

# Case study a day at seagraves

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CASE STUDY A DAY AT SEAGRAVES Dr. David Pope arrived at his office at 8:10 in a foul mood. One of his children kept him up half the night with a flu.

He is usually able to spend a couple of hours in the evening at home reading reports from his department heads, but the sick child had precluded last night. His secretary greeted him cheerily and handed him three phone messages that have come in already. Dr. Pope was the director for engineering for the Seagraves Corporation. Two of the messages were marked urgent: he decided to return George Jamison's call first. Jamison was the head of plant engineering.

“ Dave, we had a bad fire at the North Plant last night. It started in the window air conditioner checkout line. Looks like they'll be out at least a couple of weeks unless I can work my people overtime,” reported Jamison. After some discussion, Pope authorized Jamison to work as much overtime as necessary to get the line going again. Jamison promised to keep Pope posted on progress. Next Pope called Dr.

John Bush, the director of research and development. BUSH: Thanks for returning my call so promptly, David. I was talking to Pat Wright at a cocktail party last night, and he told me that there is going to be trouble at the new products committee meeting tomorrow morning. Seems Sherry Smith has decided that our waste treatment plant is inadequate to handle the additional load from the degreasers needed for the new refrigerator line I knew we'd have nothing but trouble putting a consumer advocate on the committee. POPE: What brought about her concern? BUSH: Seems she read

an article about river pollution and went down and talked to one of the operators at the treatment plant. POPE: Okay, John, don't worry.

I'll bring a copy of that study Jamison's people did. That ought to satisfy everyone's concerns. Maybe you should call on me at some appropriate point in your presentation, and I'll say a few words in this regard. BUSH: Great, I'm sure glad I went to that party and ran into Wright. That would have been a nasty shock to have gotten hit cold.

As he hangs up, Janice, his secretary, enters and reminds him of his 10 o'clock appointment and his intention to call the company plant attorney.

JANICE: Here's the mail. Nothing much except a budget request from industrial engineering and a research proposal from material engineering. Oh, yes, Joe Land stopped by and wants to see you when you're free. He said it was something to do with that new engineer he wants to hire. I almost forgot: the flight you wanted to Washington was booked, so I put you on the 4 p.

m. flight on the tenth. Pope quickly went through the mail. He signed without reading the proposal from the materials group to a government agency; dictated on his recorder a negative reply to an invitation to speak to a regional meeting of ASPE, on the excuse that he would be out of town; noted on his appointment calendar the date of the United Way (of which he was a member) board meeting; and read the request from the Industrial Engineering Department for a new minicomputer and made some notes on it requesting clarification of certain portions and further justification for why they could not use the company's CDC 7600 computer. It was now 9: 15; he

called Janice in and asked; “ Who is this meeting at 10 o’clock with? ” Once told, he asks Janice to arrange for his administrative assistant to be present at the meeting. He also told her to call Joe Land and tell him to come on up.

Picking up the phone, he returns the call of George Wallace, the general sales manager. Wallace’s secretary says he is out of the office but will call back. As Pope hangs up, Joe Land enters his office. For the next 30 minutes they discuss the pros and cons of two applicants who have been interviewed for a lead engineer’s job. They finally agree on one of the applicants, and Pope tells Land to get together with personnel on the salary to be offered but to check him first before the letter of offer is sent.

At 10: 05 the two management consultants hired by the president and Pope’s assistant are ushered into his office. The consultants explain that they have been hired to design a formal uniform wage and salary plan. The next 1 hour and 45 minutes are spent discussing the general form of such a plan and the inputs that will be needed from the engineering division. Pope assigns his assistant to work with them and instructs him to introduce the consultants to the department heads. It is agreed that Pope will first discuss the situation with his department heads at the Friday staff meeting and that the consultants can start the next Monday. As his visitors leave, his secretary buzzes Pope for a phone call.

It is George Wallace, and they decide to meet in the executive dining room for lunch. During lunch, Wallace complains that the customer service engineering is not being responsive to his field representatives. He claims that it is sometimes a week before engineering comes back with an answer

to customer complaints. Pope asks Wallace to send him a few specific documented instances and promises to look into it. He then tells Wallace about his phone call from John Bush and asks for a strong support from sales in the new product committee meeting the next day.

Wallace assures Pope that sales wants the new refrigerator line as much as anyone and the R&D and engineering can count on his strong support. As Pope returns to his office from lunch at 1: 30, he notices that four engineers are still playing bridge in one of the laboratories. He makes a note to himself to remind the department heads at the Friday staff meeting to be sure their people are not taking more than an hour for lunch. As he gets to his office, the personnel director and Glen Sanford are waiting for him.

“ Well. Glen, what are you going to do with all your free time after you leave us? ” queries Pope. After some discussion of Sanford’s farming plans, he is presented with a plaque commemorating 30 years of service as a model maker with the organization. At 2 o’clock, the president’s secretary calls to ask Pope to come to a 2: 30 meeting to discuss next year’s budget. As he walks toward the president’s suite, he is stopped in the hall by Oscar Ford, the head of quality control (whose morning phone call he had not returned). Ford explained that while the room air conditioner line was down because of the fire, he wanted to redesign the final inspection station, but he would need the help of two industrial engineers full time for a week.

He further explained that Bill Binford, head of industrial engineering, had confirmed that he had the available personnel, but needed Pope’s approval, since this was a new project. Pope gave his okay and made a note to himself

to tell the department heads that they did not need his concurrence on such little projects. I probably should set some guidelines,” he thought to himself. The meeting in the president’s office lasted until 5: 30 p. m.

Corporate Planning explained the guidelines and timetable for preparing the budget request for next year. Pope had been disturbed when given the guideline of an overall increase of 10 percent for engineering. Since the cost of living had gone up 9 percent during the past 12 months, he had hoped to be able to grant an across the board increase of at least that much plus merit increases. He had requested a meeting with the president and comptroller to discuss the matter, and it had been set up for 2 p. m.

the next day. Upon arriving back at his office, he immediately phoned his wife. She told him the doctor had put their daughter to bed for 3 days and prescribed some medicine. Because of this, she informed him, he would have to go to the executive vice president’s cocktail parties anyway, but they were even worse when he was alone. At least if his wife was there, he could make the excuse that he had to look after her if he got into a boring or embarrassing conversation. To make matters worse, the party meant he would not be able to catch up on reading reports.

“ Well, maybe I can get caught up tomorrow,” he thought himself. As he was leaving the building at 6: 30 p. m. , the security guard smiled at him and said, “ have a good day, Dr. Pope? ” Smiling wearily, Pope replied, “ Just about like usual, just about like usual.

” Case study discussion questions: 1. Can you classify each of Dr. Pope activities as to role or function? 2. How much of his time expenditure was dictated or controlled by others?