

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENT

Purpose

- Identify a management problem in the workplace that demonstrates a specific ethical behavior or leadership skill in a compromising situation.
- Propose an effective and appropriate solution to the management problem.
- Present ONE aspect of problem and solution in a formal presentation (100 points)

Case Situation

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Describe a situation that illustrates the need for an ethical decision or for leadership skills. Base the situation on an actual experience. Generate a list of possible situations based on personal or observed experience. (Create fictitious names.) Allow the following topics to stimulate your thinking.

Decisions based on

- convenience rather than rightness
- need to win, no matter cost or consequence
- rationalization
- literal obedience to rules or authority
- own needs
- group dynamics
- permission or forgiveness
- responsibility
- needs of others we know
- needs of others we don't know
- legal reason rather than a moral reason

Leader's misapplied skills of

- charisma
- commitment
- communication
- competence
- courage
- discernment
- focus
- generosity
- initiative
- passion
- relationships
- self-discipline

The Problem

The Problem

Narration and Opening

Present a narrative so that the audience experiences the situation as it unfolds. No decision takes place in a vacuum. All decisions are part of a larger climate that the presenter has an obligation to try to capture in the case. It's critical to capture the audience's attention early. A very popular and effective tactic is to begin with a brief vignette, such as an introductory sketch designed to draw the reader quickly into the case setting.

Objectivity

The presenter should not be an analyst. One word can make the difference between an objective description and biased interpretation of facts. For example, suppose you say, "Mr. X decided to hold a strategic planning meeting." This statement is a neutral description of an objective fact. But if you say, "Mr. X, unfortunately, decided to hold a population training workshop," your statement loses description of fact to an expression of the presenter's opinion. Attention to these minor details is crucial because the writer selects and frames the material presented. In selecting facts for presentation, the present must continually guard against the injection of personal values and beliefs. The writer must let the facts of the case tell the story.

Decision Points

The case must include decision points; that is, the case analyst should be provided with an opportunity to choose among alternative and equally plausible courses of action. The case writer may purposely choose to include distracters, much as the writer of multiple-choice questions includes alternatives to the correct answer. In this case, the distracters aren't meant to mislead; they are meant to help the analyst deal with the complexity of real-life decision making.

The Solution

The Solution

Steps in Reaching Solution: D-E-C-I-D-E

- Define the problem
- Examine the alternatives
- Consider how choices relate to goals
- Identify acceptable choices
- Decide on choice
- Evaluate results

Analytical Thinking and Solutions

Both creative thinking and critical thinking are important and help solve problems.

- *Creative thinking* is finding all possible ideas and making up new ones

for solutions.

- *Critical thinking* is analyzing and evaluating those ideas to see if they will work for the current situation.

Both kinds of thinking are important and help solve problems.

Thinking Hats and Solutions

Each 'Thinking Hat' is a different style of thinking. These are explained below:

- **White Hat:**
With this thinking hat you focus on the data available. Look at the information you have, and see what you can learn from it. Look for gaps in your knowledge, and either try to fill them or take account of them. This is where you analyze past trends, and try to extrapolate from historical data.
- **Red Hat:**
'Wearing' the red hat, you look at problems using intuition, gut reaction, and emotion. Also try to think how other people will react emotionally. Try to understand the responses of people who do not fully know your reasoning.
- **Black Hat:**
Using black hat thinking, look at all the bad points of the decision. Look at it cautiously and defensively. Try to see why it might not work. This is important because it highlights the weak points in a plan. It allows you to eliminate them, alter them, or prepare contingency plans to counter them. Black Hat thinking helps to make your plans "tougher" and more resilient. It can also help you to spot fatal flaws and risks before you embark on a course of action. Black Hat thinking is one of the real benefits of this technique, as many successful people get so used to thinking positively that often they cannot see problems in advance. This leaves them under-prepared for difficulties.
- **Yellow Hat:**
The yellow hat helps you to think positively. It is the optimistic viewpoint that helps you to see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it. Yellow Hat thinking helps you to keep going when everything looks gloomy and difficult.
- **Green Hat:**
The Green Hat stands for creativity. This is where you can develop creative solutions to a problem. It is a freewheeling way of thinking, in which there is little criticism of ideas.
- **Blue Hat:**
The Blue Hat stands for process control. This is the hat worn by people chairing meetings. When running into difficulties because ideas are running dry, they may direct activity into Green Hat thinking. When

contingency plans are needed, they will ask for Black Hat thinking, etc.

A variant of this technique is to look at problems from the point of view of different professionals (e.g. doctors, architects, sales directors, etc.) or different customers.

Guidelines

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1. The oral presentation should demonstrate the effective use of the following:
 - Organization
 - Introduction
 - Organization of key points
 - Transitions
 - Summary
 - Recommendations
 - Basic presentation techniques
 - Audience analysis
 - Delivery
2. The visual presentation should demonstrate the effective use of the following:
 - Rhetorical situation
 - Content
 - Visual rhetoric
 - Textual elements
 - Layout
 - Graphics
 - Writing mechanics
 - Citations
3. The time limit will be determined during class.

Resources

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