

# Case study: overview

Education



Gossip Girls Case Study Synopsis: Four women from a New Hampshire town were fired from their town jobs due to spreading a rumor about the town administrator. From the facts given, the administrator was being gossiped about having an affair with another town employee. He complained to the town council, who launched an investigation. The council then fired the four women, all longtime employees, for spreading a rumor and refuses to have anyone of them reinstated. Two of the ladies will never be allowed to apply for employment in the town again. 1. What do you think of this situation?

Do you agree with the town council's decision about the firing and refusal to reinstate the employees? Part 1 of question: Gossip in my opinion is rampant, wide spread, and contagious in some workplaces. When decision rationale is not clear, then employees spend time guessing and making assumptions about why something changed. My personal opinion about this particular situation is that it needed to be nipped in the bud immediately before it reached to the stage that it did. However, I do believe that negatively and persistently affecting employee morale is an offense that deserves disciplinary action.

Part 2 of question: I agree with the town's decision to terminate the employees if other disciplinary actions were taken before termination. In my opinion once you allow yourself to be taken out of character to the point where you become disgruntle and start expressing yourself in a derogatory manner then at that point you create a very uncomfortable working environment. However, taking in to consideration the seniority that these ladies had at the job I believe that it was kind of harsh for the town's council to refuse to reinstate them for employment and for two of them not

to be able to apply for any other job in the town. . As was stated in the case, a recent survey showed that 60 percent of the respondents indicated that the biggest pet peeve they have about their jobs is workplace gossip. Research the topic of office gossip/office rumors. Is office gossip always harmful? Discuss. Could it be useful to managers? Part 1 of question: Researchers at Indiana University say that gossip in the workplace can actually be beneficial. They state that rumors can provide insight into workplace politics and power. At the office, gossip creates camaraderie. If someone shares gossip with you, it bonds you together," says McAndrew. " It creates trust. If you're not in the loop, you feel ostracized. " From a manager's perspective, water cooler chatter can also serve a useful social function by keeping employees in line. However, my opinion is that it depends on what you are discussing and what your perspective is on the matter. When you're not the leader, says Donna Eder, Hallett's colleague and co-author of a paper, " Strategies of Adult Gossip," you don't have as much power to express yourself directly. In the work setting, it can be a tool of the oppressed," I believe that gossip is neither good nor bad, rather it is complex. Part 2 of question: Experts believe keeping abreast of workplace gossip is healthy and can be beneficial to managers and to the careers of other. Although, some gossip can be malicious, in general the activity is a type of informal communication about objects and events, as well as who's doing what, where and with whom. Gossiping forges social bonds.

However, I believe that if you are going to engage in any type of gossiping it is important to trust the people you choose to gossip with and learn what is and isn't acceptable from their responses. 3. In retrospect, what could these

four women have done differently? In my opinion these four women should have mined their business. They communicated unethically without factual information. Unethical communication distorts the truth or manipulated the listener. I believe if they didn't speculate and allowed their assumptions to take over their emotions they would have been able to deal with the matter in a more professional way.

These ladies could have asked for a meeting to share their concerns of what was being observed, and if the behavior continued then they could have also contacted the Human Resources department so that the matter is properly looked in to. However, I also believe that the specific tongue-wagging's that led to the firings were just a small part of a miserable workplace in which gossip, whispering, and an unfriendly environment are causing poor morale and interfering with the efficient performance of Town business.

I also believe that the Hooksett Four may well be the victims of a boss who just didn't like them very much and may have been seeking for the right opportunity to terminate the ladies. 4. What implications can you see for managers and communication from this story? As far as managers are concerned they can be demoted from their current positions because of false assumptions and can also loose the respect of top management and other employees because of their assumed actions. Many managers will also have a hard time confronting gossip in the workplace because it is too personal, or disrespectful.

It is because gossip in the workplace is such an incredible waste of their time. Managers do not have time and the temperament to deal with gossip, and grapevine. As far as the communication is concerned in my opinion it

will be compromised because of the rumors that have been spread and the feeling of not being able to communicate with the individuals who are spreading these rumors because of a fear of further implicating themselves by saying something wrong or not knowing what to say.