

What do we do with
howard



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“ What do we do with Howard? ” Synopsis: Tad Pierson had recently been appointed as a project engineer. As project engineer for one of Agrigreen’s plants, he is responsible for the operation of the plant surveying group. For some time now Tad had been aware of some performance, safety, and conflicts with personnel within the group. These issues appear to be escalating in frequency and are causing Tad concern regarding the safety of the employees, the production schedules, and possible actions that he might need to take.

Agrigreen, Inc. s a company that manufactures a verity of agricultural fertilizer. With plants located in the western United States and Canada, Agrigreen employs certified surveyors to ensure quality and safety of each project. Eighteen years ago, Agrigreen’s survey crew was composed of part-time drafting personnel or project engineers. Howard Lineberry, a lead surveyor had been employed with Agrigreen for eighteen years. Over his tenure he had been supervised by five different managers, and had three surveyor’s helpers. Howard’s work over the years has caused multiple safety and production issues.

He has also had conflicts with the engineering staff, his managers, and almost everyone he worked with. Mel Cutler, a surveyor’s helper, after being employed by the company for only a few years was assigned to assist Howard. Five years into this assignment, Mel began to notice problems due to Howard’s note keeping method. These problems contributed to the production and safety issues with several projects. Later Mel began to notice that Howard was taking an excessive amount of snack breaks, coming to work late and leaving early. He also noticed Howard taking naps on the job.

When the opportunity presented itself, Mel accepted a part-time assignment away from Howard.

This reassignment resulted in a new surveyor's helper being assigned, Vince Adam. Vince, an impressive young high school graduate, took on several of Howard's inappropriate habits. Tad is concerned that the performance, safety, and personnel issues in the plant surveying group is getting out of control and is considering what action(s) that he should take, if any, at this point to intervene and correct the situations. Finding of Fact #1: One of the key issues of concern that Tad faces is the escalating quality of work being performed by Howard. Howard's inefficient work processes in his note keeping and time management has caused issues in both production as well as safety violations on the job sites. These continual issues have cost Agrigreen in both extra man power to rebuild and delays in production. By examining Howard's work process Tad can better understand what needs to be done and work toward eliminating these errors.

Recommendation #1: Howard's performance at work is a product of miss management and poor attitude. When Howard was first employed, his manager, Jerry Givens [now retired], supervised with an iron hand. His management style can best be described as Theory X. Jerry took a command-and-control approach to management based on a negative view of Howard's knowledge, skills, and ability. [(Hellriegel & Slocum Jr. , 2008)] He told Howard what to do and how to do it. Upon Jerry's retirement, the next manager, Paul Jackson, used the Theory Y approach to management.

He took on an empowering approach with Howard. This is where the problem truly began. Howard, with his new found freedom took it upon his self to improve the process by working directly with the project engineers. Howard's efforts increased the pace of the work which called for a number of last minute requests and frequent changes in work schedules. By not having an establish plan of action in place, errors were made which cost the company time and money. Over the years, Howard's performance issues escalated and upon several attempts by different managers, he refused to change. Tad has his work cut out for him.

Regardless of how Howard may feel, Tad is still his boss and he is there to work for Agrigreen. Howard's performance is not acceptable in any manner. While the failures of the previous managers to confront Howard about his performance problems have cost the company money it is now up to Tad to correct this issue. In doing so, there are a few things Tad should keep in mind. First, Tad should have a plan of action as to how he is going to confront this issue. With this plan of action, Tad should set define time as to the expected behaviors and outcomes expected in Howard's performance. Next, Tad needs to meet with Howard and be specific in defining the poor performance that occurred in the past, and remind Howard when each error occurred.

Tad also needs to be specific as to the plan of action and the established time frame to correct these errors as well as the consequences of non conformance. Tad needs to focus on the performance required for the job and make sure that he reiterates the guidelines that have been outlined for the workplace. Tad should consider Howard's personality and how he handles

feedback. Regardless of how Howard has been performing, Tad should always be clear and straightforward during his communication with Howard. He needs to focus on the performance which Howard has control. At the conclusion of this meeting, Tad should check Howard's understanding to avoid any miss communications. After the meeting with Howard, Tad should document this meeting from his notes.

He should document the issue and the action that has been taken to correct or eliminate the problems. After summarizing this meeting a copy of Tad's report should be given to Howard and the original placed in Howard's file. Finally, timely feedback should be given to Howard as Howard works on improving his performance. Should Tad note that Howard needs additional training, he should check with the human resource department for additional training classes, or set Howard with a mentor. Tad should realize that confronting Howard about his poor performance is not going to be easy. But once he has a plan of action in place, he will find getting Howard back on track is far better for the company than having to replace him. [(Business & Legal Reports, 2006)] The above action is how we handled an employee in our office who was a poor performer.

I was set as her mentor, and working one-on-one with her I had to re-train her in our processes to ensure that she had a full understanding as to what was required in performing our job. After a brief three months, she is now producing high quality of work. As a reviewer, this young lady's work is "spot on." She is now off corrective action and is no longer in jeopardy of losing her job. Finding of Fact #2: The next issue Tad faces is Howard's attendance. Over the years of Howard's tenure, he had become complacent.

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He has been increasingly taking additional snack breaks, arriving to work late, leaving work early, as well as fall asleep on the job.

For years, under the previous management, Howard's actions have been over looked. Tad had witnessed several of these company violations, and has also noticed Vince; Howard's assistant has been following the same pattern as Howard. Recommendation #2: Identifying attendance issues are not a simple process. There may be underlying issues which could be the driver of Howard's absenteeism. Tad needs to first research the company's policy and gain a full understanding of what he can and cannot do to resolve the issue. Tad also needs to consult with the human resource department as well as the legal department to understand and educate himself on the potential legal issues that also are involved. Once Tad had educated himself, he needs to approach Howard to determine if there are underline reasons for the continuing attendance issues.

It depends on why the Howard is late, absent, or taking frequent breaks will drive the action that Tad needs to take. During Tad's conversation with Howard, if it is determined that the reason for this attendance problem is caused by some type of stress issues, violence and or family problem Tad may need to refer Howard to the Employee Assistance program (EAP) for assistance. If the reason is medical, Tad may suggest Howard use the benefits allowed to him under the American's with disability Act (ADA) or the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Should the outcome be something else, Tad may need to take a different approach. (Vikesland)] A good approach is to counsel with Howard of the important of keeping time and punctuality while driving down the corporate policy and procedures. A “

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carrot-and-stick” approach is a time-tested method of dealing with attendance issues. Through this approach, Tad can use a combination of reward and punishment.

As with the plan of action, Tad created for the production issue, he may wish to either add the attendance issue to the original plan, or write a separate plan of action. Also, Tad should use the same method of communication, documentation, and feedback with this issue as e does with the production issue. [(Nayab, 2010)] I work with a person who appears to have an attendance problem. This person comes in at various times during the day. I cannot a test to when she leaves as I’m already on my way home while she is still in the office. At times, I’ve noticed that she takes two sometimes two and a half hour smoke breaks. The issue here is we are exempted employees.

Since this person sits next to me I talk with her a great deal, so I know her attendance problem is mostly stress related. I have told her about our EPA program, but she has opted not to take advantage of their services. Finding of Fact #3: The final issue may appear to be one of the hardest for Tad. This is the moral of the plant’s surveying group. For years, Howard’s continued errors and attendance has caused issues with the other employees. Mel Cutler was originally assigned to work with Howard as a surveyor’s helper. A few years ago Mel began working on other projects away from Howard.

Now that the temporary assignment is reaching its conclusion, Mel had expressed his concerns with working with Howard. Tad appears to understand, since he has known the original surveyor’s helper Dan Richards

and the same concerns were expressed than. There also appears to be concerns being expressed by the engineering crews. It appears that they do not trust the work that Howard produces, and takes additional time (which cost extra money) to verify Howard's findings. As Howard's new supervisor, Tad needs to get a clear view of the situation from different perspectives and act on them accordingly. Recommendation #3: The plant surveying group at Agrigreen works closely with the project engineers. For some time now, anxiety, frustration, and resentment has been building in reference to the growing problems with Howard.

This appears to be the major cause of the low morale and high levels of employee dissatisfaction within the plant. If left unchecked this issue will only accelerate the problem and the company will lose key personal. When Tad was assigned the group, he knew that there was a continual conflict brewing. He needs to confront this issue head on. This can be accomplished by fostering interpersonal communication within the group. Tad needs to become an active listener by paying attention to the concerns of the group withhold holding judgment on those who chose to share their thoughts. He needs to develop open communication between this cross-functional team.

He need to develop clear and specificgoalsfor the team to work through their concerns. As Howard's performance and attendance issues are protected by employment laws and regulations as well as corporate ethical policies, the solutions to those issues cannot be shared with the team. For this reason, the team must learn to work past these issues knowing that Tad is on top of those concerns. [(Hellriegel & Slocum Jr. , 2008)] Conflict at times can be a

good thing. However this is not the case with the plant surveying group. Tad will have his work cut out.

He not only has to resolve the conflict within his team, but he also need to understand his own personal issues with Howard. Tad needs to get his team together to work through these concerns. He needs to set the stage by working on an agreement within the team that the conflict is a mutual problem for all and that it can best be resolved through open communication rather than allowing the issues to fester. Next, Tad needs to get to the underlying issues and/or concerns of the team. He should ask each team member for their view points and respect their opinions and feelings. He also should express that he will need their cooperation in solving the problems. If the team cannot reach a common perception of the problem, than the team needs to try to see the problem from the other members view point.

Sometimes brainstorming sessions are a great way of getting to the key factors of the conflict. This session if worked correctly, is a great tool at working through these conflicts and reaching a viable solution. (Conflict Resolution)] As for Tad and his interpersonal conflict in reference to Howard, Tad needs to keep his concerns in check while on the job. Now that he is Howard's boss, additional training may be needed to improve his interpersonal skills. This is what I believe my former manager should be doing. In working with her for the past two years, it has become apparent that she lacks interpersonal skills. Another lady I work with who trained the major of the staff when we first was awarded our contract has more than ten years of experience.

When our former manager talks with her, she comes across as demeaning and at times condescending. It is no wonder why she is no longer a manager. I personally feel that she needs to re-educate herself on how to deal with people. Works Cited Business & Legal Reports, I. (2006, October 12). 8 Rules for Dealing with Poor Performers. Retrieved December 5, 2010, from HR.

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