

Insubordination case study example

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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In every organizational set up drama is bound to happen once or on many occasions. As Marlene Chism would have it, as far as human relationships are concerned or exist, there is potential for conflicts and drama. Human misunderstandings are common at workplace and require a lot of training and self-control to clear the differences. Managers have to understand that such misunderstandings will occur even among the best employees despite great hiring practices in the organization. It is part of the managerial function definition to identify the causes of such misunderstandings and applying the best decisions to solve the problems before such issues affects employee performance. Happy and peaceful workers perform best due to good working relationships and positive morale.

When junior workers willfully ignore or disobey reasonable work instructions from their superiors, one would constitute such behavior as insubordination. Repeated actions of insubordination without proper responses from the authority tend to spread quickly among the employees. If an employee gets away with disobedience acts, it encourages others to follow suit since they view the manager /authority in place as weak and inconsequential. In this case, Tom Blaire’s failure to recognize Luther’s authority in assigning

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vacations is a sign of insubordination and lack of acknowledgement to authority.

Tom's action of seeking approval directly from Harry Jensen who is a more superior boss than Luther breaks the chain of command. Not only does it undermine Luther's authority to assign vacations but it also encourages others to ignore his duties and instructions as a manager. Since it has happened on many occasions without response from Luther, the repeated act affects the obedience of other employees. As we can see, Luther overheard them declaring that approval occurs through Harry only.

What should Harry have done?

Harry should not have approved Tom's vacation based on their friendship. This kind of favors creates disharmony and unwarranted gains to some employees while negatively affecting the morale of other employees in the organization. Tom's approval to go on a vacation means that another employee will get an undeserving work shift just because he does not happen to go fishing with Harry/boss. Such a worker will be demoralized and will lead to strained future relationships with his superior and even Tom. As a superior manager, Harry should have recognized and respected the managerial structure and chain of command. Even as a superior manager, he should have respected Luther's authority in assigning and approving vacations. Tampering with Luther's authority compromises his ability to oversee work patterns and production flow. He should understand that he cannot blame Luther if disruptions in production occur due to his interference with the duty roster which clearly not his area of management.

Instead of directly approving Tom's application, Harry should have run it first

with Luther to see if there would have been any inconveniences. Luther is in a better position to determine who goes and who does not since it is his duty to assign vacations. Alternatively, Harry should have dismissed Tom and instructed him to follow the right channel of command, which is going through Luther first. After learning that Tom was not fit to go for a vacation, Harry should have revoked his approval in support of Luther's decision. This is because managerial decisions need to be complementary.

Who is at Fault Harry or Tom?

Both managers are to blame for the situation with the employees. Luther should have dealt with the insubordination on the first instance that it occurred. On the first instance that Tom sought direct approval from Harry, he should have made them aware of his dilemma. He should have confronted Tom and made him understand that he is in authority as far as vacations are concerned. By making Harry aware and reporting to him about the decisions he makes would have reduced the chances of conflict in decision-making. Instead, Luther let the situation drag for long and raises concerns only after realizing that employees no longer respect him. Harry on the other hand is to blame for not backing up his immediate assistant manager. After realizing that he wrongfully approved Tom's vacation, his failure to revoke it on many occasions shows that he does not care about the consequences of his act. By practicing direct contact with employees based on friendship and without following proper chains of command, he contributes to the acts of insubordination and lack of respect for his juniors. Such acts encourage disobedience and lack of respect for authority, which affects the level of performance and production.

What If Harry brushes off Luther's concerns?

Luther needs to address the matter more carefully before it gets out of hand and he loses his authority and ability to execute orders. Since Harry Jensen was not aware of the fact that Tom was not supposed to get an approval, Luther should find the best way to address it without affecting his relationship with his superior. He should make it clear that such acts undermine his position of authority with the employees. He should make him understand that it makes him appear inconsequential as far as his authority to execute his functions is concerned. Finding a good opportunity at appropriate timing and in the right place to raise the concerns is necessary. Confronting Harry at inappropriate time and place, let us say in a meeting in front of junior employees will not work. Harry will most likely be defensive and ignore Luther since he is the superior.

Incase Luther engages the right mechanisms of making Harry aware of his concerns and he ignores or brushes them off, then it will only be proper to take further steps to solve the problem. Among other alternatives, Luther can make a further by seeking help from a higher authority. He can write to the board of directors to request them to help him in addressing Harry. A higher authority may be in a good position to convince Harry to change his behavior.

Luther should make efforts to deal with the junior employees on his own to enable him earn their respect. He can achieve this through being authoritative in issuing orders, setting boundaries, and disciplining deviant employees through warning letters and possible termination notices. Harry can also request for a review in the policies that define roles and

responsibilities to avoid conflict in execution of duties. When one is aware of his duties, cases of interference with each other's area will not arise. Finally, referring to the existing conflict resolution policies in ironing out differences will increase chances of response.

In conclusion, Insubordination in an organization occurs due to lack of respect for authority by junior employees. The situation arises due to small acts of disobedience that occur repeatedly without proper actions or consequences. Managers need to deal with insubordination as it occurs immediately in order build up proper working relations. Defining duties and responsibilities and setting up functional command structures is important for smooth flow of activities in an organization.

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