NEW YORK STATE FBLA

Spring District Meeting

BASIC DECISION MAKING

2013

Joan Thompson has worked in the accounting department of the medical center for 8 years. She became the assistant manager. In this position her main job was to coordinate the work of nine other people. She loved the job until about 2 months ago. That’s when Elmer Burns joined her staff. Since then things have not been the same. The problem has nothing to do with Elmer’s ability. He knows standard accounting procedures inside out and is very experienced. The problem is simply that Elmer doesn’t fit in – has not tried to fit in. This may be related to his age. Now in his mid 50’s, he’s older than nearly everyone else in the department. It is Elmer’s habits and personality that divide him from other members of the department. The first day on the job, he announced that he had always had his morning break at 10:15, his lunch at noon, and that he had no interest in changing now. Elmer was a smoker. There was no rule about not smoking in the building. But, the workers decided that they would not smoke in the office area. Elmer said, he was a lifelong smoker and always found it easier to concentrate when he had a cigarette going. Since, there was no rule he would continue smoking at his desk.

These things plus some others have had a significant impact on morale. Joan has seen what was originally a friendly office turn into a tense and unpleasant place to work. When staff members have complained to her about Elmer, she’s been sympathetic but has scarcely known what to do. Beyond asking Elmer to be more considerate of other people’s feelings, and not to make a federal case out of everything, she hasn’t been sure of the best approach to take.

Something, though, must be done. Elmer’s 90 day probationary period will end soon, and the current situation can’t be allowed to become a permanent way of life in the accounting department.

What would you recommend? If you were Joan, what would you do?

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STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

BASIC DECISION MAKING

SEMI-FINAL EVENT

2013

You are a junior in high school and just sat through an assembly yesterday in school about “bullying” and how it is against school rules inside or outside of the school. The assembly went on to demonstrate how a form of “bullying” can result in some serious reactions from the person that is being “bullied”.

You are on Facebook and see that a schoolmate is sending nasty comments to another classmate. It is pretty bad stuff. It upsets you, but you are not one to get involved in other peoples issues.

You are concerned that this student might feel bad about the “bullying” that is going on about them and don’t want to see this person hurt anymore. You want to reach out and help, but you are unsure of what to do.

Should you report this? To whom should you report this to and why or why not?

NEW YORK STATE

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STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

BASIC DECISION MAKING

FINAL EVENT

2013

The floor buffer was in the storeroom, right where it was supposed to be. But the supervisor of building and grounds at Appletree Resort, Mark McCann, couldn’t understand how it got there.

Yesterday, when one of the maintenance crew had needed the buffer to wax the lobby at the main lodge, it was nowhere to be found. Mark had looked on the sign-out sheet, but no one had checked it out.

As soon as he noticed that the buffer had been returned, Mark held a staff meeting. His frustration was obvious. He asked if anyone knew where the large floor buffer was yesterday. “Oh yeah, Mr. McCann,” said Juan. “I borrowed it to help my church people do their spring cleaning. I brought it back this morning.” “You had it for two days and you hadn’t even signed it out?” Mark nearly shouted. “I want to see you in my office!”

The following conversation took place.

Mark: “You don’t seem to be very concerned about this, Juan, but you should be. The policy on using company equipment is very clear. You can ask for permission to sign things out overnight, but even with permission is granted, all equipment must be back here the next morning. No exceptions!”

Juan: “Well, Mr. McCann, you’ve only been here a month, so you wouldn’t know how we’ve always done these things. I’ve been here ten years, and I’ve always been able to borrow things when I need them. Sometimes I sign them out, and sometimes I forget.”

Mark: “Well, not any more, you don’t. If you can’t respect the rules, then I can’t trust you in this job. Starting tomorrow, you can report to the grounds crew. We’ll see if you can follow procedures when all you have to do is mow grass and trim bushes!”

The next morning, Mark got a call from Sharon Timms, the Appletree manager. “Mark”, she said, “I think we’ve got a problem here.” His decision was being overturned. Juan was to be given his old job back. And Mark was told that in the future, he’d better be more careful in handling situations that required discipline. “The last thing we need around here is a lawsuit.”

What mistakes did Mark make in handling the situation with Juan and the floor buffer? Could he have acted differently to establish himself as a fair leader? And now that his decision has been overturned, what can he do to re-establish his authority and rebuild his working relationship with Juan?