

Perspectives and personalities: managing two talented individuals in Guyana: TEACHING NOTES

Case synopsis

A Jamaican marketing officer has just divorced and recently accepted an appointment with a company headquartered in Guyana, South America. She appears to be having difficulty settling into her new environment, company and the personality and work habits of her supervisor, the Vice-President of Marketing and Sales, who is Guyanese.

Case decision-maker's key concerns

As this was her first human resource management challenge since assuming duty, Dana is aware that the Group would be carefully observing both her decision and how expeditiously she resolved the conflict between these two highly qualified female staff. Should she fire Blossom or could she use her personal expertise and experience to suggest another solution to the problem?

Basic issues

The basic issue is the management of personality differences, diversity and performance and the tension between the two employees.

Teaching objectives

- 1 Understanding and management of interpersonal relations in the organisation, including:
 - perception and attribution and their impact on behaviour;
 - interpersonal conflict between staff, exacerbated by issues of national origin, length of service and a reporting relationship;
 - the implications of MBTI preferences for interpersonal relations in the realms of work approach, communication, learning and the management of stress; and

This teaching note was written by Andrea Watson-James with supervision from Dr Richard Norman, Victoria University, Wellington New Zealand, at the Caribbean Case Writing Course in Barbados, July 2004. It has been prepared to support class discussion of the case 2004-60.1 The use and circulation of teaching notes is restricted to accredited academics or other approved users.

© The Australia and New Zealand School of Government. Version 13-11-2007. Distributed by the Case Program, The Australia and New Zealand School of Government, www.anzsog.edu.au. No further reproduction or distribution permitted without prior written consent..

2 Dynamics of performance management including:

- decision-making and problem solving in a hierarchical organisation; and
- maintaining performance goals while managing diversity.

Suggested student assignment

- Critically evaluate the case; and
- Propose a solution to the problem presented.

Suggested additional readings

Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk – The 16 personality types that determine how we live, love and work*

Isabel Briggs Myers and Peter B. Myers, *Gifts Differing – Understanding personality type*, ISBN 0-89106-074-X (Paperback)

Possible teaching aids

Role play representing the principal actors in the case.

Additional points to raise

Facilitators should focus the discussion on the impact of stress on some personality types and their typical responses and reactions.

Suggested time plan

35 Minutes - Reading the Case

30 Minutes - Group discussion and analysis of the Case

30 Minutes – Discussion in Plenary Session.

Teaching suggestions

Discussion questions for use in class:

- What is your analysis of the root cause of the problem?
- What conceptual tools would you use to analyse the Case?
- How appropriate were Dana's actions? What else should she have done or considered?
- Does Dana need additional information before she can make a decision? If so, what information?
- What options does Dana have?

- What should be her decision?
- What impact will her decision have on the principal actors in the Case?
- How do you think the actors will react to Dana's decision?
- What impact will Dana's decision have on the Company?