressures on the business growing for some time, there were many rumors about new corporate initiatives to search for ways to improve the productivity of various systems and operations. She felt it was an honor to have been put in charge of one such initiative. The Committee included people from data processing, auditing, accounting, operations, marketing, and personnel.

She looked around as people began to file in. "This thing has turned into a real zoo," she thought, "and my patience is running out."

She looked at some of the real sore spots. One was Mike Slater, typically sitting over at the corner of the table, staring vacantly into space. He was as aloof as ever. It was clear from his actions and comments that Mike did not want to participate in this Committee. She overheard him comment one time that he had better things to do than work with a bunch of "operation types." He would show up late, walk out in the middle of the briefing, read the paper, do almost anything he could think of which would say: "I don't want any part of this, and I'll work real hard not to play a part in it." He was usually successful, and when he did contribute, it was only by virtue of his making some kind of caustic remark. Unfortunately, Judy realized, Mike did have some important insight and experience that could be very helpful to the Committee. It was just that he made it so difficult to listen to him.

She looked at Fern Henry, standing near the coffee pot, joking with Sue Casey. Fern was from Personnel and had been in that department for over 15 years. Fern's biggest asset was her ability to talk about anything, at any time, and for great periods of time. And while her knowledge of the personnel issues surrounding the Committee's work was good, she tended to voice her opinions quickly and at length, neither fully considering them nor allowing others to question her. She could talk for 10 minutes at a stretch and end up saying very little. Judy hated to turn her on because it was hard to turn her off.

Judy glanced at Sue Casey, who was from Operations. She then saw Buddy Griffith, also from Operations, enter the room and sit down. About the time this

Committee was formed, Sue was given a promotion to section supervisor. Buddy had made it clear to many people that he thought he deserved the job, and since then, there was nothing but animosity between Buddy and Sue. Judy smiled to herself, thinking: "You can bet that whatever one of them has, the other will try everything possible to tear down and make look foolish."

Finally, she noticed Wendy Abrams sitting at the other end of table. Wendy, who felt she should have been put in charge of the committee, often tried to take control of meetings by making assignments, questioning others on where they stood, and dictating agenda. Everyone knew what she was doing, and more than a few had noted how negatively her disruptions affected the group's work.

Judy was becoming concerned with the Committee's progress. Some of the key tasks were dragging; others were working at cross-purposes. Judy was becoming concerned about how to proceed.

CASE QUESTION

How can Judy Wheeler deal with the problems here in order to make the Committee operate more effectively?

CASE DISCUSSION: Out of Control

Summary

Judy Wheeler was put in charge of a Special Operations Review Committee. This Committee was an interfunctional special project team charged with finding ways to improve company productivity. The Committee met formally the third Tuesday of each month. Before the most recent meeting, Judy is sitting at the head of the table, looking at the committee members as they arrived and mentally noting the following:

- *Mike Slater* was aloof and distant. It was clear from his actions that he did not want to participate in this committee and would come late, not pay attention and leave early. When he did participate, he was often caustic.
- *Fern Henry*, Personnel, talked too quickly and too much without making any significant contributions.
- *Sue Casey* and *Buddy Griffith*, both from Operations, did not like each other. Sue recently was promoted into the job that Buddy thought he deserved. One always seemed to argue against what the other was saying.
- *Wendy Abrams* felt like she should be in charge of this committee and tried to act as if she could make assignments and dictate the agenda.

The work of the committee seemed to drag, and Judy was not sure how to proceed.

Answer to Case Question

How can Judy Wheeler deal with the problems here in order to make the committee operate more effectively?

The first thing Judy should consider is whether this committee is properly staffed. Even though membership may have been dictated at the outset, she should work with her management sponsor to reevaluate membership. This can go in two ways:

1. Are all the relevant functions within the organization represented effectively?

If some functions are missing, then she may need to add some personnel. A related question is, why are there two people from Operations?

2. Are there more effective personnel who should be included?

Even though Mike Slater may have some good insight, his poor motivation makes him of doubtful utility, and Judy should consider replacing him.

Second, after the committees are restaffed, Judy should consider using a teambuilding training session for this team. She could obtain the help of a consultant in refocusing the group's functioning and processing. As part of the teambuilding process, the goals of the Committee would be clarified, member roles (including her role vis a vis Wendy Abrams) defined, and appropriate processes established.

Third, Judy should consider working more with subgroups pursuing specific projects. For example, Wendy could be made a subgroup chair. Judy could manage each subgroup's work apart from a full group meeting. In this way, she might be able to cut down on the need for routine full committee meetings. When full committee meetings are indicated, she could make the meetings special: located off-site, extended to a full day, conducted according to carefully prepared agendas with planned slots for subgroup presentations, and the like.

Judy could also seek more senior management support and recognition of the Committee. For example, senior managers should be invited to attend the full committee meetings. She should make sure each participant on the committee is regularly brought to the attention of senior management.

CASE 39

What a Waste of Time

Background Information

Nick Graham managed the Operational Support Department at the First Services Corporation. Operational Support did a little of everything for First Services: customer-account opening and maintenance, records retention, data entry, account servicing, and similar work. There were just over 50 employees in the unit, six of whom were supervisors to the various units.

Mary Nelson has been the Procedures Unit supervisor for the past eighteen months. The Procedures Unit was responsible for producing procedural memos and guidelines and distributing these documents to the field offices and other staff groups. Before becoming the supervisor, Mary worked in the unit as a procedures clerk for three years. As a clerk, Mary performed well. However, as a supervisor, Mary left a lot to be desired.

Nick Graham knew there was a production problem in the Procedures Unit because procedures were often published late and with many errors. Frequently procedures had to be recalled, revised, and reissued. In addition, Nick received periodic reports from employees that Mary's unit had real morale problems. Nick knew that Mary had a difficult time keeping people: the turnover in her unit seemed to be much higher than for the other units in the department. Moreover, there was a definite absenteeism problem. Finally, Nick occasionally had to face Joan Wadsworth, a procedures clerk currently in the unit.

Joan joined First Services about six months after Mary and was a good performer. Joan often reminded Nick that she thought she deserved the supervisor's job more than Mary. At first, when Joan complained that Mary was "hard-nosed," "arbitrary," and "always threatening to fire us," Nick dismissed the remarks as sour grapes on Joan's part. However, as morale problems continued and production remained low, Nick watched more closely and sadly found these allegations to be true.

For example, Mary never met with her employees to explain the goals of First Services. She never spent any time training or coaching her subordinates on the job they were to do. She often chewed out an employee for making a mistake, in full view of others. Her supervisory attitude seemed to be: "You work as hard as you can at what I give you. Don't dare ask what this work is or why you are to do it. If you screw up, I'll raise hell. Otherwise, don't bother me."

Nick knew something needed to be done, so he contacted the First Services Training Department to enroll Mary in one of the supervisory training programs they offered. Bill Jones, one of the trainers there, was starting a new class, Ad-

vanced Sales Management Techniques, in two weeks. Mary was put in the class and received a memo stating that she was to attend the training program.

Mary was surprised and confused by the memo. She wondered why she was supposed to attend a program on sales management when she was responsible for operational matters. She thought at first that she may have received the memo by mistake; Then she thought that she was being prepared for some kind of promotion—or demotion.

She finally saw Nick later in the morning and showed him the memo.

"Look what I got in the mail today," she said. "Do you know anything about it?"

Nick, in a rush, smiled and said in passing: "Well, I saw they were offering this course. I thought you might like to attend, so I put in your name."

Mary looked back down at the memo, obviously not convinced by what he had said.

"Look, top management is on a training kick," he continued. "Just go and don't worry about it."

Mary seemed to find that answer more appealing.

A few days later, Mary received a second memo from the Training Department, stating that she needed to do some pre-class reading in a booklet which was enclosed. Near the end of the day, she began to skim through it. Nick, walking by her office, noticed Mary reading and asked what she was doing.

"It's some reading I have to do for that training class you put me in," Mary explained.

Nick paused for a moment.

"That's *home-work*, not work-work," he told her. "You've still got a pile of materials to process by next week. Better get back to work." After Nick moved on, Mary thought to herself: "If that's the way you want it, that 'homework' is going to become 'no-work.'"

Another week passed, and the starting day for the training arrived. Mary showed up for class, somewhat angry about the interruption to her routine and tense about what the training would be like and what it would cover. She only half-completed the pre-class assignment. She remarked to the person sitting next to her: "I hope this is over soon. I've got to get back to work."

For the next week, Mary came to the class regularly. The program, led by a less than inspiring trainer, was mostly lectures, readings, and tests. Most of the material concerned managing, motivating, and coaching field-sales personnel. There were only a few times when the training came close to dealing specifically with some of the concerns she had. Nonetheless, at the end of the week, Mary felt as if she had picked up a few ideas and techniques that she could see using back on the job. Indeed, she was excited about trying a couple.

This enthusiasm received a dose of cold water, though, when she returned to work the following Monday. There, on her desk, was a pile of papers, documents, and one bona-fide emergency. She smiled to herself. "Looks like those training ideas will wait," she thought.

Shortly after lunch, Nick walked by her door. Noticing that Mary was in, he asked in passing: "Glad you're back. How was vacation?"

By the time Mary realized he was serious, he was already gone.

It took Mary another two days to get things back under some control. She decided to try out one of her training ideas the next day.

When she came in, she started making a daily "to do" list and sorting her work into Critical, Important, and Reserve piles. Nick noticed that she was moving paper around her desk and asked what she was doing.

"It's something I learned in that training program last week. It's called 'work priority management.' You see, what you do is—"

Nick cut her off. "Yeah, I'm sure it's interesting but you've got the 48-90 procedure to get to. Let's see *that* paper move, not *this*."

Mary bristled and went out to the floor.

After about an hour, she noticed that one of her subordinates was having some difficulty with an operation. Deciding to try some coaching skills she saw in the training, she began working with the employee.

Nick, walking through the area, noticed her spending time with the employee. In a mocking tone, he asked her, "What are you doing, Mary? Some more of that training stuff?" The employee heard it too.

Mary had enough. "Can I talk to you in your office, Nick?" she asked. He said he only had a few minutes, as they walked to his office.

Mary began: "Nick, I don't know what's going on. I feel like you're being hostile to me whenever I try something I picked up in the training. What's going on?"

Nick thought for a second.

"Look, Mary," he said, "that training stuff is all theory. This is the real world, with important deadlines. Don't let that training stuff interfere with your getting the work out. I want you to get back to work."

Feeling angry and frustrated, Mary left his office.

Shortly before lunch, Joan Wadsworth came to Mary, complaining about an "insane" procedure they had to follow for an upcoming project.

Mary, back in her old form, didn't even look up from the production report she was preparing.

"I don't want to hear it," she said. "Get back to work, or else."

Two days later, Joan gave Mary her letter of resignation, with a copy for Nick Graham.

Mary thought to herself: "So much for training."

Nick thought to himself: "That training was sure a waste of time. And I've still got a lousy supervisor."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Was the training effort that Mary went through a success or a failure? How do you know?
2. Identify all the factors that contributed to the result (either success or failure).
3. What actions can be taken before, during, and after a training program, to increase the chances for a successful training experience?

CASE DISCUSSION: What a Waste of Time

Summary

Nick Graham managed the Operational Support Department. One of the six supervisors reporting to him was Mary Nelson. Mary oversaw the Procedures Unit. She had been in that position for 18 months, after working in the unit as a clerk for three years. While she was a good performer as a clerk, she had real problems as a supervisor. Her attitude as a supervisor was that employees had better do what they were told, and she did little to help them. As a result, there were noticeable production, morale and turnover problems in her Unit.

Nick felt she needed training and enrolled her in a class, Advanced Sales Management Techniques, that was part of a supervisory training program. When Mary received the attendance memo from the Training Department, she asked Nick what was going on. He first replied that he thought she might like to attend, then said that "top management" was on a "training kick." A few days later, Mary received a pre-class reading assignment. Nick, noticing her reading the booklet, told her to get back to work.

When the training class started, Mary arrived—ready to leave. She did not know what the program would cover. Nonetheless, she stayed for the full week. The trainer was uninspiring and the program was mostly lecture. There were few topics that dealt specifically with her concerns. Still, at the end of the class, she felt that she had learned a few things and was ready to try them out.

However, her first day back on the job was spent fighting fires. Nick, seeing her back, asked seriously how her vacation was. By midweek, she was ready to try some of the things she learned in the training. However, each time, Nick made some kind of comment that threw her off her efforts. Mary finally asked Nick what was going on. Nick told her that she needed to work, and not get pre-occupied by all that training "theory."

Mary was angry. She reverted to her old form, and one of her long-term employees quit shortly thereafter. Mary thought to herself that the training was useless, as did Nick.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Was the training effort that Mary went through a success or failure? How do you know?

The final judgment of success or failure is not conclusive with the evidence provided. However, it does suggest that the training was a failure. The reason is that there appears to be no lasting change in Mary's supervisory behavior, and the production and turnover problems still persist.

2. Identify all the factors that contributed to the result (either success or failure).

There are two broad classes of reasons why the program failed.

First, there were problems with the training itself. For example, Mary attended a program that was irrelevant to her supervisory duties. She entered the program with insufficient preparation. The program itself seemed to have an inappropriate design, relying more on lecture than practice. Back on the job, there appeared to be no follow-through application of what was learned.

Second, there were problems with the supervisory support given by Nick Graham. For example, Nick did a poor job preparing Mary for the program. By letting work pile up on her desk while she was gone, he made it difficult for her to make a transition back from the training. Finally, Nick sabotaged her efforts to make changes once she returned. Essentially, he gave her no support at all.

In short, it was the combination of poor training and poor supervision which sunk this training voyage.

3. What actions can be taken before, during, and after a training program to increase the chances for a successful training experience?

First, there should be better standards for admission into training. Mary should not have attended the Advanced Sales Management Training class. Furthermore, she should have attended a program designed to train her in specific skills she needs to deal with the kinds of common situations she faces.

Second, the supervisor needs to be prepared to support the training. For example, the trainer should conduct a briefing of the managers of all program participants. The briefing should instruct the managers to do the following:

1. *Before the training begins*, the supervisor should meet with the employee to notify him or her of the training and to explain the reasons why the employee should attend. The supervisor should work jointly with the employee to identify specific areas of performance improvement and make a learning goals plan. The supervisor should brief the employee on what will be covered in the training and encourage the employee to attend.
2. *During the training*, the supervisor should do as much as is feasible to prevent the training from interrupting the participant's work routine. Also, the supervisor should try to prevent any pile-up of work.
3. *After the training*, the supervisor should meet with the employee to review what was learned. The supervisor and the employee should identify what actions the employee will take to apply the skills acquired in the training. The supervisor should agree to support and help the employee in those efforts. Finally, the supervisor should watch for evidence of performance improvements and reinforce the employee accordingly.

CASE 40

Getting a Fair Hearing

Background Information

Jerri Evans generally liked supervising the Telephone Services Department of the National Building and Supply Company. Jerri supervised a staff of 10 service representatives. The reps averaged almost four years in their current jobs, and Jerri was pleased with their performance.

"Part of the reason they're good," Jerri often thought to himself, "is that I'm such a stickler for following rules. They get in on time and meet their quotas, or else. That's the only way to run things here."

In the two years that Jerri had been in charge of Telephone Services, he had never experienced any major problems with the staff. However, he had not been particularly close to them either, and his relationship with them was a formal one.

One day, shortly after lunch, Bill Hatter, a supervisor in a nearby department, came to Jerri's office with information that had the potential to change how Jerri related to his staff. Jerri liked Bill and they often talked together. He was a fine and trustworthy colleague.

Jerri was sitting at his desk when Bill walked in and closed the door. Bill wasted no time in getting to the point: "I just got through hearing an interesting conversation in the lunch room. It involved four of your employees and you should hear what they're saying about you."

Jerri looked puzzled and concerned. "What do you mean? I mean, er, how do you know? How did you hear?"

"Well," Bill said, "I was sitting at an out-of-the-way booth with my back to them and was kind of hidden by a poster display someone recently put up. I don't think they knew I was there."

Jerri was growing impatient. "OK, OK, but what were they saying?"

"I wasn't paying any attention at first, so I'm not sure quite how things got started," Bill replied. "But in any case, when I finally began to listen, it seemed the first part of the discussion concerned a warning you gave Delores about being late."

In fact, earlier that day, Jerri had issued a written warning to one of his employees, Delores Jones, about her periodic lateness. Delores had to take public transportation to get to work and had a tendency to arrive 10 to 15 minutes late on a regular basis.

Bill continued: "I think at first it was just Delores and April Browner who were involved. Evidently they were comparing notes about how often each of

them was late and how you treated them. They were joined by two other employees, Chris Wilkins and Randy Barry."

Bill explained what happened. The other two employees, learning of the topic, chimed in. After awhile, they were all complaining about how Jerri did not treat them fairly and how unfairly they were paid. They openly discussed their salaries and how wrong their job descriptions were. It was a major gripe session, and these employees were very upset.

"I got the impression that this was not the first time they had this conversation," Bill observed. "I also got the impression that a lot of other employees in your unit felt the same way.

"The thing that really got my ear, though, was when Delores said something like, 'How much longer are we going to put up with this stuff? We should do something.' Everyone there agreed."

Bill explained that he stayed in the cafeteria longer than he should have and had to return to his department.

"I tried to be careful when I was leaving, so that they wouldn't see me, but I think I was noticed. Then I came right here."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Does Jerri have a problem? If so, what is it?
2. What actions, if any, should Jerri take?

CASE DISCUSSION: Getting a Fair Hearing

Summary

Jerri Evans closely supervised the 10 service representatives in the Telephone Services Department. He set rigid standards about getting to work on time and meeting established performance quotas. While he never had any major problems with his staff, he supervised them rather formally.

Shortly after lunch one day, a fellow supervisor, Bill Hatter, came into Jerri's office and indicated he had just overheard several of Jerri's staff carrying on a conversation in the lunchroom. The immediate cause of the conversation involved an employee to whom Jerri had given a warning about being late for work. She was comparing her lateness with that of the other employees at the lunch table.

According to Bill, all the employees there were complaining about being treated unfairly by Jerri. They talked about their salaries and poor job descriptions. This was evidently not the first time these topics had been discussed. One employee finally asked when "they" (the employees) were going to do something about the situation.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Does Jerri have a problem? If so, what is it?

Jerri does appear to have a morale problem with some, if not all, of his employees. This kind of situation could blow up into a larger problem unless Jerri takes constructive action to deal with it.

2. What actions, if any, should Jerri take?

The discussion, as reported by Bill, could be construed as part of initial efforts by employees to engage in "protected concerted activity." This means employees were taking steps to act collectively on their concerns regarding the terms and conditions of employment. Even though there was no explicit mention of unions, the nature of the discussion might fall under the protection of the National Labor Relations Act. For this reason and others, Jerri should not act to discipline, terminate, or otherwise single out the people involved. Even if it were legal, Jerri would only be reacting to a symptom, not the problem.

The basic problem appears to be how Jerri's actions are perceived by his employees. In short, Jerri has gained and/or earned the reputation of treating his employee unfairly. He needs to take action in such a way that he can deal directly and effectively with those concerns. He needs to contact Human Resources and/or seek the help of experienced labor relations counsel.

A further complication here is that if Jerri meets with his employees, whether all of them or just those whom Bill identified, to discuss their grievances and negotiate a resolution, he may give a de facto recognition

of union status to the employees, which could further extend labor law protections to all future interactions.

Therefore, Jerri needs to begin correcting the problems without appearing to do it in response to employee pressure. In fact, this is exactly the way any supervisor should approach this type of problem.

There are several steps Jerri should take:

1. Working closely with Human Resources, he should review the compensation of his employees to determine if there are any inequities, either between employees or in terms of how they compare to an outside labor market price. Any significant internal inequities should be resolved quickly and quietly.
2. He should have Human Resources review job descriptions. This review could be portrayed as a request from Human Resources to update descriptions which HR suspects may be dated. One-on-one meetings with each employee to analyze their jobs could also be used to casually listen for any other concerns employees have.
3. Jerri should also consult with Human Resources regarding company policies and the policies he enforces. Is he insisting on policies that run contrary to organizational policy?
4. Jerri might want to consider some kind of employee opinion survey as a way to gather information about employee concerns. If he did this, he would be in a good position to identify with employees what those concerns are and what he will do to address them.
5. Jerri probably needs to examine himself more closely. Is he being too hardnosed and inflexible in dealing with his employees? He should look for opportunities to move from an adversarial, authoritarian posture to one which is more consultative and participative.

One major opportunity would be to reconsider the recent warning he gave Delores Jones for lateness. While he may technically be correct, insisting that she report to work on time when she is using public transportation may, in practice, be misplaced. This is especially true when he might be able to make an adjustment that could actually improve his unit's performance. For example, Jerri could work out an informal flex-time schedule with Delores, in which she would agree to stay past normal quitting time to make up the time she missed by being late.

He could ask to meet with Delores to indicate that he has thought more about the warning and wonders now whether there might not be a better solution, which he could propose as an informal flex schedule. If she agrees, he would agree to rescind the warning.

CASE 41

Who's Telling the Truth?

Background Information

In spite of its name, the Four State Medical Supply Corporation was in fact one of the largest distributors of medical supplies and materials in the nation. Four State served hospitals and medical offices throughout the South. Joan Lloyd joined Four State as manager of the Information Systems Division not quite a year ago. Joan had been an Information Systems Department manager in a metropolitan hospital for five years prior to moving to Four State. Joan's department handled the computer information system at Four State.

The Information Systems Department was organized into three main groups: systems planning and analysis, data entry, and computer operations. All 36 people in the department shared the fourth floor of the Four State headquarters building. Even though most of the staff worked the normal 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. shift, there was round-the-clock coverage in computer operations. The non-management personnel in her department belonged to the Information Workers Union, local 818.

During her first year on the job, Joan spent much of her time working with other managers to improve the performance of the company's information processing systems. As such, she had little daily contact with the employees in her department, although she knew them and felt that she was on generally friendly terms with each. She relied on her group supervisors to handle the ongoing supervision of employees.

One day, on her way back from a meeting, Joan ran into Brenda Upton at the elevator. Brenda worked as a data-entry clerk in the Data Entry Department, which was supervised by Wilma Lane. Wilma reported directly to Joan. Brenda was also the shop steward for the unionized employees in the division, and she was known for her aggressive representation of employees in grievance matters. Brenda would advocate for an employee even when the non-unionized employees in the department had good reason to believe that the employee was wrong. This relentless pursuit to protect union members made her disliked by many in management and elsewhere.

When Joan encountered Brenda at the elevator, Brenda asked Joan if she could privately speak with her as soon as possible. Joan had some free time at the moment because of a cancelled meeting and invited Brenda into her office.

Brenda promptly took a seat in front of Joan's desk and came straight to the point: "I'm being sexually harassed by Mtombe Akilo, and I want you to make him stop. There are others who will support what I'm saying." Mtombe Akilo was a senior computer operator and supervised the midnight to 8:00 a.m. work shift.

This revelation was about the last thing Joan expected from Brenda.

"Brenda, I'm a little surprised," Joan said as she tried to recall any prior indications that there could be a problem here. "Tell me what happened."

Brenda looked directly at Joan as she told her: "It's happened a couple of times over the past six months or so. I'll be sitting at my terminal, doing my work, and when there's no one around, he'll rap on the glass partition, then hop on the work counter behind him. When I look up, he'll move his hips back and forth and touch himself in his crotch. It's disgusting."

Joan visualized the work area: The data-entry terminals faced into the computer room, which was surrounded by a floor-to-ceiling glass wall. There was a counter just inside the wall.

Joan asked Brenda: "Well, what did you do?"

Brenda paused a moment, thinking. "The second time he did it, I walked over to the computer room and told him to stop. I was upset. But he did it a few more times. Finally, I went to his boss, Matt McWilliams, to complain."

Matt McWilliams, like Brenda's boss, Wilma Lane, was a supervisor who reported directly to Joan.

"What did Matt do?" Joan inquired.

"Oh, you know men," Brenda replied off-handedly. "He listened, then just shrugged it off. He said Mtombe was probably just kidding and that I shouldn't pay any attention to it." Brenda paused for a moment. "Mtombe did it again about two weeks ago, and that's when I decided to tell you."

After a little more conversation, Joan thanked Brenda for bringing this matter to her attention and promised to do something about it soon.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, Joan called a meeting of Brenda; Brenda's boss, Wilma Lane; Mtombe; and Mtombe's boss, Matt McWilliams. Joan told them that Brenda had accused Mtombe of sexual harassment and that she wanted it to stop. She pointedly asked Matt McWilliams why he had not taken any action. He mumbled something about not thinking it was a very serious problem. The meeting broke up shortly thereafter.

For the next six weeks or so, things seemed to quiet down. Joan heard nothing further and concluded that the issue has been resolved.

It was at this time, though, that Joan was invited to attend the annual meeting of the human resources managers, which was held to brief company managers on important policies and developments. One key issue discussed in this year's conference was sexual harassment. It was during this conference that Joan looked over the company's policy in detail. Thinking back to the incident between Brenda and Mtombe, she recognized that there were some things she had not done properly and needed to correct.

For example, under Four State policy, an employee with a sexual harassment complaint should first go to his or her supervisor with the problem, unless (for obvious reasons) the employee had to go to another manager. Joan could not control or take any action on, why Brenda went to Mtombe's boss instead of her own female boss. Joan could take action on another item in the policy though: the documentation of the complaint. The policy stated that all complaints of sexual harassment had to be documented within 30 days of being reported and the document then sent to Personnel.

"Better late than never," Joan thought to herself.

She dictated to her secretary an outline of what had happened and instructed the secretary to send the document to Personnel and a copy to Brenda as soon as possible. A few days later, Personnel notified all parties—Joan, Brenda, and Mtombe—that the report had been received and would be investigated.

Brenda, clearly upset, asked to see Joan shortly after receiving the memo. Brenda's tone was belligerent and defensive: "Why did you send that report over to Personnel? I just wanted you to respond in the department."

Joan began to explain that she was required by company policy to send the report over when Brenda interrupted her: "Well if you're so concerned about policy, why didn't you send it over when you were supposed to—within 30 days? You screwed that up."

Joan was startled, but before she could respond, Brenda said sharply: "You're just trying to set me up. You and all you guys in management are just trying to get rid of me because I'm such a strong union representative. Well, it's not going to work." Brenda left Joan's office.

Before leaving work that evening, Joan sat at her desk, pondering the issue. Her thoughts turned to Mtombe Akilo. He had been with Four State for over three years, having started there shortly after immigrating to the United States from Africa. He had become a U.S. citizen two years ago. As far as Joan knew, he had consistently done a good job for the company, although his employment had not been without some stresses. For example, when he was promoted to shift supervisor, many employees in the unit complained because they did not think he was competent enough to be a supervisor; also, a little over a year ago, he found his tires slashed after a particularly troublesome disciplinary process with a few of his employees. Overall, he did not strike Joan as someone who would harass anyone, although she was aware that appearances could be very deceiving.

The next morning, Mtombe was waiting to see Joan when she arrived at her office. She invited him to take a seat. Even though Mtombe tended to be somewhat reserved, Joan could tell he was upset. He asked Joan to remove the record of Brenda's harassment accusation from his personnel file. Joan told him that she could not do this because the matter was now in the hands of Personnel. She did offer to go with him to Personnel to discuss matters, though.

Mtombe thought for a minute, then said: "I'm really innocent. I never did what Brenda said. She's just trying to ruin me." Joan saw that Mtombe was clearly shaken by these events.

"Well, why would Brenda make up such a story?" Joan wondered aloud.

"I tell you," Mtombe answered. "It's because I wake her up."

Joan was puzzled by this, and listened as Mtombe told her his story.

Joan learned from him that Brenda's mother also worked at Four State, in the kitchen area, where the workday began at 6:00 a.m. Because Brenda and her mother lived together, they also commuted together, which meant that Brenda usually arrived at work about 5:45 in the morning. To fill the time, she would go to the dark and deserted employee lounge and sleep until 8:00 a.m., when her own workday began.

When his shift was finishing up for the night, Mtombe would sometimes stop by the lounge to get a coffee or a breakfast snack from the vending machines. On a number of occasions, he inadvertently woke Benda up. This usually led to a bitter argument between them, and not long before Joan held the meeting on the harassment issue, Brenda told him that she was going to get even with him. Mtombe concluded by telling Joan: "Why would I mess with her? I'm afraid of her."

The next day, Joan received a letter from an attorney, indicating he was representing Brenda in this matter.

Joan stared out the window of her office. She now fully believed that Mtombe was innocent. One question after another raced through her mind: "Why did Brenda wait so long to bring this to the attention of management? Why did she first go to Mtombe's boss, a male, rather than go to her boss, a woman? Why did she just want me to handle it informally in the department? Brenda obviously knows the company's policy so why should she have been surprised when I followed it?" There were just too many loose ends.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. How should Joan have handled the first report of sexual harassment from Brenda? Should she have called the meeting?
2. Given the situation as it stands, what should Joan do now?

CASE DISCUSSION: Who's Telling the Truth

Summary

Joan Lloyd managed the Information Systems Division of the Four States Medical Supply Corporation. There were 36 people in her department and they were organized into three groups: planning, data entry, and operations. The operations group worked round-the-clock shifts, while the typical working day for everyone else was 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The non-management personnel were members of a union, and their shop steward was Brenda Upton. Brenda aggressively represented employees before management and was disliked by many in management and elsewhere. Brenda worked in the data-entry group.

One day, Brenda asked to talk with Joan privately. In the meeting, Brenda accused Mtombe Akilo of sexually harassing her. Mtombe, a recent immigrant from Africa and a newly naturalized U.S. citizen, supervised the midnite to 8 a.m. shift in the operations group. Brenda told Joan that when he would see her at her workstation next to the operations center, he would get her attention and make sexual gestures. Brenda indicated this began about six months ago. She initially told Mtombe to stop, then went to his supervisor to complain. Mtombe's supervisor, Matt Williams, dismissed her complaint. When Mtombe did it again two weeks ago, Brenda decided to tell Joan.

The next morning, Joan called a meeting with Brenda, Mtombe and both of their supervisors. She told them that the harassment had to stop. For the next six weeks, she heard nothing further and assumed the matter was closed.

At that time, Joan attended an internal management meeting, where she learned that she had not followed company policy on dealing with harassment matters. When she returned to her office, she filed a report on what had happened and submitted it to Personnel. Shortly thereafter, Personnel notified all parties—Joan, Brenda, and Mtombe—that they would be investigating the matter.

Brenda met with Joan again, angry that Joan brought the matter to the attention of Personnel. She accused Joan of not following procedure and of trying to pressure her because of her union position. Later Joan received a letter from a lawyer whom Brenda had hired to represent her.

The next day, Mtombe Akilo met with Joan. He was upset about the situation and asked Joan to remove the harassment accusation from his file. When Joan explained she could not do that, Mtombe claimed to be innocent and presented his version of events. According to Mtombe, Brenda came in early to work every day because she commuted with her mother, who worked in the cafeteria and began her job at 6:00 a.m. Brenda would go to the employee lounge and sleep until starting time. Near the end of his shift, Mtombe would go into the lounge and inadvertently wake her. An argument would ensue. Not long before the big meeting with Joan, Brenda threatened to get even with Mtombe.

Joan thinks back over Brenda's story and has questions about it. Why did she wait so long to say something? Why did she go to Mtombe's boss rather than to her own? Why did she want the matter kept within the Department? Joan now believes that there are too many loose ends, and that Mtombe is innocent.

Answers to Case Questions

1. How should Joan have handled the first report of sexual harassment from Brenda? Should she have called the meeting?

Joan's first obligation was to find out what kinds of internal procedures regarding sexual harassment existed within the company. She should have followed those procedures in this case.

Even without clear or specific organizational procedures, there is a standard routine for investigating sexual harassment claims which Joan could have profitably followed in this case.

1. *Obtain a full account of what happened according to the aggrieved.*

Joan should have made a written record of Brenda's claims, seeking specific dates and times of the alleged incidents. She should ask for names of witnesses. Mtombe's exact behaviors should be detailed, as well as how Brenda reacted.

Joan should make it clear in this context that she will need to talk with others about this matter, and that even though she will do her best to be discreet, some aspects of this situation will likely become common knowledge in the department.

2. *Ascertain whether the behaviors were really unwelcome and offensive to the aggrieved, or just annoying and tolerable.*

Joan should have Brenda clarify her reactions to the behaviors. Sexual conduct becomes harassment only when it is unwelcome, and Brenda's reactions are integral to determining the degree of the offense. Joan might also ask if there were any preceding discussions involving others that might have created a sexually oriented group atmosphere.

3. *Interview the alleged harasser and any witnesses.*

Joan should give Mtombe a chance to respond to Brenda's allegations. This can be done without implication of guilt by stating:

- The nature of the claims against him
- That Joan is gathering facts and that no decision will be made until all parties have had a chance to present their sides of the story.

Joan should give Mtombe an opportunity to make any general reactions, then should probe about specific events. She should take careful notes of his replies.

Joan should also talk to any witnesses. If no witnesses are named, she may want to talk with co-workers of both Mtombe and Brenda to inquire if there is any evidence, that supports the accusations, including past incidents or a context that might have influenced events. For example, did Mtombe and Brenda ever date, or were they dating at the time? Was there a general climate at the workplace that encouraged the discussion of sexual matters, and what

role did either Brenda or Mtombe play in the discussions? Were there any other conditions at play that might prompt one party or the other to lie? Joan could ask any other women in the area if they have ever been sexually harassed by anyone at the worksite.

Remind all parties that the interviews are confidential and should be kept as such.

4. *Review the evidence.*

Does the testimony hang together? A claim of harassment will be more credible if Brenda's story is internally consistent, its specific details supported by the work schedules in the department and the reports of others. A story loses credibility to the extent that there are loose ends, vague and contradictory details, conflicting reports, and other external facts that do not conform to the story as presented. Extenuating circumstances may also downgrade a story's credibility. Don't hesitate to interview people again to seek clarification to any anomalies in any of the reports.

5. *Make a decision based on the best available information. Match the discipline to the severity and likelihood of the offense.*

Write a memo to the harassing employee explaining the outcome of the investigation and what actions will be taken in response. Execute that discipline, which could take any of the following forms:

- Reminding the employe to avoid making suggestive comments
- Cautioning a work group to avoid a sexually explicit atmosphere
- Restoring lost benefits or wages to the employee
- Transferring the harasser
- Taking formal disciplinary action against the employee, ranging from a reprimand to full discharge

In this situation, Joan should reprimand Brenda's boss for not taking Brenda's claim seriously and acting accordingly.

Based upon this general procedure, Joan was not well advised to call a meeting of all parties without a prior investigation.

2. Given the situation as it stands, what should Joan do now?

The wheels are now in motion, so Joan may have a difficult, if not impossible, time pulling the plug on what has happened. Hence, she should work closely with Human Resources from this point forward.

Given that Brenda is not represented by an attorney, Joan may not have any further options other than documenting what Mtombe told her and her new opinions about the matter and forwarding that document to Human Resources.

Even so, Joan is left with certain questions that necessitate further statements from Brenda. Again, with the concurrence of counsel and Human Resources, Brenda might want to reinterview Brenda to determine how she would explain many of the anomalies in her story.

CASE 42

Shouting for Results

Background Information

As Director of Operations for the University Hospital, Fran Jackson felt proud of any achievements in the employee relations realm. She recalled how happy she felt six months ago when the employees in the Hospital Workers Union, Local 211, ratified the adoption of a new merit-pay program. True, it was not a landslide victory (41 percent of the employees in the union voted against it), but it was progress. From the time Fran joined University Hospital three years ago, she had pushed for a performance management system that would reward employees for good work. In that time, she had installed the skeletal framework of such a system in fits and starts. Then, in the most recent round of negotiations, a full-scale plan was put up for a vote, and the rest, as they say, was history.

In fact, though, the changes were less sweeping than they seemed. Partly because of Fran's initiative, there had been a procedure in place for the last 18 months for reviewing employee performance, even though there had been no immediate salary implications. Indeed, from what she heard from Sylvia Downing, head of Human Resources, employees were invariably rated highly in the evaluations. Still, as Fran figured, it was a start.

Under the newly approved plan, supervisors would continue rating their employees each year on the anniversary date of their employment with the hospital. During the first year under the full plan, all employees would receive a flat cost-of-living increase after the evaluation. However, at the start of the second year, employees would receive a merit increase to their base pay, based on their position in the salary range and their performance rating. Under the contract, the following format for salary adjustments was adopted:

Rating	Quartile Position in the Salary Range			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Outstanding	8%	6%	4%	2%
Very Good	6%	4%	2%	1%
Average	4%	2%	1%	5%
Acceptable	2%	1%	.5%	0
Not Acceptable	0	0	0	0

This format was published in the new contract and was known by both managers and employees alike. Further, employees seemed to quickly realize that their ratings in the first year could play a big role in the ratings they received the next year and that those ratings would make a difference in the raises.

In addition, University Hospital managers and supervisors understood that the adoption of this program meant that they had more power and were expected to rate employees tightly and accurately. As a result, Sylvia told Fran that there was a slight but noticeable increase in the number of average and acceptable ratings coming in. However, there was no training for managers and supervisors in how to use this process once it was adopted, and many supervisors followed their own methods for using the new performance management program.

One such manager was Pat Hudson, who supervised the Special Services group in Housekeeping. The Housekeeping group had a history of labor relations difficulties with the Administration of the hospital.

Last month, Pat evaluated four employees in her unit. Pat rated two as average and two as acceptable. One of the employees who received an average evaluation signed the appraisal form without incident. However, the other three refused to sign their forms. Shortly thereafter, the three employees filed a first-level grievance on the matter with Pat. In their grievance, they all wanted to be rated at a Very Good level and contended that Pat did not have sufficient information about their performance in order to make a fair and accurate evaluation. Pat rejected their appeal.

The employees then went to a step two grievance, which meant it came to Fran for review. It was at this point that Fran learned more of the details. According to Pat Hudson, the work of the Special Services group was at best mediocre and was often plagued by problems. Since Pat had taken over 10 months ago, she had worked to improve Special Services, but progress was very slow. Indeed, according to Pat, the three employees filing the grievance were among the biggest culprits in holding back process. Pat described their performance and the complaints and problems that seemed to resist resolutions. Fran concluded that the ratings initially given to the employees were on target.

Fran scheduled the grievance review meeting for the following week. Fran invited Pat to the meeting, as well as the three employees and their shop steward. However, when the meeting finally arrived, Fran was surprised to find two additional people in attendance. One was the president of the union local, Buck Brownly. The other was Sue Cranston, described as a representative sent from the national headquarters. They all managed to crowd into a small conference room just down the hall from Fran's office.

As Fran tried to get the meeting under way, Buck Brownly broke in: "You can save all that 'welcome' crap for others. We're here to demand that these employees have their evaluation records changed. They work hard and should be given a top rating." He glared at Fran.

Fran started to respond: "Well, that's one of the questions we're here to consider. Now, if you'll let me—"

"What do you mean 'consider'?" interrupted Betsy Williams, the shop steward. "We're not here to 'consider' anything. We want you to change those ratings, or else."

Fran let the "or else" comment slide. Fran could feel her anger starting to rise. "We'll proceed in an orderly fashion," she stated, her tone beginning to match that of the union representatives.

Juanita Perez, one of the employee's filing the grievance, then rose from her chair and pointed at Pat Hudson. She was very angry and shouted: "Why do you this, Pat? You're no good. You're just trying to give us a hard time!" The other two employees vigorously joined in, and the meeting suddenly bordered on chaos.

Fran was combating the noise and trying to regain some order when Betsy Williams beat her to it. She quieted down the employees and looked Fran square in the face. "Look," she said, "either you change these ratings or I'm bringing out all the dirty laundry in this department."

Fran knew what Betsy was referring to. When Fran was hired three years ago, she replaced a man who abused the authority of his position by hiring friends into key jobs and awarding consulting and construction contracts to cronies without always following purchasing policies and procedures. He was finally fired, although the full story of why was never really brought out. Fran was brought in to clean house, a task that she is just now starting to complete.

Betty's remark scored on a real sore spot, and Fran stood up, pushing her seat back forcefully so that it banged up against the wall. The room became quiet. "What did you say?" she leveled against Betsy.

Betsy, though calm on the surface, realized she may have pushed too far. There was a slight quiver in her voice as she replied, "You heard me."

"You're right. I did hear you." Fran was indignant, but under control. "Now you listen to me. I had nothing to do with what happened before I got here and have been working hard to get it fixed. So if you want to bring up any dirty laundry, you just do so."

She paused for just a moment, then looked at Buck Brownly. "You don't come in here and demand anything. Before you started, I was going to try to listen to what you had to say before I made up my mind. But after listening to all this, I'm convinced that Pat Hudson was right. There is no way I am going to accept this grievance. You guys get back to work. If you want a higher rating, you have to earn it."

As Fran began to pack up her things, Sue Cranston spoke. During the previous conversation, Sue had been sitting in the corner, taking notes. In a calm voice that suggested she had been through many meetings like this, she said: "Well, you can leave if you want to, but we'll just take the grievance to the next level, to the president of the hospital."

Fran knew that what Sue was describing was in fact the next step in the process. Fran did not think they were bluffing, either.

Sue continued: "Besides, you haven't responded to our basic charge. How can you say Pat was right when he didn't have enough information about their performance to make an accurate rating? Our union members here often don't work the same shift as Pat, and when they do, he seldom, if ever, checks up on how they're doing. So how can you say he's right?" Fran realized that Sue was right. Pat had kept no substantial records of the employees' performance during the year. His reports on their performance were based on a few examples of sec-

ondhand information and on inferences of who did what when. In spite of Fran's willingness to draw a deep line in the sand, she knew she was in fact standing on rather thin ice.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What kind of training and/or preparation in conducting performance appraisals should managers and supervisors receive? What steps should Pat have taken during the year to avoid the problems that were causing this grievance?
2. What should Fran have done to manage the meeting more effectively?
3. How should Fran respond to the implication of an appeal of the grievance to the next higher level? What can she do about the problem of insufficient information?

CASE DISCUSSION: Shouting for Results

Summary

Fran Jackson had been Director of Operations for the University Hospital for three years. During that time, she had made gains in improving the department. She had "cleaned up" the dubious contracting practices of her predecessor, who had been fired. She had also managed to get the local chapter of the Hospital Workers Union to approve a new merit-pay plan. Fran had worked on this plan in fits and starts since the start of her employment at the hospital. Under the plan, supervisors conducted performance appraisals of their employees. The level of the rating and the employee's current salary then determined how much of an annual increase the employee would receive. Even though the plan was adopted, hospital managers were not trained in how to use the new system.

Last month, Pat Hudson, the supervisor of Special Services in Housekeeping, completed performance appraisals on four employees. The Housekeeping group had a history of labor relations problems with the hospital administration. Three of the rated employees refused to sign the ratings, which were average and acceptable. They filed a grievance on the ratings, demanding to be rated as Very Good. They claimed Pat did not have sufficient information on which to base their evaluations.

When Pat rejected their appeal, they took it to the next level, which meant that Fran reviewed it. In discussing the matter with Pat, Fran found that the three employees were at best average performers and that the ratings were justified.

Fran called a meeting to review the grievance. In addition to Fran and Pat, the following people were also in attendance: the three employees, their shop steward and two new people—Buck Brownly, the local's president, and Sue Cranston, a representative from the national union.

As Fran tried to start the meeting, Buck Brownly cut her off, demanding that the evaluation ratings be changed. The shop steward joined in, followed by the employees, and soon it seemed that the meeting was a shouting match. Order was finally restored by the shop steward, Betsy Williams. Betsy threatened to bring out the "dirty laundry" of Fran's predecessor if the evaluations weren't changed. Fran became incensed and dared Betsy to do so. She told Buck Brownly that he wasn't in a position to demand anything and that before his tirade, she had been willing to listen. However, now she was ready to fully accept the evaluations as they were stated. She told the employees to get back to work.

As she began to leave, Sue Cranston, who had been sitting quietly taking notes, began talking. She pointed out that the union was prepared to take the grievance to the next step: a meeting with the hospital's president. She also pointed out their basic charge was unanswered. That is, Pat had insufficient information about their performance because she worked a different shift and seldom checked on their performance. As a result, she did not have enough information with which to make the ratings stick.

Fran knew that Sue had a point.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What kind of training and/or preparation in performance appraisals should managers and supervisors receive? What steps should Pat have taken during the year to avoid the problems that were causing this grievance?

Supervisors should be trained in how to complete a performance appraisal program. The training should be linked to the policies and procedures in the program itself, which should require that at the start of a performance cycle, employees are notified of what the appraisal will cover and what the standards of evaluation are. The training should also teach supervisors to keep records of employee performance throughout the year. The training should also teach managers how to use the appraisal procedure consistently and reliably, including how to conduct the actual meetings themselves.

One step Pat could have taken during the year was to require the supervisor to conduct periodic review meetings with each employee to go over interim appraisals. This would have reduced the element of surprise behind the final evaluations and reduced employee motivation to contest the final ratings.

2. What should Fran have done to manage the meeting more effectively?

First, Fran should have sent a notice to the participants regarding what the agenda of the meeting would be. This agenda would start by defining the purpose of the meeting as that of collecting information.

The likely structure would follow a three-step process: (1) a restatement of the grievance (for the record), to which the grievant parties would agree, (2) a presentation of the reason for the ratings given by the supervisor, and (3) a presentation of the argument in favor of the grievant's position. Fran should note that she will review all the information collected *after* the meeting is concluded, and that she will issue a decision within some defined period of time, such as a week. She should state who should attend the meeting. She should also indicate that the meeting will be tape-recorded.

Unless there were contract provisions to the contrary, she should not have proceeded with a meeting at which two unannounced "strangers" were present. She could have insisted that the meeting was by invitation only. If the grievants had insisted that the parties be present or if contract provisions allowed same, she should have cancelled the meeting and rescheduled it. The reason for this would be that she does not want to be surprised and that she needs advance notice of whom else will be present.

Otherwise, in the context of the meeting itself, she should have asserted her control more forcefully at the outset when confronted by Buck Brownly. She should have told him in no uncertain terms that she would only conduct a meeting that was held on civil terms and that unless he could agree to following civil procedures, she would conclude the meet-

ing immediately. Assuming his assent, she should then have stated the fact-finding nature of the meeting, adding that a decision would be issued after the meeting was concluded and the information weighed. She should then have stated the procedure that would be followed.

3. How should Fran respond to the implication of an appeal of the grievance to the next higher level? What can she do about the problem of insufficient information?

Fran may be reluctant to go to the next level of review, but she should not be frightened by this tactic. She should take action, though, to strengthen her position, in case the appeal moves to the next higher level. For example, she should have Pat reconstruct a performance history for each of the grievant employees over the past year. She should issue her judgment in writing to the employees, referring to these histories for support.

CASE 43

Fixing Things Over Dinner

Background Information

"It's been almost four years since I was made supervisor," Wendy Miller told her husband, Ted, during dinner on Friday, "and I thought I had seen it all. But this past week was a new one."

Ted smiled. "What happened? Sounds like another radio ad fiasco." Wendy supervised the promotions and advertising section of the marketing division for the Heritage Valley Insurance Corporation, and Ted was kidding her about a major snafu in radio ads that had happened on the day she joined the company. Even though she had not been responsible, he never let her forget it happened "on her watch."

"No," she shot back, smiling. "No, this involved Melissa, my secretary."

"But I thought you and Melissa worked well together," Ted responded.

"So did I, at least until this week," Wendy said. She paused, sipping a glass of wine. "Let me tell you what happened." She reviewed the following facts with Ted.

Wendy hired Melissa Wolff, 24, about one year ago for the secretarial job in the department. Melissa had almost two years of college and had worked as a receptionist-secretary in a nearby doctor's office for the past two years. During the interview, Wendy felt that Melissa could be a good addition to the department.

Sure enough, Wendy was pleased that after an initial orientation period, Melissa turned out to be a great employee. She was always at work on time, was careful about completing her tasks correctly, was eager to help out and was good in dealing with the various people who came into the department.

Indeed, things had progressed so well that Wendy and Melissa became close, occasionally talking about the problems they had with the men in their lives, jobs, and family.

Wendy felt she could achieve such close relationships with her employees because she liked to let employees manage themselves. Wendy disliked the idea of acting in a "dictatorial" manner or being a "corrector," so she was perfectly happy to let Melissa and the three other employees in the department work on their own, as long as they remembered who was the final authority.

"Well, that's all well and good," Ted told her. "But I don't see what the problem is."

"I'm not finished," Wendy said.

"Well, excuuuse me," Ted said, laughing.

About two months ago, Wendy started noticing how much time Melissa was spending talking to Deborah McBride. Deborah worked as a clerk in a department on another floor of the building, and it seemed that Deborah was either visiting in this department a lot or that she and Melissa were on the phone a lot. Wendy knew that Melissa and Deborah were about the same age and shared many things in common. For example, they lived in the same apartment complex and often commuted to work together. Since their work duties never required them to work together, Wendy became concerned about the excessive amount of personal communication between them. She noticed that Deborah began running into delays in getting her work completed and that other employees in the unit were often interrupted when they were trying to complete their work.

However, with her vacation soon approaching, Wendy decided not to say anything, at least until she returned. She was hoping that all the conversation might just stop naturally.

"Unfortunately, after we returned and I went back to work, I found that they were spending more time conversing, not less," Wendy reported to Ted. "So then, last Monday, just before lunch, I noticed Deborah was coming by to visit with Melissa. She stayed about 15 minutes. As soon as she left, I called Melissa into my office."

"Melissa, do me a favor, would you please?" Wendy asked Melissa. Wendy was trying to appear casual and informal.

"Sure, what's that?" Melissa replied.

"Ask Deborah not to come into this office so often, OK?"

"Oh, OK," Melissa said.

Melissa left Wendy's office, and Wendy thought that it wasn't such a bad day after all.

However, within 30 seconds, Wendy heard a crash. "Probably dropped something," she thought. But that was followed by another crash, then a few drawer slams, and a couple of pencil slams onto the desk top.

Wendy called out, "Melissa, get back in here!"

Melissa appeared in the door.

"What's going on out there? What's the problem?"

Melissa blurted out, rather belligerently: "What do you mean, tell her not to come back in here again? I've got a right to talk to whomever I want to, and you can't make me stop. We're not doing anything wrong!"

Wendy was surprised by the intensity of Melissa's outburst. Well, as a matter of fact, you were. I've noticed that you two spend quite a bit of time each day talking about all kinds of things—but none of it is job-related. And if she's not here, you're on the phone talking about personal, outside matters."

Melissa jumped right in. "Well, you make personal phone calls, too. I know, I can see when you're on your line and I can hear who you're talking to."

With that last remark, Melissa began to cry. As she started to hurry from the office, she turned back to Wendy and told her: "If you monitor my calls, I'll just start monitoring yours. We'll just see what happens then." There was still a defiant tone to her voice.

Wendy, now worked up herself, shouted at Melissa's retreating figure, "You just do that!"

Wendy took another sip of wine, then explained to Ted: "That was on Monday. Ever since then, she's been very formal, almost icy with me. I mean, I knew she could be very defensive, and I've seen her turn into a tiger a couple of times when some media people tried to corner her with some problems. But I never expected this."

Ted was looking at his wine glass, thinking.

Wendy continued: "And then on top of it all, Deborah came into my office this afternoon. She wanted to know why I didn't say anything to her directly. She was almost as aggressive as Melissa. I was so glad when today ended."

Ted waited for a moment, then said: "Let me ask you a few questions. First, how do you think you handled the initial conversation with Melissa when you asked her to talk with Deborah? If you could do it over, how would you approach it? Second, how did you respond to Melissa's threat to monitor your calls? Finally, it sounds like you've got a festering sore on your hands. What can you do about it now to try to correct the problem?"

Wendy looked up and smiled at Ted. "What are you, my therapist?"

"No," Ted winked, "just your trainer."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. How well did Wendy handle the initial conversation with Melissa, in which she requested that Deborah not come into the office so often? How should she have conducted the discussion?
2. How should Wendy respond to Melissa's threat to monitor Wendy's calls?
3. How should Wendy deal with the problem now?

CASE DISCUSSION: Fixing Things Over Dinner

Summary

Wendy Miller supervises the Advertising Section of the Marketing Department for Heritage Valley Insurance. About one year ago, Wendy hired Melissa Wolff, 24, for the secretarial job in the department. Melissa proved to be a very reliable employee, and Wendy and Melissa became personally close. Wendy did not want to supervise in a dictatorial fashion and allowed her four employees work in their own way without close observation.

Melissa started spending quite a bit of time with Deborah McBride, an employee about Melissa's age, but who worked in another department. They lived in the same apartment complex and often commuted to work together. Soon, Deborah was spending a lot of time visiting Melissa and talking with her over the phone. Melissa's timely work production began to slide and others in the department were interrupted by the visits.

Wendy hoped that this bustle of activity would calm down while she was on vacation. However, when she returned, she found that Melissa and Deborah were visiting more than ever. After one such visit, Wendy requested that Melissa ask Deborah not come into their office so much. Melissa returned to her desk, but after she started slamming things, Wendy told her to come back into the office. A shouting match ensued, in which Melissa defended her phone conversations with Deborah and accused Wendy of spending plenty of personal time on the phone herself. In a parting shot, Melissa threatened to monitor Wendy's personal calls. After that confrontation, Melissa acted very coolly towards Wendy. Then, today, Deborah came into Wendy's office and also argued with her about what happened.

Wendy explained these events to her husband over dinner. Her husband asked her three questions, which are the basis for this assignment.

Answers to Case Questions

1. How well did Wendy handle the initial conversation with Melissa, in which she requested Deborah not come into the office so often? How should she have conducted the discussion?

Wendy could have handled the discussion much better. Wendy was trying to downplay her irritation and minimize the problem, but did so in too offhanded a manner. It clearly was an approach that did not produce desired results.

Some preliminary comments would be in order. For example, there should be some notice in the firm's orientation program or in Wendy's orientation process that notes limits on personal calls and visits. This is a standard of performance which should be established.

Also, Wendy probably should not have waited as long as she did to act. Whether she should have spoken with Deborah privately or with Melissa present—or at all—is a judgment call. Since Deborah is not one of her

employees, Wendy could not "order" her behavior. However, as supervisor of her area, she can control access to it and use of it for non-business reasons.

During the meeting, Wendy should have made the following points:

- That she needed Melissa's help in solving a matter that could become a bigger problem if it was not fixed, and that this matter involved the amount of time Melissa and Deborah spent on personal matters
- That she was not trying to stop their relationship, but was becoming concerned about how these meetings were interfering with Melissa's work. She should state the standard for personal calls during work time and provide some examples of problems.
- That she is requesting Melissa to spend less time with Deborah during work hours

She should be ready to discuss the matter with Melissa fully, but in a nonthreatening manner.

2. How should Wendy respond to Melissa's threat to monitor Wendy's calls?

This statement is totally inappropriate. It was obviously made while Melissa was very upset, but Wendy should say something about it to her. Wendy needs to decide how strong to make the message. Assuming that Wendy's personal call usage is not excessive, Melissa's threat to monitor Wendy's calls would be considered insubordinate.

There are several points that Wendy should communicate to Melissa. First, it is not Melissa's job to supervise Wendy. Second, if she does that, Wendy will consider disciplinary action for reasons of insubordination. Third, she did not appreciate Melissa's defensive and aggressive reaction to a legitimate supervisory request. Fourth, Wendy expects Melissa to show more maturity in responding to any other discussions like this in the future.

3. How should Wendy deal with the problem now?

There are two matters which need attention.

First, Melissa is harboring anger, resentment, and hurt. This residue of ill will should be addressed. Wendy should meet with Melissa and note the cold-shoulder treatment she is receiving. Wendy should reaffirm that she made a legitimate request of Melissa and that she resented Melissa's explosive reaction. She should indicate that she is willing to put the matter to rest if Melissa is willing to resume a more normal relationship. However, it would be appropriate for Wendy to pressure Melissa to decide how she wants the situation to proceed, and to force a commitment from her if she wants to resume a normal relationship. If Melissa feels unable to resume a more constructive relationship, then Wendy should

indicate that Melissa may no longer be welcome as an employee. Wendy does not have to accept Melissa's continued employment if she is going to be sullen and belligerent.

Second, Wendy needs to resolve the problem with Deborah's argumentativeness. Wendy could proceed either formally or informally. Informally, Wendy could meet with Deborah one-on-one to indicate that Deborah was out of line in confronting her. Formally, Wendy could meet with Deborah's boss to explain the circumstances and request compliance in that manner. Wendy is the judge of which course of action would produce the best results.

Note to Trainers: There are three different discussions between a supervisor and employee in this case: the initial discussion with Melissa, a second discussion with Melissa (over monitoring), and a third discussion with Deborah. Each could be the basis for role-play activities.

CASE 44

A System's Migration to New Skills

Background Information

Looking across the rows of men suits, Bob Williamson spots Pat Dekkar working with one of his employees, a sales associate. They are trying to complete a sales transaction on the new WIZARD information system. Bob watches as Pat again fumbles his way through another transaction. Almost instinctively, he rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

Bob Williamson manages the Men's Furnishing Group for the Northridge Mall store of the Dukes and Noble Department store chain. As one of the younger Group managers, Bob has charge of over 20 full-time and part-time sales and service representatives in four units: suits and outerwear, leisure clothes, shoes, and accessories. Bob has been with Dukes and Noble since joining their Management Associates Development program after graduating from college. Pat Dekkar is about 15 years older than Bob, with about that many more years experience in the retail trade. Pat began his career in a floor sales position and, after years of hard work, was promoted to supervise the Leisure Clothes Unit.

Beginning about six months ago, Dukes and Noble began a "systems migration" (as the Data Processing staff called it) of replacing the somewhat antiquated computer and information processing system with one that was more streamlined. Under the new, integrated system, all the retail functions—inventory, sales and customer tracking, returns and adjustments, accounting and profitability calculations—would be joined together and operated out of the same data base. Further, all stores would be linked together, giving headquarters better ongoing control of the company as a whole and of stores and departments in particular.

As a result of this "migration," virtually every job in the company was changed in some way. The jobs of the sales associates changed most: virtually every product, customer, or financial transaction was to be done differently. While the complexity of any one task might be small, the combined weight of all the changes resulted in major learning stresses on employees. They had to learn how to operate the system, access it, complete all transactions through it, and make any needed corrections directly on the point of sale terminal—all while the customer waited across the counter.

As the kick-off date for the conversion to the new system neared, all employees were brought in for a comprehensive four-day training program. Man-

agers and supervisors were trained first so that they could serve as aides and coaches to the other employees once the WIZARD was operational. Bob and Pat attended one of the early programs together.

Bob was impressed by how much the program covered. The trainers went through every conceivable transaction and procedure, demonstrating and explaining them. Each participant in the class was able to practice some of the procedures on the demo terminal. The notebook provided in the program was reasonably thorough, even if it was poorly organized.

As was characteristic, Pat Dekkar approached the training with gusto and enthusiasm. Pat had never worked much with computers before, and his anxiety about learning how to use the system was more than offset by his strong motivation to learn. Bob was particularly pleased with this matter because he was concerned that Pat's strong "people orientation" might not have a corresponding "technical" aptitude.

It has now been more than a month since the new system started up. All the associates in the store completed the system training shortly before the conversion date and by now, most are operating fairly well with it.

Indeed, that's what is so troubling to Bob. In spite of the training and the time on the system, Pat just hasn't made satisfactory progress mastering it. Bob sees Pat's problems in various ways, like the instance he has just witnessed. There was Pat, working with one of his sales associates, trying to complete a distinct, but not that unusual, procedure. It was clear that the associate actually could complete the procedure better than Pat. Pat was following a trial-and-error process of running through different key combinations to see if any worked. The customer was growing annoyed.

Bob thought about other instances. For example, Pat had asked Bob about how to complete the same procedure on four different occasions in the course of a ten-day period. At times, Bob would watch Pat refer a customer to another sales station or have the customer wait while he asked another associate to process a complicated transaction. At one point, Bob asked Pat to check his manual, but Pat could only say it didn't help him that much, and besides, he wasn't sure where he had left it.

On top of it all, Bob is now sensing that Pat is becoming more frustrated and stressed by the situation. He now thinks that Pat is trying to hide from Bob his discomfort with the system. In a way, this is Pat's method of signaling to Bob that Pat's knowledge of the new system cannot be discussed.

Bob wonders how much longer he can go without taking action. Already, there are some grumblings from the other associates that Pat cannot be counted on to help them with their problems. Bob has noticed how Pat's unease with the process is putting some additional burdens on the other employees, as well as the customers. Bob knows that Pat is smart enough to learn this material, but cannot understand why it is so difficult. Bob wants to help but also feels that Pat needs to show some progress—and fairly soon—or else Bob may be forced to take some actions he would rather not take.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is there a training problem?
2. What can Bob do to assist Pat in completing the learning process?
3. What should Bob expect of Pat's performance in conducting and completing his own learning?
4. How should Bob respond to Pat in the next few weeks?

CASE DISCUSSION: A System's Migration to New Skills

Summary

Bob Williamson is the manager of the Men's Furnishing Group at the Dukes and Noble's Northridge Mall store. Bob managed about 20 employees in four units. One of Bob's unit supervisors is Pat Dekkar. Pat is about 15 years older than Bob and has about that much more experience in retail sales than Bob. Bob went into the Management Associates program directly after graduating from college.

About six months ago, Dukes and Noble began a "systems migration," during which the antiquated computer and information system would be replaced by a more integrated, state-of-the-art system that allowed a number of functions to be carried out at one spot. This system linked all the different departments in the Dukes and Noble system to headquarters on a "real time" basis. The new system made profound changes in all the jobs in the company. For example, every sales associate now could make direct entries regarding virtually every product, customer, or financial transaction.

As the kick-off for the new system neared, all employees were brought in for a comprehensive four-day training program, with managers and supervisors trained first. Bob and Pat attended one of the early programs together. Bob felt that the training, while not perfect, was generally very comprehensive and helpful. Participants received a notebook. Pat approached the training with enthusiasm, although he had never worked with computers before.

It has been a month since the new system started. While all the other employees have now achieved a level of mastery, Pat has not. He shows repeatedly that he is not comfortable nor proficient in doing certain transactions. His poor performance with the system is now affecting customers as they wait for him to complete routine transactions.

Bob is sensing that Pat is becoming frustrated too. Pat seems to be hiding his discomfort from Bob. Bob would like to deal with this problem but feels that Pat does not want to discuss it. Still, the problems are mounting, and unless there is progress soon, Bob may be forced to take actions he would rather not take.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is there a training problem?

There is clearly a performance problem on Pat's part. Pat has yet to show a minimum level of proficiency in operating the new system. This problem remains after Pat has completed a formal training program and has received the same work experience as all the other employees. During that time, the other employees learned the system well enough to operate it.

It would be more precise to label the problem as more of a learning than a training problem, although they are closely linked. Indeed, the issue facing Bob is how to create some new kind of learning plan that would

help Pat move to proficiency. Unfortunately, Pat seems to be painting himself into a corner by not wishing to discuss the problems he is facing.

2. What can Bob do to assist Pat in completing the learning process?

Bob can perform several very useful tasks in working with Pat. First, he should make it possible to discuss the problem. He can do this by letting Pat know that he's noticed Pat may still be in a learning mode and that he wants to help Pat. In this communication, Bob should try to reduce the threat-producing anxiety such a meeting might provoke. Bob can do this by treating the matter not as a job-threatening event, but rather, as a natural process of learning something new. By indicating that others also struggled to learn and that it is just a matter of time before Pat picks up the new system can be a big step. Bob can also acknowledge that people learn in different ways and at different speeds, and that the task before him and Pat is how to find the learning process that will work best for Pat.

Second, Bob needs to work out with Pat a plan that will help him learn the system. This may begin by having Pat go through certain transactions so that Bob can discover where Pat is running into difficulty. Bob should prompt him to keep notes in some way. Bob should also make sure Pat finds his training manual—or gets a new one.

Pat may be making some simple mistakes that can be easily corrected. However, it's possible that by this time, Pat is facing some deeper problems. If so, Bob should work with Pat regularly to practice some transactions. Working on a demonstration and practice cycle can be effective. An alternative would be for Bob to request training and coaching assistance from someone who conducted the training.

Bob should also encourage Pat to work on these items on his own; that is, Pat should be responsible for his own learning. This may mean "playing around" with the system during off hours or at off times.

3. What should Bob expect of Pat's performance in conducting and completing his own learning?

Pat may not be very effective at managing his own learning process. Therefore, Bob should work with Pat regularly to help him do the following:

- Identify areas of skill discomfort (analyzing skills deficiencies)
- Establish learning goals (to remove the deficiency)
- Locate instructional information (be it peers, Bob, the training manual, or whatever)
- Practice the skills

Bob should make it clear that he does expect Pat to take responsibility for his learning process.

4. How should Bob respond to Pat in the next few weeks?

Bob should take a more active role in working with Pat to help him learn this new system. If Bob is not actively coaching Pat in the new skills, he should be checking with Pat regularly (at least every few days) to see how his learning is proceeding. This may require Bob to casually check out how well Pat is conducting transactions.

If a couple of weeks pass and Pat is not making progress, Bob may need to initiate stronger action.

CASE 45

The Worst Part Was That She Often Was Right

Background Information

The Winston County Savings Bank was founded in 1928, shortly before the start of the Great Depression. The institution managed to survive and grow over the years by adapting to changing markets and taking advantage of improving technology. Currently, the Winston County (as it was called) was doing well: it remained solvent and profitable during the recent troubled period in the industry.

As a recently promoted supervisor in charge of the Consumer Credit Services Department, Wanda Vaughn felt as if she was progressing along with Winston County Savings. Her department handled all aspects of consumer credit: analysis, account establishment, file maintenance, and payment processing. Indeed, she had moved into her current supervisory position just six months ago when her boss, the former head of the department, was promoted to head the newly formed Investment Services Unit. Wanda wanted to show that she could take charge and make things run effectively, so she became a very "hands-on" manager. She made decisions, took close control, and worked closely and often with the employees under her charge.

At the time of her promotion, Wanda could not have been happier. Having worked as a senior representative in the department for almost three years, she had been able to develop close working relationships with the other representatives in the department. Currently, there were four representatives in the unit. Three of the representatives were still relatively new, having been there less than one year on the average. The fourth employee, Beverly Beutell, had been in the department almost as long as Wanda, and they had a good working relationship.

"Or so I thought," she mused to herself late one afternoon after the latest run-in with Beverly. Wanda was sitting at her desk, looking out the window at the emptying parking lot. She was still trying to recover from the staff meeting that had just ended.

Wanda thought back to how things had changed between her and Beverly since Wanda had become supervisor. Before Wanda moved into her supervisory position, she and Beverly had been very friendly, even close. Wanda always respected Beverly's ability, even though she was also wary of Beverly's habit of speaking her mind directly and quickly. Wanda could understand why others

might think that Beverly was defensive and belligerent. Indeed, Beverly's quick tongue and tart manner easily put people off.

When Wanda was promoted, Beverly became the most senior person in the department. However, when it came time for Wanda to pick an assistant to help run the department, she selected another employee who was junior to Beverly in years but easier to get along with and more liked by the other employees. Beverly reacted badly to this decision, believing that she should have been selected as the department assistant manager. Since then, Wanda had noticed that Beverly directed more and more of her argumentativeness at her. For example, it seemed that Beverly would drag out staff meetings to twice their necessary length simply by asking questions and voicing concerns. The only thing these tactics seemed to do was get her to the point where she would finally say, "I think we ought to do it this way...."

As she looked out the window, Wanda thought back to the times when Beverly's actions had become a real point of friction. One instance really stood out. Shortly after taking charge of the unit, Wanda issued a change in the account-processing procedures. This change was intended to remedy a long-standing "glitch" in the system that required unnecessary work.

Within minutes of receiving the memo, Beverly was in Wanda's office. "This will never work," she said, waving the memo.

Wanda was surprised. "What do you mean, it won't work?" she replied. "Sure it will. We'll be able to cut our work load on that task by 10 percent."

"Yeah, but you forgot about the last audit and the regulation on consumer notification," Beverly said without missing a beat. "If you do this, we're going to have a worse audit next time, plus get in trouble with the customers we turn down."

Wanda realized Beverly was onto something, even if she was overstating it a bit. After thinking about Beverly's remarks, Wanda realized she had to revise parts of the new procedures.

This incident seemed to capture the nature of what their relationship had become. Even though Beverly did her job well, Wanda felt as if Beverly was always challenging her. It appeared that for every decision Wanda made and every directive she issued, Beverly was there to question it. Wanda thought Beverly was almost playing a game of "I'll get in the last word" with her, and she was becoming tired of it.

Indeed, at one point Wanda had felt compelled to tell Beverly that her behavior around Wanda might have to be taken into account during the performance appraisal.

After hearing Wanda's caution, Beverly had responded, "Well, if that's the way you feel, I'll just never say anything else."

Wanda told her, "That's not what I meant. I just want you to keep an open mind."

Beverly had seemed satisfied with that.

Then, at today's staff meeting, it happened again. This time the problem centered on Winston County's new computer system. For over a year, the bank had been preparing for a large-scale conversion to an integrated system. Even though the conversion had little direct impact on Wanda's group, it did have an

impact on other departments in big ways. As a result, Wanda wanted to make some important changes in their own processing operations to anticipate and support the conversion.

Today's meeting was devoted to explaining what the conversion would involve and what they would do differently. Wanda began the meeting by bringing everyone up to date on the status of the conversion project. After Wanda answered a few questions, she then announced the changes she was going to institute for various procedures. Wanda believed her proposed changes would be right on target, and she had decided on these changes, in part, because they were just slight modifications to current practices.

Almost as soon as she had finished, Beverly announced: "Those changes will never work. If we do that, things will be chaos around here."

Even the other employees who were used to Beverly's behavior were surprised and looked at her.

"Sure," Beverly continued, "think about it for a minute. If we start following those steps, here's what will happen." She spent the next three or four minutes reeling off a list of potential problems and difficulties.

She concluded: "I think we just ought to continue doing things as we have been. Then, after the new system is operational, we can see whether we need to do anything differently."

Wanda looked at the other employees, who seemed to be agreeing. Wanda realized that some of Beverly's ideas were in fact valid and that she did have a worthwhile point of view. Not wanting to let the meeting get too far out of hand, Wanda said something about it being late and that she appreciated everyone's reaction. She said she would get back to them with the final decision as soon as possible.

She adjourned the meeting and went back to her desk. As she watched the parking lot empty out, she wished all her problems would drive off too.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Does Wanda have a supervisory problem with Beverly? Explain your answer.
2. If there is a problem, what is it?
3. What steps could Wanda have taken in order to reduce or avoid the problem after she was promoted to the supervisor's job?
4. What steps should Wanda take now to deal with the issues at hand? Recommend specific actions and steps.

CASE DISCUSSION: The Worst Part Was That She Often Was Right

Summary

Wanda Vaughn was made supervisor of the four service representatives in the Consumer Credit Services Department of Winston County Savings Bank when the previous boss was promoted. Wanda was the senior representative in the Department at the time.

Wanda had worked closely with—and even become friendly with—Beverly Beutell. Beverly had been in the department almost as long as Wanda. Beverly tended to be very open and direct. This behavior had a tendency to put people off, making them see her as defensive and belligerent. Thus, when Wanda was promoted, she selected a more junior and more agreeable employee as her assistant manager. At that point, Wanda's relationship with Beverly began to change.

Wanda wanted to show that she could manage the department effectively, and became a very hands-on manager. She did not hesitate to make decisions and issue directives. However, it seemed to Wanda that Beverly increasingly criticized her decisions and often did so in front of the other employees. To make matters worse, Beverly was often right.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Does Wanda have a supervisory problem with Beverly?

Wanda has a problem, but it is not clear whether it is a supervisory one. Wanda is feeling threatened by Beverly's critical reactions to her decisions. However, these reactions bring up good points; that is, Beverly is providing good input. Unfortunately, that input is coming after Wanda has announced her decisions. This makes it appear that Beverly is attacking Wanda.

2. If there is a problem, what is it?

The problem centers around how Wanda is supervising Beverly and in how Wanda is interpreting Beverly's behavior.

Wanda is using a very directive supervisory behavior with Beverly, when a more participative approach is called for. By including Beverly in the decision-making and planning process, Wanda can obtain Beverly's useful input before she makes final decisions, thereby increasing the chances of securing Beverly's commitment to the decisions. Also, Beverly's comments will not come across as such direct personal attacks.

3. What steps could Wanda have taken in order to reduce or avoid the problem after she was promoted to the supervisor's job?

The problem might have been caused in part by Wanda's rejection of Beverly as an assistant manager. There are several considerations here.

First, why was it necessary to have a formally designated assistant manager? In such a small group, appointing a person as an "assistant manager" may not be necessary. It might be possible to operate on an informal, seniority basis instead.

Second, if it was necessary for Wanda to appoint an assistant manager, she should have been very careful in picking someone out of the line of seniority. In some ways, the problems Wanda is experiencing with Beverly are predictable in this context. Wanda should have used a very careful and well-defined selection procedure, identifying the criteria that were most important for the job and perhaps interviewing the job contenders. If, as a result, Beverly was still rejected for the position, Wanda should have met with her to explain why and to negotiate an effective means of working together.

4. What steps should Wanda take now to deal with the issues at hand?

Basically, Wanda should begin supervising Beverly in a more participative manner. She should include Beverly in evaluating issues and making plans.

CASE 46

Lighting a Fire

Background Information

Allison Clark was a reluctant supervisor. As executive assistant to the Commissioner of Client Services with the Department of Disability Rehabilitation, she had the responsibility to supervise the day-to-day work of a secretarial and clerical support staff in the Commissioner's office. While she liked her work, she did not enjoy supervising. Allison, white, supervised a three-person staff of female minority-group members.

Given her distaste for supervising, she was fortunate that her staff performed their work smoothly and competently, even when they were busy. Wilma Johnson was the senior secretary, having been with the Commissioner for over eight years. Wilma was very professional and competent, able to handle her various tasks skillfully and effectively. Joan Carter handled more of the technical procedures and operations associated with disability rehabilitation matters. Joan, in her position for just over a year, was just beginning to achieve proficiency in this complex area and was doing an adequate job. Both Wilma and Joan were grade 8's in the civil service system.

And then there was Lenora Haskins, a 21-year-old office clerk, grade 6. Lenora had been moved into this front office position six months ago under less than favorable circumstances. Before the transfer, she had been working as a clerk in the nearby regional administrative office. However, her performance in that job was lethargic and uninspired. She had to be supervised closely on a regular basis, and while the work she did met minimum standards, there were occasional errors and lapses. Non-exempt employees in the department belonged to the State Service Employees Union. Rather than risk problems with the union over firing her, the decision was made to move her to the Commissioner's office.

Allison saw Lenora as quiet and without much of a personality, "a real lump" as Allison put it. In addition, Lenora had very poor communication skills, and others in the office had little to do with her and showed little enthusiasm for working with or supporting her.

Lenora spent about three months learning the routine assignments associated with her new position. At that point, Allison decided to expand her responsibilities so that Lenora could serve as a back-up for most of Wilma's and some of Joan's duties, on an as-needed basis—for example, whenever either Wilma or Joan were on vacation or out sick. Both Wilma and Joan supported this plan.

The effort to cross-train Lenora met with two problems, though. The first problem became obvious fairly quickly: Lenora just did not seem to understand what was going on. She appeared to be personally uninvolved in, almost bored

by, the cross-training efforts. For example, whenever Wilma or Joan would explain a procedure, Lenora seemed to pay little attention to what they were saying, although she did take a lot of notes. Consequently, on a few occasions when Wilma or Joan was absent, Lenora could not do the work, saying she did not know how.

Lenora's reluctance to participate in the work of the office could be especially troublesome when things got busy, for she rarely pitched in and helped others. The Commissioner's office was frequently assigned special "rush" projects that had to be prepared, completed, and distributed to various field offices or constituent groups as quickly as possible. When these conditions arose, everyone was expected to help out. Too often, Lenora seemed content to sit passively at her desk, even when her work was completed, and watch as everyone else hustled to meet deadlines.

After one such particularly frustrating episode, Allison talked to Lenora privately, cautioning her about her lackadaisical approach to her work. During the conversation, Lenora mentioned that she had been taken advantage of before and felt she was being asked to do grade 8 work when she was only being paid to do grade 6 work.

This comment posed a second problem that faced Allison in cross-training Lenora. Shortly after her meeting with Lenora, she discovered that Ted Matthews, the personnel officer for the department, was concerned about this same issue. According to Ted, the union could file a grievance claiming that Lenora was in the wrong pay classification to the work assigned to her. He suggested that they avoid any union problems by giving Lenora a temporary adjustment in salary; if Lenora performed well, she would be given a permanent increase to a grade 7. Allison and Ted agreed that for them to make the increase permanent, Lenora would have to do a much better job than she was presently doing.

Ted, also a minority employee, explained the decision to Lenora in a private meeting. He also gave her a pep talk, pointing out that extra effort now would pay off down the road. Lenora's reactions were difficult to gauge, although she did not appear overly enthusiastic during or after the meeting. Allison figured it would take a little time for Ted's message to sink in and did not become immediately concerned. She knew it was unrealistic, and unfair, to expect an instantaneous transformation.

Nonetheless, over the course of the following three weeks, Allison became more and more perplexed: It appeared that Lenora simply had not "gotten the message" at all. Finally, one afternoon she had a discussion with Wilma that not only confirmed the issue, but made Allison realize the further action was necessary.

Wilma came into Allison's office shortly after lunch and closed the door. "I need to talk to you about Lenora," she began. "You know how busy we've been with the new regulations and the downsizing. I've got work piling up and Lenora is just not pitching in."

Allison knew what Wilma was talking about, having given her a couple of big assignments earlier in the day. However, Allison was also surprised by Wilma's observations. Even though Wilma had never been particularly enthusiastic about Lenora's performance, she usually implied that Lenora was doing her work acceptably.

Wilma continued: "I've got a pile of things to do and Lenora won't help out. I've asked for her assistance a couple of times, but she either ignores me or really complains about helping. And just a minute ago, when I asked her, she just looked at me and said, 'I'm not going to do that.' I need help, and I've no time to argue with anyone."

Allison leaned back in the chair, wondering what to do next.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What kind of program exists: supervisory or motivational, or both?
2. What steps should Allison take to address the problem?

CASE DISCUSSION: Lighting a Fire

Summary

Allison Clark was a reluctant supervisor. Fortunately, two of the three secretarial employees under her charge were very proficient. However, the third employee, Lenora Haskins, was another matter. Allison was white and all three of her staff were female minority employees.

Lenora, 21, had transferred into Allison's office some six months ago after proving to be a difficult employee in her field assignment. Rather than risk a fight with the union for firing her, the decision was made to move her to the "front office."

In Allison's view, Lenora was just a "lump" with little personality, poor communication skills, and little involvement with her co-workers. After a three-month orientation period, Allison wanted Lenora to learn some other tasks so that she could backup the other secretaries in the unit. Lenora's cross-training proved difficult for two reasons: (1) She did not get involved in the training process itself, consequently learning little, and (2) she resisted "pitching in" to help others when the workload demanded it. At one point, Allison talked to her about her unwillingness to help out. Lenora countered that she felt she was being taken advantage of and paid improperly for the work she was being asked to do.

Ted, the department's personnel officer, was concerned that the union might file a grievance on the issue of Lenora's being in the wrong job classification. He suggested giving her a temporary adjustment, to be made permanent on her performing successfully. Allison agreed. Ted, also a minority employee, explained the decision to Lenora and gave her a pep talk about working hard now to have things pay off later.

However, his message did not seem to get through. Three weeks after his meeting with Lenora, one of the other secretaries complained to Allison that Lenora was not helping out on a major project. In fact, the secretary had asked Lenora for help on several occasions. At one point, Lenora outright refused.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What kind of problem exists: supervisory or motivational, or both?

The main problem here is that Lenora is not performing at the minimal acceptable level, specifically in terms of contributing to the production in the office.

Poor employee performance is caused by a supervisory problem when an employee is not handled well by the supervisors and/or the organization. It is caused by a motivational problem when the employee does not expend sufficient energy to satisfactorily meet the performance standards of his or her work.

There is evidence of both supervisory and motivational problems in this case. Lenora's continued poor performance is a result of insufficient su-

pervisory and organizational attention, as well as of inadequate internal motivation on her part.

2. What steps should Allison take to address the problem?

Lenora needs a very directive manner of supervision. Standards need to be specified and her performance closely watched. The cross-training she receives should require her to demonstrate trained skills. Lenora needs to understand that her future job evaluation will be tied directly to her job performance and she should be given regular feedback on that performance. Finally, Allison and Ted should be ready to take on the union if termination seems warranted.

In this particular case, Allison should call Lenora into the office with her and Wilma. Allison should indicate that Wilma is authorized to give work assignments to her whenever the workload demands it. Allison should have Wilma reissue the directive, then ask Lenora if she will comply fully with it. Allison should note to Lenora that refusal to comply is insubordination and could be grounds for Personnel to take immediate and severe actions.

This conversation should be documented as part of a disciplinary proceeding.

CASE 47

Caught in the Act

Part 1. A New Man on Deck

Background Information

Though 25 years of hard work and good luck, Bill Johnson built up his company, Johnson Properties, from one fledgling apartment unit into a multimillion-dollar, 2,000-unit property management enterprise. Because the units were located at over 30 different sites, Johnson had to rely on five different property managers. Each manager had almost total authority and responsibility for renting and maintaining the facilities under their control, servicing the renters, and collecting payments. One property manager, Wendy Samikura, had been with Johnson for more than 10 years and was very adept in her work.

The flagship facility of the five properties for which Wendy was responsible was Armatage Towers, a 150-unit complex. Armatage Towers appealed to older couples and retired individuals.

A resident manager was responsible for the daily chores of managing and maintaining the Towers. To guarantee round-the-clock access, the resident manager's employment agreement included rent-free use of an apartment along with free utilities and phone services. In addition, the resident manager had passkeys to enter any part of the building in order to work on problems at times that were most convenient to the residents.

About two years ago, during a very hot summer, the resident manager at Armatage Towers retired. Wendy was most concerned about replacing him with someone who could work on and fix the temperamental air conditioning and other systems in the Towers. She ran a help wanted ad in the local newspapers, asking applicants to phone her office if interested.

Wendy screened the calls herself. To determine minimum qualifications, she asked each applicant about their experience in working with centrifugal air conditioners and elevators, as well as about their prior experience in managing high-rise units. She also asked what their family situation was like.

One of the phone-in applicants who impressed her most was a 35-year-old man named Frank Lupo. Frank indicated he had very strong qualifications; he was currently employed as a resident manager in a high-rise apartment-hotel combination and looking for another job that involved less commuting. He sent in a resume, which included his current employer as a reference. Wendy interviewed Frank in person and then visited his home, where she met his wife and daughter. Wendy also called his employer and asked if he would hire Frank

back, to which the manager said yes. Satisfied with his background and pleased with her impression, Wendy hired Frank Lupo for the job. Frank and his family moved into the apartment soon thereafter.

During the first year or so, things seemed to go smoothly. Wendy would regularly visit the Towers and meet with Frank to review matters. She always called him first to notify him of the meetings so that she knew he would be available. She generally heard very good things about him from the tenants, who loved his ability to fix almost any problem they had, although she did hear an occasional complaint about Frank drinking while on duty. On further investigation, she had learned of a few specific occasions when he had appeared to be somewhat intoxicated or smelled of alcohol, but as some of these instances occurred during off-hours, Wendy was not too concerned.

This period of good feeling lasted through the first year. Then one day, not long after Frank's first anniversary with the company, Wendy stopped by unannounced to talk with him about a project she had in mind. She could not locate him in the building, so she went to his apartment. After repeated knocking, Frank opened the door. He was dressed in a bathrobe, his hair was a mess, and he had not shaved in some time. He had been asleep, and although she was a good three feet away from him, Wendy could smell the unmistakable scent of alcohol. He was very drunk.

He explained that his wife had left him the night before. Wendy listened, then talked with him about the drinking. He admitted to some problems in the past with alcohol. Wendy instructed him to go to Alcoholics Anonymous, adding that he should later bring her a signed slip stating that he had attended.

A few weeks later, Wendy asked Frank if he had gone and he said yes. However, AA, because it was anonymous, would not sign a slip. After a month or so, because there were no further complaints, Wendy assumed the problem had been resolved, and things returned back to normal.

About two weeks ago, on May 15, Wendy heard an alarming report from Juanita Williams. Ms. Williams was the daughter of Mrs. Creedy, a tenant in the building. Ms. Williams, an official with the city government, regularly visited her retired mother. In early May, on an early Sunday evening, she dropped her mother off at the Towers after they had spent a day visiting in the city. Frank Lupo, walking by the car, noticed them and opened the door to help Mrs. Creedy out. While he was holding the door, Juanita Williams gave her mother a small bundle of dollar bills, worth about \$120. Frank escorted Mrs. Creedy into the building, and she went to her apartment.

Early the next day, however, Mrs. Creedy called her daughter to report that the money was missing. Curiously, Mrs. Creedy told her daughter, the chain was still on the door, so she could not understand what had happened. Juanita Williams had the police investigate, but they found no sign of forced entry. What they did find, on closer inspection, though, was that one of the links on the chain had been finely sawn in half, then replaced. They concluded it was an inside job of some sort.

Juanita Williams called to ask Wendy what could be done. Wendy promised to look into the matter immediately, and called Mrs. Creedy. In that conversation, Wendy learned from Mrs. Creedy that other tenants had also experienced thefts of money and other valuables. It appeared that although the tenants re-

ported the incidents to Frank Lupo, he had done nothing further with the reports, and this was the first time Wendy had heard about the problem.

During this same period, Wendy received the monthly phone bill for the resident manager's apartment. Looking over the bill, Wendy noticed a very unusual pattern. Many of the calls had been made to the same number, and each of these calls lasted less than one minute. The calls had been placed continually throughout the day, starting in the morning and ending in the evening. This was the first time Wendy had noticed such a pattern in Frank's phone bills. What struck her most about it was the sheer number of calls placed: during the month of May, Frank had made over 100 such calls.

Wendy contacted the phone company and asked for an explanation. They told her the number Frank had called so often was that of a beeper in an adjoining township. Because the township had a different area code, the calls were considered long-distance ones and showed on the bill.

Wendy now suspected that drugs were the source of the problem.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Evaluate the employee selection procedure Wendy used. Given the nature of this job, should Wendy have been extra careful when selecting someone for the resident manager's position? If so, what steps should Wendy have taken?
2. What actions should Wendy take now?

Part 2. Stopping the Flow

Concerned about the possibility that drugs were at the root of the problem, Wendy hired a private investigator to wiretap the phone in Frank's apartment. It was immediately apparent that Frank was indeed buying cocaine. Wendy decided to act.

On May 30 at 3 p.m., she met with Frank in the Manager's Office at the Towers. When Frank entered the office, he noticed that Wendy was there with her secretary and a resident manager from another facility. Wendy motioned for Frank to be seated in the chair across the desk from her.

Wendy wasted no time. "Frank," she said firmly, "I've come to tell you that I'm letting you go."

Frank smirked and looked at the blank faces in the room. "Sure, yeah," he laughed. "What's the real reason you're here?"

Wendy was calm on the outside, but nervous inside. "No, I'm serious. I'm going to let you go."

Frank realized she was serious and exploded. "What in the hell...! I can't believe it. What's going on?"

Wendy replied, "Frank, I just think we need to make some changes here. As you know, there have been some prob—"

Frank cut her off, shouting, "You little bitch, you can't do this to me! I'll get you!" He rose from his chair and started screaming and cursing. Wendy gave her secretary a prearranged signal; the secretary went to the outer office and called the police.

About five minutes later, two police officers arrived. Frank, who had continued to shout and act in a menacing fashion, calmed down a bit when the police came into the room. Wendy explained the situation to the police, then looked at Frank.

"Since you no longer are employed by Johnson Properties," she said, "you will have to give up the apartment. I will pay you through the end of next week; but I want you out of the apartment by then. I also want your master keys."

The last remarks reignited Frank's anger and he began to scream and curse at Wendy again. After a minute or so, the police officers moved closer to Frank and told him that he should leave the office and return to his apartment. Each officer carefully reached for one of Frank's arms. Frank realized his condition, threw the master keys on the desk in front of Wendy, and turned to leave. The police escorted him to his apartment, which was located on the opposite side of the first-floor lobby and main elevators. He continued shouting as he walked down the hall, and as he entered his apartment, he began shouting directly at the police and making threats.

The police returned to Wendy's office and suggested that they stay for a few minutes to see what would happen. Wendy was thankful. Sure enough, about five minutes later, Frank walked into the hallway and began shouting threats and curses towards the main office.

By this time, several tenants had been present at various points during this episode. They had noticed the police escorting Frank or had heard Frank screaming, and, quite naturally, had been concerned. To ensure everyone's

safety, the police remained on the scene for another half hour and cautioned Frank about his outbursts before they left.

CASE QUESTION

What actions should Wendy take now? Describe what steps she should take in regards to:

- Frank
- The tenants
- Herself

Part 3. Finishing the Story

Throughout the afternoon and evening, Frank continued to emerge periodically from his apartment, shouting and threatening others. Finally, around 11:30 p.m., the police had to be called back to restore order. During this period, Frank was observed by several tenants forcefully ripping off the name plate on his apartment door with something that looked like a knife or metal scrapper. Frank called a number of tenants and heatedly accused them of causing his problems. In particular, he called Mrs. Creedy and accused her of being responsible for his termination.

Sometime during the early evening, Frank apparently left his apartment through a back door that opened onto the covered parking garage and slashed the front tires of Wendy's car. In all the years Wendy had parked at the Towers, she had never experienced any vandalism, and it would have been an extraordinary coincidence if anyone else had attacked her car. Fortunately, none of the other cars in the garage at the time suffered any damage.

During the evening, Wendy went to each apartment in the Towers, explained to the tenants that Frank had been fired, and assured them that there was police protection in the lobby. However, some of the tenants liked Frank so much that they yelled at Wendy when she told them he was let go.

Within the next few days, Wendy issued the following written notice to all tenants:

IMPORTANT

Dear Resident:

I would like to notify you that effective immediately Frank Lupo is no longer the Resident Manager of the Towers. Christian Flores will be acting as resident manager. He has been with Johnson Properties for almost 10 years. I am sure you will find his services satisfactory. If you are in need of any repair work, please leave your request on our answering machine. We thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Very truly yours,
Wendy Samikura

Wendy authorized round-the-clock police protection in the Towers. She changed the locks to the offices and utility areas. The total cost was \$8,000.

Because of local laws regarding eviction, Wendy engaged the legal counsel used by Johnson Properties. The lawyers took several steps.

First, they issued a letter renotifying Frank that he was to leave the apartment by the due date. However, after discussions with Wendy, they conditioned the eviction notice with the offer that if he left by that date, he would be paid an additional two weeks' salary. Frank agreed in writing to the offer the next day.

Second, they filed papers with the local court to authorize eviction regardless of Frank's commitments.

Third, a few days later, after continued blustering and hysterics from Frank, they sought a restraining order from the court requiring him to stay away from and in no way contact The Towers, Johnson Properties offices, and/or the personal home of Wendy Samikura.

About a week later, Wendy received a call from the Franklin Hardware Store. Wendy and her managers purchased needed repair materials and supplies from Franklin as needed and maintained an open account with the store. The day before, Frank had placed an order to be charged to the Johnson Properties account for a large number of items. The value of the order totaled over \$1,800. He was going to return that day to collect the items. Fortunately, the nature of the order had caught the eye of one of the Franklin employees, who called Wendy to confirm the order. She, of course, cancelled it.

Finally, the day after the termination, Wendy received an impassioned letter from a tenant. The tenant charged Wendy with keeping the tenants in the dark as to what was going on. He noted the thefts, the police, and all the apparent turmoil surrounding Frank. He complained about the fear and uncertainty "all" the tenants were feeling, and demanded that Wendy provide a full explanation of what happened. The next day, Wendy met with this tenant and the president of the tenant's association, and explained what happened.

When Frank left the apartment, Wendy found he had damaged it severely.

CASE DISCUSSION: Caught in the Act

Summary: Part 1. A New Man on Deck

Wendy Samikura was one of the property managers with Johnson Properties. She was responsible for, and had almost total authority for renting and maintaining five apartment complexes. The main property in this group was Armitage Towers, a 150-unit high rise that rented mainly to retired senior citizens.

Two years ago, the resident manager of the Towers resigned. The resident manager was housed in an on-site apartment so that he would be available on a round-the-clock basis to service the tenants and the building. He took care of all repairs at the Towers and had master keys to the building in case he needed to enter the units to do repair work. To replace the retiring manager, Wendy ran an ad in the local papers.

One of the applicants with whom she talked was Frank Lupo, 35. Frank claimed strong credentials in resident management. He was looking for a job with less commuting. Wendy interviewed Frank, then visited his home to meet his wife and daughter. She checked the reference to his current boss and received a good report. She hired Frank for the job, and he moved into the apartment with his family shortly thereafter.

During the first year, Wendy regularly visited Frank at the Towers to review matters, calling him first to make sure he was available. The tenants seemed to like Frank, although she did hear some complaints about his drinking on the job. These complaints were dismissed.

Not long after Frank's one-year anniversary, Wendy dropped by the Towers one afternoon unannounced. She found Frank in his apartment, drunk. Obviously he had been asleep. Frank explained that his wife had left him the night before. After some discussion, Wendy told him to go to Alcoholics Anonymous. Several weeks later, Frank told her he had gone to AA.

One day, Wendy received a report from the daughter of one of her tenants that her mother had been robbed of some cash in her apartment. She had given her mother about \$120 in cash when she dropped her mother off at the Towers. Frank had helped her from the car and into the building. However, the chain was still on the door of her mother's apartment, and it was unclear how the robbery occurred. The police found no signs of forced entry but did find that one of the links on the door's chain had been sawn through. In talking with the victim, Wendy learned for the first time that other tenants had been victims of similar thefts, which they had reported to Frank Lupo. He did nothing further with the reports.

During this period, Wendy received the phone bill for Frank's apartment. The bill contained a large number of brief calls to the same number. The calls occurred at any time, day or night. Wendy learned from the phone company that the receiving number is a beeper belonging to someone in the adjoining township. She now suspected drugs were the source of the problem.

Answers to the Case Questions

1. Evaluate the employee selection procedure Wendy used. Given the nature of this job, should Wendy have been extra careful when selecting someone for the resident manager's position? If so, what steps should Wendy have taken?

The resident manager's job is one that gives the incumbent virtually unrestricted and uncontrolled access to private living quarters. Also, many of the Towers' inhabitants are elderly. In such a situation, Wendy should have exercised extra care in selecting someone for that job. By not taking extra precautions, Wendy increased her exposure to a claim of "negligent hiring."

In particular, Wendy should have taken all reasonable steps to screen the applicant's background for any signs of potential problems, especially in terms of theft, violence, or abuse. Thus, Wendy should have followed a number of screening steps in addition to the personal interview, family interview, and reference check. In particular, Wendy should have considered using these additional steps:

- Administering a paper-and-pencil "honesty" test
- Ordering a test for drug use
- Conducting a criminal-records check

Even though her use of a family interview was a good idea, she would have been well advised to consider using any or all of these additional screens.

2. What steps should Wendy take now?

Wendy has reasonable suspicion at this point that Frank may be undertaking criminal activity through his job. She should work closely with any police investigations and should consult the company's legal counsel for guidance.

However, Wendy does not have conclusive proof of criminal activity, and any abrupt action against Frank—such as termination—could be premature and create future defamation problems. Still, Wendy should take actions to protect the residents. This situation is complicated by the existence of eviction laws that limit how a tenant can be removed from a rented property; local regulations should be consulted.

One immediate course of action Wendy could take would be to place Frank on administrative leave. This could be done either with or without pay, depending on the circumstances. If she opts for leave without pay, she could include in the notification a clause that pay would be reinstated upon the successful resolution of these matters, that is, if Frank is found innocent. She should also place him on the same status as all other tenants regarding services and utilities (including his paying his own phone bills).

A letter notifying him of these actions should be delivered and explained to him by a competent authority. While Wendy could do this herself,

there is merit in having legal counsel make the notification. Upon notification, Frank should be required to surrender all keys to the building.

With the advice of counsel, Wendy should also notify all residents that Frank is on temporary leave and is no longer available to serve as resident manager. Wendy should make some alternative manager available. Wendy should meet with the Tenants Association's executive board to review the circumstances.

If Johnson Properties has a drug policy in place, Wendy should require Frank to submit to a drug test. Without such a policy, Wendy could still require the test but might be on shakier future legal grounds. If the test proved positive (and reasonable precautions had been taken), Wendy would be in a position to terminate his employment and begin eviction.

Summary: Part 2. Stopping the Flow

Wendy hired a private investigator to tap the phone in Frank's apartment. It is immediately clear that Frank is buying cocaine.

Wendy met with Frank in the Manager's Office of the Towers shortly thereafter. She had her secretary and another resident manager from another facility with her. She told Frank that she was terminating his employment. Frank exploded in anger and began screaming. The police were called and arrived shortly thereafter. Frank calmed down momentarily, until Wendy told him he had to vacate the apartment. Frank exploded again, and the police officers escorted him down the hall. He shouted threats all the way, making a scene. Several tenants had witnessed the episode and wondered what was going on.

Answers to Case Questions

1. What actions should Wendy take now?

This situation has become dangerous. Wendy should act to protect herself, her co-workers, the tenants, and the property. It would be prudent for Wendy to hire a private security service to be on-site 24 hours a day until Frank vacates the property.

Wendy should be in close contact with the local police, notifying them of Frank's status. She should also be in close contact with the legal counsel of Johnson's Property. She should press the counsel to assist her in his rapid eviction and in creating injunctions against his stalking either her, co-workers, or tenants.

Describe what steps she should take in regards to:

- *Frank.* Her primary goals should be to remove him as quickly as possible and with as little damage as possible. Frank should be served a written notice of his disposition. It would be possible to build in incentives to encourage his rapid and minimally disruptive vacation of the apartment. Likewise, the notice should warn him that Johnson Properties will press charges for any damage done.
- *The tenants.* She needs to communicate clearly with the tenants about Frank. She needs to notify them that he no longer represents Johnson Properties and is not authorized to serve the tenants. An alternative means of service should be indicated. This notice should be reviewed so that she does not create any defamation liabilities.
- *Herself.* She should take reasonable precautions. In particular, she should avoid seeing or talking with him without someone present. Indeed, she should refer any contacts from Frank or his counsel to her lawyer.

CASE 48

Look Out Ahead

Background Information

When Tom Miller was hired to head the Administrative Services Division, he was ready for the job. After 20 years of managing procurement and logistics in the military, he knew something about running these important support activities. Now, after three years with Genco, he had the entire operation running fairly smoothly.

As head of Administrative Services, Tom was responsible for three areas: purchasing, document storage and processing, and the mail room. The mail room was supervised by Rodney James, 32. There were eight people in the mail room who handled the volume of internal communications, mail delivery, and supplies distribution needed to keep Genco running.

Replacing the supervisor in the mail room was one of the first challenges Tom faced at Genco. Not long after Tom was hired, Genco began receiving customer complaints that money they had sent was not being received. Tom carefully monitored events for a period of about two weeks, found the mail room manager was stealing the money, and fired her. Tom took a chance and promoted Rodney James to the position. At that time, Rodney had worked in the mail room for two years, but he had no supervisory experience.

As Tom thought back on it, he was generally pleased with the results: Rodney emerged as a very capable supervisor. He was good with his employees even if he was not so effective as a delegator. Because of his tendency to do too much of their work himself, he was continually "fighting fires" but doing no planning.

Lack of planning and foresight was something that Tom could just not understand. Effectively anticipating future conditions and making plans accordingly was a learned instinct in the military. Rodney's inability to make even the most simple plans was like screeching chalk on a blackboard to Tom. Indeed, Tom was good at making such plans. He knew how to make forecasts of project milestones, estimate budget requirements, perform workload estimates, create controls, prepare planning documents and reports, and execute a host of related techniques. To him, it was second nature.

Tom's frustration with Rodney's poor planning skills was coming to a head with the system conversion now underway at Genco. This conversion was a system-wide process of changing from a manual, paperbased operating system to one that was an electronic, area-networked, integrated data-base system. In short, the system conversion that was to be fully operational in two months meant a drastic reduction in paper. And this meant a major change for the mail room.

Moreover, the start-up for the new system was timed to coincide with the start of the new budget year. Tom had been cautioning Rodney for the past few weeks that he needed to prepare a budget that reflected a better staffing and workload plan.

Tom had other concerns about the staffing arrangement in Rodney's area. The biggest concern was the large gap in job titles and grades between Rodney and his staff. Rodney was a grade 12 supervisor, while everyone else was a grade 8 communications specialist. There was a grade 10 position called "senior communications specialist" that was open. Some of the communication specialists had longer tenure in the department than Rodney and were very capable.

Tom thought there could be two problems here. First, Rodney was not creating any backup for himself, in effect contributing to his delegation problems. By moving a few specialists into a senior specialist category, he could give them greater responsibility and ease his workload. Second, Tom was afraid that unless something like this was done soon, the more capable employees would leave to find better jobs.

Tom mentioned these concerns to Rodney on several occasions. Each time, Rodney would say, partly out of sincerity and partly out of frustration: "Yeah, yeah, I'll get around to it soon."

But "soon" never seemed to come.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is this a disciplinary or coaching problem for Tom?
Is it a problem at all?
2. Outline and describe a coaching process Tom should follow in working with Rodney.

CASE DISCUSSION: Look Out Ahead

Summary

Tom Miller moved to the head the Administrative Services Division of Genco after 20 years experience managing procurement and logistics in the military. In his new position, he was responsible for purchasing, document storage and the mail room. After three years, Tom had the entire operation running smoothly.

Rodney James supervised the eight employees in the mail room. Rodney was the first employee Tom hired after joining Genco. Rodney's predecessor had been caught stealing money, and Tom took a chance in promoting Rodney into the position. His gamble paid off: Tom was pleased with how Rodney emerged as a supervisor, even if Rodney tended to not delegate as well as he should. Tom saw that Rodney spent too much time fighting fires and too little time planning. Not planning effectively was a major failing in Tom's mind. Tom had been extensively trained in and worked on planning. To him, planning was second nature.

Tom's frustration with Rodney's poor planning skills was coming to a head during the current system conversion now underway at Genco. The new system promised a drastic reduction in the flow of paper at Genco. The new system was scheduled to start with the new budget year. Tom had been warning Rodney that he needed to prepare a budget that reflected a better workload and staffing plan.

Tom had other concerns as well. For example, there was no one ready as a backup to Rodney. Rodney was a grade 12 supervisor while everyone else was a grade 8 specialist. Tom thought this lack of backup contributed to Rodney's delegation problems. Each time that Tom mentioned this to Rodney, Rodney would agree and promise to get around to it soon, but "soon" never seemed to come.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is this a disciplinary or coaching problem for Tom? Is it a problem at all?

The problem is more one of potential than fact. Rodney is able to get the work done in his unit. However, there are a number of festering issues that demand attention, both by Tom and by Rodney: lack of management depth in his department, inadequate manpower planning, fire-fighting and poor delegation practices, and a budget that will apparently be insufficient. All these matters could easily become real problems.

For Tom, planning is second nature because of his prior training and work experience. However, for Rodney, planning may seem an alien and ill-defined process for which he is not prepared. Avoiding tasks with which one is uncomfortable is a natural reaction for anyone. Therefore, it would best to approach this matter not as a disciplinary problem (which assumes that the employee can do the task but chooses not to)

but as a coaching problem (where the employee would do the task if he or she knew how).

Tom needs to coach Rodney in planning.

Tom should also meet with Rodney to crystallize a management backup. Tom should act deliberately to force the appointment of someone as a backup. Tom and Rodney can make the decision about who the person will be, or Tom can let Rodney make the call. Either way, Tom should require a decision soon. Tom would need to work with Rodney, though, in clarifying the new relationship between Rodney and his new assistant. Tom would also need to coach Rodney in how to supervise this person.

2. Outline and describe a coaching process Tom should follow in working with Rodney.

There are two coaching tasks facing Tom: how to teach Rodney planning skills and how to help Rodney work with his new assistant manager.

A. *Planning skills*

There is a sequence of tasks, as well as related planning skills, on which Tom needs to work with Rodney. It will be necessary for Tom to teach Rodney the skill basics and to give him progressive assignments in which he applies those skills for Tom's review and constructive criticism.

The focus of this coaching is on manpower planning and budgeting. A likely sequence of steps would be as follows:

- Assessing the impact of the system's conversion on the mail room's workload
- Converting that impact into manpower needs
- Preparing a budget to reflect the revisions in manpower needs
- Creating a personnel and organizational transition plan to implement the changes in staffing.

Tom should work with Rodney on each step, one step at a time. He could give Rodney a week to work on each task. If possible, Tom should provide Rodney with written materials that help explain the process, including any organizational materials (such as those on budget preparation). Rodney would be expected to complete an applied assignment that involved the mail room, which Tom would review. In this way, Rodney learns a skill while completing needed production work.

B. *Working with the new assistant Manager*

Tom needs to make sure that Rodney is working with his new assistant manager effectively; that is, Rodney needs to turn over some of his work to the assistant and work with that assistant to develop his or her supervisory skills. The issues on which Tom should work with Rodney would include clarifying duties and authorities, delegating responsibilities, supporting and training

the new assistant manager, and developing a good working relationship with his new assistant.

Tom can discuss these issues with Rodney in regular sessions between the two. He can ask Rodney to detail what is going on and then offer feedback and suggestions. On occasion, Tom could have a casual talk with the new assistant manager to learn his or her opinion on how things are going.

CASE 49

A Problem in Security

Part 1. Introduction

General Systems, Inc., was a conglomerate of various high-tech, service, and defense-related business firms. Most of these businesses were on the south side of the city, located in or near a prosperous, growing industrial park. The General Systems Credit Union (GSCU) serves the thousands of General Systems employees. GSCU grew rapidly in the boom times of the late 1980s and now employed about 150 people at the headquarters site and seven different branch locations. It has operated as an independent financial institution since it was chartered.

In 1984, Robert L. Woodson—or B.L., as he liked to be called—was hired as the security officer for the credit union. B.L. swiftly earned quite a reputation as a GSCU character. For example, he took a measure of pride in letting everyone and anyone know about his intriguing past: During the 1970s, he had been an undercover narcotics officer on the city's police force; in 1983, after a difficult period that, B.L. implied, included a nervous breakdown, he received a psychiatric medical discharge from the police force.

B.L. also went out of his way to let people know that he was on sedatives to help control his mood swings. This knowledge was comforting to anyone who saw his powerfully developed 5-foot-5-inch frame (the result of years of weightlifting) or who was present during one of his violent tirades. B.L. also let everyone know that in order not to forfeit his disability pension, he could accept a salary of only \$20,000 from the credit union. Normally a job like his would have paid an annual salary of \$35,000.

As GSCU's security officer, B.L. was responsible for handling all the fraud, theft, and counterfeit matters financial institutions are heir to. When he started working at GSCU, his job duties included branch security procedures. Over the course of the next year or so, B.L. assumed several additional duties. Then he was given charge of running the mail room operation; located just across the hall from his basement office, the mail room handled all the correspondence of the company, including the large volume of customer bank statements and promotional literature GSCU regularly distributed. B.L. also was made responsible for facilities maintenance and repair. Whenever a roof leaked, a wall needed painting, or the air conditioning broke, all anyone had to do was call B.L. and he would take care of it.

B.L. reported to Jed Romanoff, senior vice president. Jed was working as a teller with GSCU when it was chartered; since then, by virtue of hard work and extreme diligence, Jed had moved into the number two position at GSCU. However, Jed's strength was in "running numbers" and keeping track of details. He spent little time managing B.L. This lack of supervision was in part due to the fact that B.L. was often looking after repairs or security matters.

B.L.'s Style: The Legend Grows

B.L.'s background and facility at assuming extra duties gave him a certain distinctive place among GSCU employees. There were a number of personal characteristics, though, that elevated him into something of a legend.

For example, B.L. seemed to thrive on his image as someone who was dangerously excitable. Some co-workers said he would deliberately work himself up when new employees were around so that he could scare them with one of his outbursts. Nonetheless, despite this explosive side, to most employees B.L. was just as exciting as excitable. It did not bother them that he liked to drink alcohol in substantial quantities at lunch, as well as on other occasions, for often he would end up contributing to a very light-hearted approach to the afternoon's work.

B.L. carried large amounts of cash with him at all times, which also impressed others. He invariably paid for lunch when out with fellow employees, and he left large tips. Indeed, at one point, a number of fellow employees made him agree to let them pay for lunch the next few times they went out. This ready cash went hand in hand with B.L.'s expensive tastes in clothes, equipment, jewelry, and travel. He would often "model" his purchases or tell co-workers about his trips, thus adding to his "legendary" status.

Everyone knew that his wife worked, too, in some kind of administrative job in a doctor's office. Although associates noticed the pattern of giving and spending that seemed so lavish to his co-workers, they assumed that the combination of his salary, disability pension, and wife's income were adequate for his practices. When asked how he could do all this, B.L. would come up with some kind of answer like an inheritance or personal savings.

B.L. also had a reputation as someone who liked women. He was a well-known flirt with many of the younger, more attractive women employees of GSCU. He was able to express his desires and intentions in a way that the women felt flattered rather than harassed. In the past year, he had chosen for a "girlfriend" a young woman who worked in Accounts Payable. They were a well-known "item" among GSCU employees.

B.L., the "legend," was therefore quite an anomaly: despite having a raw, menacing air about him, he had gained the favor of many employees in the company.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Given the fact that GSCU is a financial institution, what kinds of standards of personal conduct are appropriate for the management personnel?
2. Was there any potential problem in B.L.'s conduct?
3. If you were a manager in the company, would you have any concerns or take any action? If so, what?

B.L. in Operation

As head of security and facilities, B.L. was his own boss and made his own schedule. His boss, Jed Romanoff, gave B.L. free rein, and they seldom met to review what B.L. was doing. Given his duties, most of the time B.L. was on the road between branches, suppliers and the like.

Whenever there was a problem at a facility, the facility manager would call B.L. and ask him to get it fixed. In spite of his heavy workload, B.L. always managed to find some way to get the work done. He was known to do certain jobs himself, and sometimes in unorthodox ways. For example, the president of GSCU, Amos Baker, liked to tell the following story about B.L. and the vandalized sign.

A new date-time-temperature sign had been put up in front of a GSCU branch, but it was hidden from view by a tree. The local zoning board was threatening to withhold approval to remove the tree. Then, one weekend, "vandals" sawed the tree down and carted it away. Everyone knew that B.L. was the vandal, including Amos, who always laughed approvingly at the conclusion of the story.

How B.L. was able to get the work done was something of a mystery, though. He seemed to find contractors out of thin air, and they often worked on a handshake. There was no purchase order signed for the work he authorized. Further, the managers of the site where repair work was done never had to sign off on or approve any work order or invoice. Since the work was getting done, they didn't think anything about it.

Given the situation, it came as something of a surprise to Denise Hatfield, head of Accounting, when B.L. made such a fuss about the new vendor identification program that she had instituted in October, 1987. In order to justify not withholding taxes on some of the contractors B.L. used, Denise wanted some information about the firms, like tax identification numbers. However, B.L. refused to comply with the procedure, complaining loudly and forcefully to anyone who would listen about the "stupid bureaucrats" in Accounting.

B.L. continued with his usual practice: He would approve an invoice and sent it to Accounts Payable. (There was no signing limit on how much he could approve for payment, so any and all invoices went straight from him to Accounts Payable). Curiously, many of the invoices he sent to Accounting contained a provision for a discount if paid within five days. B.L., while often visiting his girlfriend in the department, would pick up the check and offer to deliver it to the vendor directly.

On one occasion, his girlfriend told him that a payment about which he was asking had already been put in the mail. He shrugged. "No problem," he said. "I'll just look through the mail when I go back downstairs." He had already established a rule among his staff in the mail room that all invoices, payments, and return mail were to be given to him before the mail was processed further.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Are there any further concerns about B.L.'s management and practices? If so, what?
2. Analyze the GSCU controls on the invoice payment process. Are there any problems here?
3. What are the standards that should be in place for a payment process? How should this system be changed to remove potential problems?

Part 3. A Problem in Security

Despite the general favor B.L. enjoyed at GSCU, things were not all sweetness and light. His battles with Accounting had raised the ire and concern of Denise Hatfield. This concern was magnified as a result of a chance meeting between her and B.L. when he was dining with his family at a local restaurant, late in February, 1988. At that time, Denise learned that B.L. had taken his entire family for a two-week vacation to Colorado. Denise kept wondering about how he could pay for such a vacation on top of his expensive clothes and jewelry.

In addition, Denise learned from Dorothy McPatrick that B.L.'s area had not been audited in over three years. Dorothy was the one-person auditing department of GSCU. Now 64 years old and looking forward to retirement Dorothy had avoided B.L. almost from the start, explaining that he frightened her. Denise reminded Dorothy that an audit was long overdue.

In early March, 1988, Dorothy began a routine audit of his area. All seemed to be fine except for a curious finding about three checks made out to different contractors. In looking at copies of the checks, all three were *cashed* by the same teller. According to GSCU policy, checks made payable to businesses can only be taken as deposits; it was against policy to cash these checks.

In looking further, Dorothy discovered that even though there were three different business names, two of the businesses had the same address. A quick call to Personnel confirmed that the address was B.L.'s home address. The third was sent to a post office box with the same zip code. When the endorsements were examined, although the names were different, B.L.'s characteristic chicken-scratch handwriting was clearly evident in all three. Finally, in looking at the records, B.L. made deposits of almost the same exact amounts cashed from the checks into his personal checking account a short time thereafter.

Dorothy and Denise were convinced that B.L. was embezzling funds from GSCU. They looked back through the records of contractor invoices submitted by B.L. for the past three years. Excluding the vendors, which Denise knew were legitimate and concentrating on the "5 day discount" invoices, Denise and Dorothy estimated that the credit union paid out almost \$130,000 in questionable funds during that time.

Amos Baker is briefed on the matter and decides it is time for action.

CASE QUESTION

What steps should be taken at this point?

NOTE: Banks are under regulatory guidelines to file reports with, and involve federal agencies in, suspected cases like these. Exclude those required actions from your analysis.

CASE DISCUSSION: A Problem in Security

Summary: Part 1. Introduction, B.L.'s Style: The Legend Grows

B.L. Woodson was the security officer of the General Services Credit Union. As such, he was responsible for all the criminal kinds of matters financial institutions are prone to suffer. He was also responsible for the security of the branch offices. Over time, he assumed responsibility for facilities maintenance and the operation of the mail room. He was loosely supervised by the number two man at GSCU, Jed Romanoff.

B.L. previously had worked on the city's police force as an undercover narcotics officer, and had been released from the force after suffering a nervous breakdown. He went out of his way to let everyone know this fact and a few other facts about himself:

- He was limited in the amount of money he could accept from GSCU for compensation because of a disability pension.
- He had to take sedatives to control his mood swings.
- He had expensive tastes and habits, and was in the habit of carrying a large amount of cash.

B.L. liked to have a good time. At lunch, he drank a lot and usually picked up the bills. He often flirted with female co-workers, although he seemed to have settled on a "girlfriend" in Accounts Payable recently. His wife worked in some kind of administrative job with a doctor's office.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Given the fact that GSCU is a financial institution, what kinds of standards of personal conduct are appropriate for management personnel?

Customers expect their financial institutions to manage their money safely and prudently. In part, prudence of an institution is reflected in and embodied by the actions and behaviors of its management personnel. While this does not mean that managers must be drab and dour, there is an expectation that bank managers will be conservative, sensible, and well composed.

2. Was there any potential problem in B.L.'s conduct?

Problem may be too strong a word, but there were some legitimate grounds for concern in B.L.'s conduct. For example, his drinking heavily and regularly at lunch should be a concern for reason of the poor example it sets for other employees, if not for its health implications.

His ostentatious display and use of money to buy possessions and pay for lunches, while admittedly a personal matter, should have sent up some warning signs among the rest of management. This was especially true in terms of his self-admitted income limitations.

3. If you were a manager in the company, would you have any concerns or take any actions? If so, what?

This is a judgment call for each person. Obviously, given the nature of the question, there is a suggestion that perhaps some kind of action was appropriate. During the period in which these events were unfolding, it was not at all clear that action was warranted nor what kind of action was appropriate.

In financial institutions, the auditing function is supposed to serve as an internal check. If any action were clearly signalled, it should have been that B.L.'s area should be audited on a regular schedule.

Summary: Part 2. B.L. in Operation

B.L. managed to get things done, even if his methods were something of a mystery. He was known to do some of the facilities' repairs himself, but used some contractor unknown to anyone else. He did not use any sort of formal billing, invoice, or accounting forms in this process.

When the head of Accounting instituted a new procedure requiring paperwork to process payments, B.L. hit the fan and complained loud and hard about the "stupid bureaucrats" up in Accounting. He never complied with the procedure. Instead, he followed his normal procedure: he would send invoices directly to Accounting for payment with his signature as the only authority. Since there was no policy detailing payment approval limits, Accounts Payable would go ahead and cut the check.

Some of the invoices had a discount if paid in five days provision. B.L. made a habit of picking up the checks from his girlfriend so that he could drop them off directly to the contractors within the five-day window. If the check was already sent, he would go through the mail in the mailroom before it was sent to retrieve it. He had established a rule in the mail room that all invoices, payments, and return mail were to be given to him before being processed.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Are there any further concerns about B.L.'s management and practices? If so, what?

Again, it is not abundantly clear. It seems that he uses the same kind of informal approach to getting things done that characterizes him otherwise.

The real concern at this point should be the nature of the accounting procedures and controls in place.

2. Analyze the GSCU controls on the invoice payment process. Are there any problems here?

Yes, there are some problems here. In general, there are inadequate controls on how money is distributed. For some time, there appeared to be no controls at all. Any one could send up any invoice and get it paid.

There were several gaps in controls. There was no policy on authorization limits. B.L. could just as easily have authorized payment on a check for \$10,000 as for \$10. There was no need for a second signature on the authorization. There was no way to verify the status of the firms sending in the invoice. By allowing B.L. to handle the checks directly, an important principle of separation of duties as an accounting safeguard was broken. Finally, the policy put in place requiring vendor identification was apparently not enforced: B.L. could ignore the procedure and still operate.

3. What are the standards that should be in place for a payment process? How should this system be changed to remove potential problems?

There should be separation of duties and multiple authorizations.

- There should be a policy limiting the individual signing authority of any one manager.
- For invoices above some dollar amount, the approval of a higher manager should be required.
- Vendors should be identified properly before payment is made.
- No one should be able to handle checks once they have been prepared; certainly, the person authorizing payments should not be able to retrieve the checks themselves.

Summary: Part 3. A Problem in Security

During a chance encounter at a restaurant one weekend, Denise Hatfield (the head of accounting) learned that B.L. had just taken his family for a two-week ski vacation to Colorado. Denise could not understand how he could afford such luxury.

About this time, Denise learned that B.L.'s area had not been audited in over three years. This delay was due in large part to the fact that Dorothy McPatrick, GSCU's chief auditor, was afraid of B.L. and stayed away from him. Nonetheless, Denise pushed Dorothy into an audit.

During the audit, Dorothy discovered some alarming items. There were three checks made out to three different contractors. Two of the contractors had the same address, and that address turned out to be B.L.'s home address. All three had been cashed by the same teller, and they had not been deposited according to GSCU policy. All three were endorsed by B.L.'s characteristic handwriting. Within minutes of the checks being cashed, B.L. had made deposits of similar amounts into his personal checking account.

Denise and Dorothy were convinced B.L. was embezzling money. Looking back through records, they estimated that B.L. may have taken up to \$130,000. The president is briefed and decides it is time for action.

Answers to Case Question

What steps should be taken at this point?

There are several principles that should guide the steps taken at this point. First, while there is apparent guilt here, it is not absolutely conclusive. Since any action regarding B.L. will have to be explained, it will be important not to create a potential libel or slander problem down the road. Second, B.L. needs to be removed from any possible opportunity to do any further damage to the monetary or physical assets of GSCU. Third, a full determination of the extent of B.L.'s apparent activity needs to be undertaken, along with an investigation regarding any possible accomplices. Fourth, the safety of employees involved in the situation should also be attended to. Fifth, because this is an apparent violation of Federal law, reports must be filed with regulatory bodies and with the FBI.

Therefore, the following actions are appropriate:

1. Place B.L. on administrative leave until further notice. This message should be conveyed in person by a neutral party who is also an official of management. There should be legal counsel present as a witness. Depending upon circumstances, a security agent may also be appropriate. B.L. should be instructed that he is not to visit or enter any GSCU facilities. His checking account and other personal accounts should be frozen, and he should be told of that action.
2. During this meeting, B.L. should be instructed to remove all personal possessions from his office under the watchful eye of all present. He should surrender all GSCU keys in his possession. He should be escorted off the premises.
3. His office and files should be inspected and/or sealed. The locks to his office and any other entrances to which he was accustomed to using should be changed. It would be advisable to station a security agent in a suitable location.
4. The same essential procedure should be followed for the teller who cashed the checks.
5. A more intensive audit should be conducted. Further, an investigation into B.L.'s associates should be conducted in order to ascertain whether there were any employees working with him on the scheme. In particular, his direct-report employees in the mail room as well as his "girl-friend" in Accounts Payable should be interviewed regarding their knowledge of what happened. Depending upon the results of these investigations, a final decision about what to do with B.L. must be made.
Note: In the real life case, B.L. was successfully prosecuted and sent to prison for 18 months. He was only able to repay approximately \$15,000 of the \$100,000 finally charged to him.
6. At some near point in time, employees in the organization should be given an official briefing and explanation of what happened. Attention must also be given to bringing the matter to a close after all the investigations have been conducted and final actions have been taken.

CASE 50

Who Me?

Part 1. What a Surprise

Betty Dover was the Chief Medical Technologist in Windmore General Hospital's medical laboratory. She was the general supervisor in charge of the 12 laboratory technicians (five men and seven women) who staffed the lab from 6 a.m. through 9 o'clock each night, seven days a week. Betty usually enjoyed her work, in no small part because the employees working for her did a good job and got along well together.

"Perhaps too well together," she thought to herself as she sat at her desk, thinking about the recent events that had made life more difficult for everyone.

The whirlwind centered on Nelson Washington. Nelson, 32, was married and had two children. One of four African American employees working in the laboratory, he had a bachelor's degree and previous experience as a lab assistant in a life sciences firm. When the firm downsized two years ago, he joined the Windmore Hospital staff and quickly impressed Betty with his interpersonal skills as well as his job skills. Betty had been very happy with how well he fit into the work group in the laboratory, and he turned out to be a model employee: quiet yet sociable, hard-working, and conscientious.

Betty was not aware of any personal problems between any of the employees in the lab. In fact, if anything, Betty thought the employees were a little too familiar with each other: They seemed to keep up a running commentary about sexual matters, and everyone in the unit participated in it. For example, Betty had heard a conversation the other day about bust sizes. The conversation had been general in nature, without anyone mentioning a particular lab worker, and everyone laughed and joked along, or so it seemed to Betty.

Given Nelson's style and the generally good morale, then, Betty was particularly shocked when two of the women technologists in the lab, Mary Wilson and Susan Foley, accused Nelson of propositioning them. The women, both white, worked on the evening shift. It was common for them and their friend Winona Franklin, one of the other African-American employees, to spend some time working alongside Nelson in the late afternoon when their shifts overlapped.

Not long after the discussion about bust sizes, Mary and Susan asked to speak to Betty before she left for the day. Nelson had the day off.

Mary Wilson explained what happened: "Last night, about 8:00 p.m., Nelson called the lab. I think he might have been at a bar. In any case, we talked awhile, and we kidded a little more about the bust size discussion we had the day before. Did you hear about that?"

Betty nodded her head yes.

Mary continued: "Well, he just came out and asked if I would like to meet him at the Shady Pines Motor Court, you know, that motel up on Route 96. He said he'd get us a room and show me a 'real good time,' as he put it. It was clear he wanted me to go to bed with him. I was shocked, and kind of fumbled out that I couldn't. He then asked to talk with Susan or Winona. Winona was on break, so I let Susan have the phone."

Susan picked up the conversation. "When I got on the phone, we talked for a minute or so, then basically he asked me whether I'd meet him at the Shady Pines, just what he said to Mary. I was too shocked to answer and said I had to go because we were real busy."

Mary spoke up: "We were both so shocked when we realized he propositioned us both. We talked about it all during the shift last night, and decided to tell you. We don't want that to happen again."

Betty agreed and thanked them for talking with her.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. Is this a sexual harassment problem?
2. What should Betty do about it? How should she proceed?
3. Does Betty have any responsibility for what happened?

Part 2. Why Me?

The next day, Betty met with Nelson at the first opportunity.

"Nelson, I understand you've been calling some of the women on the night shift and asking them to join you at the Shady Pines Motor Court," Betty said. "Is that true?"

Nelson was clearly surprised and a little flustered. He fidgeted for a moment, then said, "Well, sure, but I was just kidding. You know how we like to kid each other around here." He went on to explain the kinds of sexually explicit conversations in which everyone in the lab participated.

Betty listened. When he was finished, she said, "Well, Mary and Susan thought you were serious, and they were shocked and offended."

Nelson was a little defensive and maintained that he was just kidding and that they misunderstood what he was doing.

Betty drew the discussion to a close. "Nelson, I understand that you say you were just kidding, but what you did was pretty far out of line. I'm going to have put a note in your personnel file, reprimanding you for what happened."

Nelson was obviously upset by this development, but he did not argue with her very much.

In the weeks that followed, Nelson's performance and demeanor began to change rather dramatically, and none of it favorably. He started acting like he had a chip on his shoulder: instead of working well with others, he began to be more testy, more argumentative, and insulting. The others in the lab began to stay away from him, and the free flow of conversations in the lab dried up whenever he came around.

His work began to slip also. Betty noticed that he would make occasional lapses in testing procedures and report documentation. After one particularly blatant error, Betty pointed out the mistake to him. He was very angry and accused Betty of racially discriminating against him.

The situation continued to deteriorate, and finally, Betty took a first-step disciplinary action against him because of his poor job performance. According to the hospital's policies, the first stage of disciplinary action is a formal meeting between supervisor and employee. The supervisor recites the standards of performance expected and the lapses in performance found. The employee is instructed to improve. Each technician was held to a standard of completing a certain number of routine tests every day, and during this recent period, Nelson had fallen consistently beneath these standards. Betty felt that she had no choice but to take action.

An hour later, after this disciplinary meeting, Nelson stormed back into her office. He was indignant and loud. Others in the lab, as well as the patients being served, could hear the hubbub.

Nelson threw his latest report on her desk. He was screaming: "Here's this report you wanted! I hope you're happy with it, you racist! You expect me to do more than everyone else in this frigging lab. And you're always picking on me. You and everyone else here is out to get me. I just won't let that happen. I'll get you!"

He turned and marched out of her office, back to his lab station.

CASE QUESTIONS

1. How well did Betty handle the meeting and discussion with Nelson? Did she make the correct response?
2. How should she have responded to Nelson's declining job performance?
3. What concerns should Betty address now after Nelson's outburst? What should she do?

CASE DISCUSSION: Who Me?

Summary: Part 1. What a Surprise

As chief medical technologist, Betty Dover supervised the 12 technicians who staffed Windmore General Hospital's medical laboratory during the day and evening shifts. Betty was pleased with how well her staff worked on their job tasks and worked together. Although, after the recent problem with Nelson Washington, she wondered if they got along too well together.

Nelson, 32, is one of four African-American employees working in the lab. Since he joined the hospital lab two years, Nelson has been a model employee, quiet and hard-working. He is married with two children. There were five men and seven women in the lab.

The technicians in the lab had developed an informal relationship with one another. Betty was aware that their conversations were often of a sexual nature. A recent conversation about bust sizes, not about anyone in the lab in particular, was greatly enjoyed by—or so it seemed to Betty.

Shortly after this discussion, about 8 p.m. one night, Nelson called two women who were working the evening shift. The schedules of the three often overlapped, and so they were used to working together. Both women with whom he talked were white, and the third woman to whom he wished to talk (and who had been on a break) was black. After some playful chatter, Nelson invited them to join him at a local motel where he promised to show them a "good time." Both women were shocked and declined.

They complained to Betty the next day about the conversation and indicated they didn't want it to happen again. Betty thanked them for coming.

Answers to Case Questions

1. Is this a sexual harassment problem?

Yes. One employee has made explicit requests for sexual favors from other employees. These advances were unwelcome, and the women notified both the offending employee and the supervisor to that effect.

2. What should Betty do about it? How should she proceed?

Given the circumstances, Betty should act carefully yet deliberately and quickly. She should consult with the hospital's Human Resources department for guidance.

Betty should investigate the circumstances of what happened. This should begin by recording the details of the allegations made by the two women. If necessary, she may need to talk with them further to pin down exact details of what happened, who said what, when, who else was present, and the like. This information should be documented and kept in a working file.

As appropriate, she might want to confirm any details by interviewing any other employees who might have been nearby. She should also

make notes about the nature and tenor of sexual conversations that seemed to be common in the lab.

She should also interview Nelson to learn his account of the matter. A document of this interview should also be created.

If the claim of harassment is valid, Betty must take appropriate action. However, the strength of that action would need to be tempered by the prevailing climate of sexual discussions in the lab. This is not to minimize Nelson's actions, but rather, to understand that there is a preceding context to what he did.

If the claim appears questionable, Betty needs to look into why Nelson is being singled out. This could indicate other kinds of problems, such as racial discrimination, that Betty would also need to act on.

3. Does Betty have any responsibility for what happened?

In a sense, Betty does have some responsibility for what happened. Betty has been aware that the casual conversations in the lab have tended toward sexual topics. Even though there have been no voiced complaints, certainly Betty should consider the appropriateness of such discussions in a professional working climate. Presumably, patients visiting the lab overhear such conversations. Given the momentum and acceptability of conversations like this, the probability of a sexual harassment problem increases in such situations.

While Betty does not have to impose a puritanical standard on the lab, she should have acted earlier to limit the free-ranging nature of such discussions. She could invoke some standard about patient presence as the baseline for controlling such conversations.

Summary: Part 2. Why Me?

The day after the employees notified her of Nelson's call, Betty met with Nelson. She told him of the claims made against him. Nelson, somewhat unnerved by the charge, admitted that he made the call but that he was just kidding. He noted how often everyone in the lab talked about sexual matters. Betty told him the women were shocked and offended, and that even though she understood he had been kidding, she was required to put a reprimand in his file.

Nelson, though upset, did not argue much. However, in the weeks that followed, Nelson's performance fell. He became antagonistic when dealing with other employees. He also started making errors in his work. On one occasion, when Betty called a mistake to his attention, Nelson accused her of discriminating against him.

Because Nelson had fallen below standard in performing routine tests, Betty took him a first-step disciplinary action. About an hour later, after his disciplinary meeting, Nelson stormed into her office, shouting that she was racist and that everyone in the lab was out to get him. He vowed to not let that happen and that he'd get her. He marched out of the office back to his lab station.

Answers to Case Questions

1. How well did Betty handle the meeting and discussion with Nelson? Did she make the correct response?

Betty acted a bit prematurely in meeting with Nelson. She should have investigated the women's claim more fully before confronting him.

The nature of how she opened the discussion could have been better. The purpose of a fact-finding meeting is to gather information. However, her approach to the interview could seem accusatory to some people and produce exactly the kind of defensive reaction she obtained from Nelson.

A better opening might be something like:

Nelson, I need to talk with you about some charges made recently to me about your contacting some women here to meet with you at a local motel. I'm trying to find out what happened before I reach any final conclusions, and I want to give you the opportunity to talk about what happened.

Under the circumstances, unless she was responding according to hospital regulations, Betty's decision to put in a formal reprimand would be considered harsh. There are two important factors Betty should keep in mind:

- Nelson has been a model employee up to this time and has no prior record of problem behaviors. While he admitted to the claim, such action appears to be a first-time misjudgment and not a long-term pattern.
- The discussion climate Betty allowed in the lab could send the wrong signals to employees about how far discussions can and should go. While this does not excuse Nelson's actions, it does serve as a reminder that there was a context for his actions, that is, an environment that made his actions more likely to occur. Betty had not taken any actions to change that environment.

Therefore, another, less inflammatory course of action might be indicated. For example, Betty could make a strong verbal statement that sexual harassment is not tolerated in the hospital. Betty could indicate that she is making a memo of both this matter and this conversation, which she will keep in a working file. As long as there are no further complaints, Betty will destroy the memo at the end of a period of time, such as six months or a year. Betty should also indicate that she will make a general announcement to all employees in the lab, instructing them to limit and restrict their sexual oriented conversations.

2. How should she have responded to Nelson's declining job performance?

In this case, a previously competent employee's performance dropped after he was chastised. His ability to work with others deteriorated. Betty should have initiated a conversation much sooner with Nelson to probe the reasons for the problems.

While she does not have to try to solve whatever problems he may bring up, simply indicating that she is concerned about what is happening to his work and that she wants to help him through any problems could be an important step. It may be that he is harboring some residual anger or distress from the harassment situation. If so, Betty should act to reassure him.

3. What concerns should Betty address now after Nelson's outburst? What should she do?

There are several issues about which Betty should be concerned. First, Nelson appears to be experiencing deep stress as a result of this matter. Indeed, even though Betty is not clinically trained as a psychiatrist, she should be legitimately concerned about Nelson's emotional balance at this point. Once Nelson has calmed down, it may be a good idea to meet with him and express her concern. Betty should recommend that Nelson consider seeking some help in the form of an employee assistance program (if possible), a family minister, or someone who can provide similar guidance. Betty should do this in such a way that she shows her concern without appearing to question or threaten Nelson. She could also make herself available to listen to Nelson herself, to seek to resolve any work problems that she can help him with.

Second, Betty should say something at a more convenient time to mend the tension created by Nelson's shouting.

Third, it would be appropriate for Betty to be sensitive to the potential for violence in this situation. Nelson's explosive behaviors and open threat to "get you" should be taken seriously. If her efforts to encourage him to seek help do not work, she should be more attentive to the possibility that he will act on his threat. Discussions with Human Resources about how to proceed are indicated.

