

Triad insurance



Evaluation of Triad Insurance Company of Indianapolis MEMO Leadership skills are commonly considered highly sought after qualities in any organization's employees but are particularly desirable for persons placed in roles at the management and executive levels. Organizations without effective leadership may, at best, underperform and, at worst, may fail entirely. The strategy a company adopts to obtain and maintain effective leadership within their ranks may vary according to the needs of that organization. As such, an objective evaluation of proposed strategies is required to determine how best to ensure the organization develops and maintains the desired skill set among its employees. An attempt at such an evaluation was made by Ms. Denise Khali on behalf of Triad Insurance Company of Indianapolis (TICI).

Before attempting to evaluate the merit of the memo from Ms. Khali, the issue posited and the conclusion reached by the author should be clearly specified. The issue addressed in this memo is that of whether Triad Insurance Company of Indianapolis should fund a new leadership development program for junior insurance executives. After much discussion, Ms. Khali subsequently concludes that TICI should not fund the leadership program for a variety of reasons. Ms. Khali attempts to persuade the reader of the validity of her conclusion by utilizing the entire gamut of available reasoning strategies; typical reasoning strategies can range from beliefs, evidence, metaphors, analogies, and other statements offered to support or justify the conclusions. They are the statements that together form the basis for creating the creditability of a conclusion (Browne, 2007, p.

25). While a variety of justifications are cited in the memo, the author presents three main arguments to support her conclusion that the leadership program should not be established. The first contention of the author is that such a program would be fiscally problematic, stating that ??? the total cost to TICI would be \$100, 000. 00 per year plus approximately the same amount for lost time on the job??? (D. Khali, Personal Communication, April 6, 2010). The author??™s second contention speaks to the idea that leadership skills cannot be taught in the first place; rather, leaders are born, not made which renders any consideration of developing leadership skills moot.

As the author states, ??? it would be more logical to select and recruit those with leadership traits than to try and develop those who are not??? (D. Khali, Personal Communication, April 6, 2010). Lastly, the author makes the assertion that the true impetus behind proposing the leadership development program is a politically-motivated attack on her person by a colleague with underhanded intentions.

??? Mr. Clarke has a personal agenda to discredit me personally and push the theories of the Aspen Institute.??? (D.

Khali, Personal Communication, April 6, 2010). It is the evaluation of these three main reasons that will determine whether Ms. Khali??™s argument can be accepted as valid. Before determining whether Ms.

Khali??™s arguments have merit, the terminology used by the author to formulate her contentions must be examined. Should any of the words or phrases the author uses be ambiguously defined or have multiple meanings,

the clarity of both the author's argument as well as any rebuttals made against it would be compromised. In evaluating the content of the memo, a number of ambiguous terms become apparent. The terms most critical to the validity of the author's main arguments that suffer from such ambiguities are total cost, lost time, prosperous and wasted or wasteful. The terms total cost and lost time are used to support a statistic and therefore should have very specific definitions with regard as to how that associated statistic was calculated. With regard to total cost, for example, the value presented seems to have been derived from the number of employees estimated to undergo training (20) times the cost per student (\$5000). However, we do not know how the cost per student rate was derived. Is this value all-inclusive (accommodations, transportation, registration fees, etc.

) If so, what assumptions were used to determine this value If the value is not all-inclusive, the author could be underestimating the associated costs. The author does not provide a clear definition by which the reader can determine the validity of the estimation. This lack of transparency is also renders the term lost time equally vague.

There are many ways to define lost time in an occupational setting; what definition was used here and what values were used to calculate the associated statistic The use of the adjectives prosperous and wasteful suffer from more than a lack of transparency; these terms are entirely ambiguous even while they formulate the center of the author's contention regarding the fiscal feasibility of the proposed program. The terms prosperous and wasteful are entirely dependent on

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context ??” a context that is completely lacking in the memo. What constitutes a ??? prosperous??? or ??? wasteful??? program in her estimation (For example, if the average growth rate of the company is 12% per year while the average growth rate in the industry is 35% per year, is the company still ??? prosperous???) These words and phrases require further clarification on the part of the author in order to have full understanding of what is meant by their use. Having examined the content of the memo with regards to issues of terminology, the document may be evaluated with respect to ??? what the value conflicts and assumptions??? are within the context of the arguments made (Browne, 2007, p. 53). Browne states that ??? a value assumption is an implicit preference for one value over another in a particular context??? (Browne, 2007, p.

59) and that ??? a value conflict is the differing values that stem from different frames of reference??? (Browne, 2007, p. 56). The memo from Ms. Khali demonstrates one main value conflict/assumptions. This involves a value conflict between – fiscal concerns and personal development opportunities. For Khali, conflict arises when she argues that a fund for a leadership development program would cost over \$200, 000. 00 per year which thus does not make the establishment of such a program a viable choice to develop ??? junior insurance executives for future advancement into executive positions??? (D. Khali, Personal Communication, April 6, 2010).

There is no frame of reference provided as to the benefits that may be gained from implementing the program, either in monetary terms (such as a Return on Investment analysis) or in other more intangible benefits, nor are costs associated with the alternative (Executive Recruitment Programs)

presented. By not presenting a discussion beyond that of the outward cost of the program, the author is also making a value assumption as she perceives little or no value in providing personal development opportunities, especially when those opportunities may require monetary investments that are more than trivial.). The author's arguments are based on the assumption that the reader shares these values. This evaluation of the construction of the argument regarding the fiscal impact of the leadership program is one of many the factors to be considered in determining the merit of the author's contention. Browne, M. N.

, Keeley, S. M. (2007). *Asking The Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking*. (8th Ed.).

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall