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biometra essay
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There were three categories of issues that Peterson had to deal with when he took over as general manager at Biometra. These three categories were: early issues, issues within the Biometra team, and other issues. Each of these factors had major consequences that affected the success of Peterson at Biometra, as well as the success of the new product launch.

The first of the three major issues were the early issues Peterson had encountered when he first began working at Biometra. The most significant of these concerns was the fact that Peterson did not have any experience dealing with new product launches and his boss didn't have the leadership skills and knowledge needed to be able to offer assistance. Originally, Peterson was supposed to report directly to the VP of peripheral vascular devices, an employee that was an "extremely seasoned executive" with experience in product launches. Unfortunately, this changed rather quickly. The vice president and several other key Biometra managers departed fairly early into Peterson's career at Biometra and he was promoted to acting general manager reporting directly to Jeff Hardy, the vice president of planning and control for the peripheral vascular division.

Hardy was a fairly recent MBA graduate with no product launch experience. Therefore, Peterson was unable to get advice or guidance from Hardy concerning a new product launch. There was also an extreme lack of communication between the upper management and the company. Neither Peterson, nor Hardy was informed about the change in the reporting structure for the launch. According to Peterson, it just "seemed to have occurred." Peterson never had a formal sit down with Hardy to go over

expectations or product launch goals. It was very much a situation where the “ blind were leading the blind.”

The second category of issues facing Peterson was internal issues among the Biometra team. Each manager had a personal issue or an issue with a team member that caused dysfunction. These issues ranged from salary to competence, commitment, and resentment. Wescott often “ rubbed people the wrong way” and Peterson felt like he had to closely monitor his communication with his employees. Burns, a new hire, developed problems working with Wescott and often distracted the group with the constant flow of new ideas. Andrews, the director of operations, probably caused the most issues. Peterson felt as if he lacked the flexibility and resourcefulness needed and that he was easily frustrated. Miczek had lost the general enthusiasm with her job, and her quality of work had waned over time as a result of issues with salary. The final manager, Hanes, was unhappy about the salary of Wescott, and employee with similar, and in some situations less, experience with medical devices.

Another issue within the Biometra team dealt with gaining support from key opinion leaders (KOL). Due to the recent management turnover, many KOLs were nervous about incorporating the new catheter into their practices. Five “ prominent” KOLs had recently indicated that they would prefer to “ delay trying out the catheters” until after the product had launched and other doctors had reported their findings. Peterson had attempted to remedy the situation by sending additional trainers, but once again his attempts were foiled by Hardy, who was unwilling to sign off. Instead two additional members, Dr. Green and Karen Cantor were added to the team. Although

Peterson was relieved that he wouldn't have to deal with the KOL issue, he was not pleased with who was chosen for the position. Peterson had previously been “verbally attacked” by Green for criticizing a unit in SciMat during the summer. He had problems with Cantor when she had become visibly upset and argumentative when Peterson had challenged some of her statements.

The final category of issues Peterson faced was “other” pre-launch problems. Biometra had decided to outsource some work which caused production issues because of the language barrier between those in the United States and the workers in Costa Rica. Production had seriously fallen behind schedule and devices coming off of production lines “failed to consistently meet specifications.” Peterson attributed much of this to the fact that important points were being missed due to the language barrier.

In addition to the issues abroad, Peterson still faced the same issues at home concerning Hardy, Wescott, Burns, and Andrews. Hardy seemed incapable of making a decision, Andrews continued to be resistant to suggestions and the tensions between Wescott and Burns continued to take a turn for the worse. All of these issues were coupled with the fact that a change in the supplier caused the operations team to spend more limited and precious time testing materials for the FDA.

The underlying causes of all these problems are communication, competency/commitment, and cultural disparities. In my opinion, the most pressing of these causes is the lack of communication within the company. This was evident from the very start of Peterson's career with the company.

When the reporting structure changed, neither Peterson nor Hardy was informed. Peterson was also under the impression that Richard Jenkins would be very involved in the launch of the product, when this changed Peterson was once again left out of the loop.

Even in person there was often an issue with communication. When Knight, Jenkins and Harper arrived at Biometra the only time they sat down and had a real conversation with Peterson was when they were informing him of his demotion. He never had the opportunity to lay out his plans for the future of the launch and discuss issues and concerns. Poor communication in a company can “ obstruct the efficiency of your organization” and “ impact the motivation of employees.” Peterson’s reaction to the abrupt change in leadership, with very little communication, is an example of how employee morale could fall with poor communication. Peterson found that he continuously felt a “ sense of dread” at work and he had several people complain to him about “ the loss of teamwork and camaraderie.”

Competency and commitment were also underlying causes of the issues within Biometra. Several of the employees were not competent enough to be in the positions they were in. Hardy and Andrews are perfect examples of this. Hardy had no experience with a new launch and seemed to have issues making a decision. Peterson felt that he had been “ consistently hampered by his inability to get either support or clear direction from Hardy.”

Andrew’s was also not competent enough for his position and there were several instances when Peterson requested that he be transferred to another department.

Cultural differences also played a large role in the problems that Biometra was having with the production plant in Costa Rica. Typically manufacturing came out of a small local facility in Woburn, but Jenkins decided to move the plant to Costa Rica to take advantage of lower operational costs. This caused a problem, mainly because this was the first time that facilities would be set up in Costa Rica.

Although Peterson did everything that was required of him to make the launch a success, he was not very effective and that is largely due to the issues he had with his boss Hardy. With each issue that arose Peterson had a developed a plan of attack that could have very well resolved the problems at hand. Yet each time, nothing was resolved. Hardy is more to blame for the issues at Biometra because he was not competent enough to make the leadership decisions that needed to be made. He often “left the monkey” on Petersons back and in many situations Peterson did not have the authority to make the changes that he proposed.

Hardy’s inability to do his job also caused Peterson to look like he was incapable of leading the Biometra team. To turn the situation around and be prepared for his meeting with Chip Knight, there were several steps that Peterson should have taken. According to Amy Gallo, with the Harvard Business Review, Peterson should “understand the incompetence with his boss, ask others for help, and also take care of himself.” He made the right move when he approached Hardy with the issues, but when he became aware that Hardy was not going to make the changes that needed to be made he then should have started taking the proper steps to keep him from looking bad. He also should have found a mentor within the business to ask

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for advice. A last resort option would have been to contact Mr. Jenkins directly and voice his concerns. This would have effectively “ gotten the monkey off his back” and onto the rightful back of Hardy.

He also should have used Situational Leadership to deal with the various problems he had within his team. “ Situational leadership means having the skills and understanding to assess a scenario you’re facing and manage it with the right leadership style.” For example Curt Andrews was a D2. He had low to some competence and low commitment. Peterson should have taken a coaching leadership style with Andrews. Melissa Miczek, on the other hand was extremely competent, but had variable commitment to the company since the raise that she had been promised was lowered by HR. She would’ve required a supporting leadership style, to help get her back on track. A good leader “ chooses the best style for the challenge at hand,” but Peterson used the same style for each employee he dealt with. Because every employee had different competency and commitment levels, he would have had better luck had he adapted his style with each employee. With Melissa, Peterson could have also utilized the expectancy theory to explain why her enthusiasm and quality of work had deteriorated over time. Melissa put forth the effort that led to high performance, but the rewards did not equate to the effort put in.

In conclusion, I believe that Peterson had the ability to have a successful and timely product launch at Biometra, but the issues that plagued the company were too great for just one person to handle. Once he realized that Hardy was not capable of handling the issues or implementing Peterson’s solutions, he should have went directly to Jenkins to report the issue. In any business

environment, communication is extremely important and it was underutilized for both parties. At the end of the day, the wrong person was fired, but for the right reason. Had Peterson took the initiative to inform his superiors that his boss, Hardy, was truly the one who had issues “ making effective organizational and staffing decisions” he would have never been fired.