

What a star-what a jerk: harvard business review case

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As a team leader, Jane has already touched based with her group and recognized everybody's role: Tom is "the joker," Jack is "the intellectual," Caroline is "themom" and Andy is "the top performer and troublemaker." She understands that all of them are high-paid employees and have been working as a group for a while, at least much longer than she has.

As far as the performance, Jane believes that they are high performers and make up a very interesting and strong group; although there is no evidence of it since the company has been trying to keep the top 80% of employees, so all the members but Andy could be still working because the management like them and also be considered as average performers or even lower-level.

What is true and seems to be temporary: Caroline, the oldest member, is currently having a questionable efficiency because some personal issues.

Moreover, Jane has made up her mind with the idea that Andy has not only the best performance but also a nasty and irreversible behavior, so the team is pretty much split in two sides: Andy and the rest. Based on her first impressions about the company's too-nicey-nice atmosphere, should she also think about that as Andy and the company? There is no way to know this. But what it seems to be obvious, is that the latter leader couldn't fix this whole situation up either. Andy's behavior is always affecting the group with his frequently signals of nastiness.

Since Jane's start, he's been stepping all over each member: Jack and the too-long-to-explain-flawed idea, Caroline and the "big mistake" with Andy's 8-month important prospect, Tom and some kind of hot discussion. Even over Jane's assistants, Maureen and Danielle, because of some "routine"

mistakes (scheduling and customer's information request, respectively). Hitting almost one month of e-mailing with Rick (an outside adviser, who acknowledged her as "softie" with routine mistakes), she's still taking her time to explore the group and trying to figure things out.

Maybe she has no sound experience in leadership, lacks of training, or her action plan usually has sort of long time of collection data. Nonetheless, her team is still being taken care of by itself, assuming the same roles, getting the same outcomes, and not finding a truly leader's identity and team's solution on her.

Instead an invisible and bully leader: Andy. The message she's been transmitting to them is fade and not strong enough. She has treated Andy with a very soft style in each opportunity, and he seems to be really stronger and smarter than her.

Being the highest performer, has he perhaps been waiting to get promoted and take the leader position before and now he became crazy for Jane's hiring? The reality is that everybody talks about Andy's intellectual skills. With the best numbers in the company, he has to be anyhow good at people skills and completely nice with clients -out of the organization-, doesn't he? He can be also a good "performance reference" for the rest of the team, and sure Jane has realized that (she has mentioned everybody's mistakes to her advisor and reaffirmed Andy's position about those), so she should think of this to help things work out.

Talent is a moving target and is not completely fixed, it depends on a person's motivation and experience, and how a person is managed or led.

For the group's health, she has to come out with a firm reaction about all this as soon as possible, coaching Tom, Jack and Caroline in order to increase their performance (goals and feedback and identification of training needs) and working on Andy in a one-to-one manner.

Then she has to think about enhance the cohesiveness of the group, which considering Andy's current behavior could be at least expecting a more civilized dynamism between these 2 " groups. " There is a chance that things get better. But if not, she can start thinking in different avenues on what to do with her nightmare employee, either firing him (which sounds a pretty " scary" idea for the higher levels and their profitability) or transferring him on a different team or project. That way, she would be keeping her team as a unit. -----