

# Alex sander case study essay sample

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



“ A Day in the Life of Alex Sander: Driving in the Fast Lane at Landon Care Products” Situation/Analysis:

Alex Sander is the newest and youngest product manager in the Toiletries Division of Landon Care Products, Inc., a cosmetics product company located in Connecticut. At 32 years of age, Alex is aggressive, driven, and an extremely hard worker. Alex is educated, obtaining his MBA from MIT Sloan, as well as an undergraduate BA degree in Economics from Stanford. When he joined Landon Care Products, he was only 4 years removed from school and had very limited worked experience. Sam Glass is Alex’s direct supervisor, the leader of the Product Group for Landon. Sam hired Alex to join his product group to lead a very important product marketing initiative for the organization. In addition, Landon has embarked on a 360 degree feedback and review process for their employees. This is a new process for Landon and for the company’s leaders and employees. There are several key issues in this case:

\* Alex has strengths and weaknesses, but his weaknesses primarily center on leadership. While he is extremely bright and hard-working, he appears to lack innate leadership skills needed to manage people. \* Alex places no value on the feedback process and comments provided by his supervisors, peers, and direct reports. This will make it very difficult for Sam to coach and guide Alex. \* Sam has a vested interest in Alex’s success because he hired Alex. If Alex fails, it will certainly reflect negatively on Sam and how he is viewed by Senior Management. \* Alex’s positive feedback and results indicate that he is extremely talented. The question, and challenge for Sam, is how to get the most out of Alex’s talent while coaching him through his

weaknesses before he loses his entire team. \* Sam is, admittedly, “intimidated” by Alex, who reports to him. This is a problem that he must overcome. Recommendations for Sam:

This is a very difficult situation for Sam Glass, and will test his leadership ability. In summary, Sam must provide coaching and guidance to a highly talented employee, that he hired (knowing some of the potential challenges). He must provide this feedback and coaching to Alex, who is an individual that places no value on the feedback and believes that his main weakness is that he only has a problem with his temper. Sam also feels somewhat intimidated by Alex, which will only make this conversation more difficult. Our recommendations for Sam are multifold.

\* First, Sam needs to quickly overcome being intimidated by Alex. He can and should have a healthy respect for Alex, but he needs to keep in mind that Alex is young and has very little actual work experience. While he is smart and talented, he is lacking key elements of leadership that come with experience, and Sam must realize this, not be intimidated by him, and coach Alex with a level of confidence.

\* Second, our recommendation is that Sam be up front and honest Alex. In doing so, Sam needs to be direct and serious. He needs to let Alex know that the organization takes this process and feedback seriously.

\* Third, Sam must not only focus on the negatives, but also provide positive feedback as well. There is significant positive up and down feedback regarding Alex, his work ethic, his commitment, confidence, etc. These are

positive skill-sets and character traits that Alex can focus on. By giving Alex balanced feedback, including focus on the positives, it will make Alex more open to recognizing the negative feedback and willing to make the changes.

\* Fourth, we would advise Sam to collaborate with Alex and develop a set of 4-5 actionable steps that he can focus on to improve some of the negatives that he needs to work through. By being specific, he will learn and think them through. These need to be measurable, and something that Alex can demonstrate. These could be (a) collaborating with others, not controlling every part of the conversation, (b) In addition to providing direction and instruction, ask key questions and challenge your team to come up with the solution, even when you know the answer. Guide them toward the answer. (c) Balance work and personal life – No emails are sent between the hours of 8PM and 7AM for 3 months – see how the team reacts.

\* Fifth, Sam needs COURAGE. He needs to make Alex understand that if he does not make the improvements outlined, he does not have a place in the organization. This may mean that Alex quits or leaves, but Sam cannot be held hostage by him and must be forthright, up front, set the expectations, and deal with whatever result happens, including terminating Alex if things do not improve. Courage.

\* Finally, if Alex is as talented and as much of a “ star” as portrayed in the case, the organization may want to invest in a professional coach for Alex, someone from the outside looking in, that can provide him feedback and help get through to him. There is potential value in providing this for a highly talented employee like Alex.