

Business management monica ashley

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Implementing Strategic Change: Monica Ashley's Experience "The Monica Ashley Case" illustrates a very conclusive example of how the correct use of power and influence in management is as important as, and sometimes even more important than, having all the right answers and being able to back them up with data. Power struggle, influence, politics, and resistance are all issues within this case study. It also provides an example that within project management it is essential to determine the key players, figure out what is important to them and utilize strategic management skills to influence the project.

Monica Ashley, a highly driven and ambitious woman was the project manager of "Project Hippocrates" at HEAL-INC. She had individual power to use the company's resources and people to accomplish job related tasks and duties. She initially had concerns about taking on the position however, with the personal encouragement and backing by the president of the company, Gary Dorr, she accepted. As the project manager, Monica had access and control over information such as reporting and data supporting the idea of purchasing a digital signal processor from an outside vendor.

She also had information about the changes of customer needs and the competitor's reactions to the changes. Therefore, her colleagues needed to depend on her to solve some of the problems they faced. This gave Monica information power. Although Monica had information power there were several types of power she was missing. Monica lacked reward power and coercive power. She couldn't give monetary bonuses, promotions or any other form of rewards to colleagues who had done well in the project.

More importantly, Monica didn't have the power to punish anyone who hurt team morale and obstructed the progress of the project by engaging in organizational politics, such as Ralph Parker and Ed Kane. Monica had several years experience in important staff positions, which helped her in transferring her knowledge to this project however she lacked expert power. She didn't have the expertise in designing and manufacturing of signal processors before taking up the project. She was relatively inexperienced when compared with Parker and she had neither made major contribution to the company nor built close relationship with her colleagues. Her colleagues also less respected her than Parker who had high informal individual power including expert power because of his expertise in analog signal processors. Parker was the vice president of signal processor design, and he believed that he was the only person that could specify the type of processor (analog or digital) to be used in the project. On occasion he discredited Monica's research and stated that it " wasn't competent". Monica chose not to align with Parker and rather continue on her track to complete the project the best way she saw fit.

Monica had legitimate power on the project with her team however she lacked with senior management. Dorr valued a " peaceful and productive environment" with no " hot competitors". Based on her prior conversation with Dorr it seemed he valued the teamwork aspect more than the expert power. Dorr was frustrated with her thinking that she had legitimate power and described her as " an Imperial Chinese Emperor. " Parker questioned her legitimate power when he shouted: " Who the hell do

you think you are, going to an outside vendor. ” Parker throughout the case used coercive power to intimidate Monica.

He taunted her by calling her a “ traitor and a renegade. ” The power used by Parker to influence Dorr was not discussed in the case since most of their interaction happened behind closed doors. Though, whatever power used, it surely was more effective than that of Monica. Parker knew how to play the political game, while Monica thought that her numbers and data are going to be enough to get her targets’ buy in. Monica’s influence tactics relied heavily on rational persuasion. Before the Hippocrates project she used this rational persuasion successfully to influence Dorr.

She backed up “ her views with data when he (Dorr) asked why she disagreed. ” Monica’s attempt to use rational persuasion during project Hippocrates did not yield the same positive results. On the other hand, Parker and Kane knew how to “ play the game” at HEAL-INC. While Monica stuck to one tactic using data and information, Parker and Kane used several tactics in an attempt to influence their targets. This included pressure and time spent forming a coalition. Pressure was exerted on Monica, and she “ ate the bait” and appeared to fight back. Monica’s appearance to fight back worked against her since managers are expected to exert self-control.

Behind closed doors, Parker and Kane brought Dorr to their side of the argument and used this coalition to marginalize Monica’s proposal.

Eventually near the conclusion of the project Monica was removed from her position. Monica realized that she was too caught up in the technical and marketing challenges and she did not focus on assessing the interests of

other key players. She had data and content for the project but lacked a foundation because she did not align with others. Her manager, Dan Stella, tried to coach Monica to be more influential but he couldn't get her to listen to his advice.

This proved to be an obstacle for her because when challenged by others Stella did not publically back her up. Stella had a lot at stake for his position in the company and therefore had to look out for himself. Monica also never addressed issues with Parker. She took her coworkers views of Parker as facts and did not bother to talk to him directly. Monica should have taken the opportunity to talk to Parker out of the context of presentations and possibly even work and learn more about him. The goal of meeting with Parker would have enabled her to build trust and rapport with him.

She should have also worked actively on finding ways to include Parker in the decision making process. By including others in the project should would have encouraged positive input and perhaps eliminated behind-the-scenes maneuvering. In regards to Stella, rather than viewing his concerns as negative she needed to step back and reassess why he was coaching her. Stella was an invaluable alliance that she should have fostered and recognized. She should have given him the promise of more controlled behavior and listening to his advice, in turn he may have been more willing to publically support her.

Monica also made mistakes with Dorr. She went head on with Parker even though Dorr specifically told her not to do so. Her intensity rather than patience and teamwork concerned Dorr. She didn't do enough talking with

Dorr about the project rather provided information in a public setting. The project required Dorr's support and she did not align with him to build a strong foundation. This misjudgement proved to be a major weakness for Monica. She harmed an opportunity that provided her direct contact with the President of the company, a contact that senior managers should embrace.

In order to be more influential in the future, Monica needs to avoid heavily relying on just the merit of her work and viewing politics with distaste. The "numbers" are not the only focus for senior management. Effective managers need to also have self-control and show a perception of being team players. Monica needs to work on her relationship with her peers and superiors at HEAL-INC. This includes reaching out to the President Gary Dorr, her boss Dan Stella and last but not least Parker and Kane. In addition to that Monica needs to adapt her influence style.

Going forward, she needs to recognize the influence of others and build trusting relationships with the key players involved. References: Porter, M. E. 1985, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, New York: Free Press. Hoskisson, Hitt, Ireland, Harrison 2008, *Competing for Advantage*, Ohio: South Western. Influence without Authority website, www.influencewithoutauthority.com Edersheim, E, *The Definitive* Drucker Cohen and Bradford, 2005, *Implementing Strategic Change: Monica Ashley's Experience Case Study*