

# Case study example

Business



Julie and Susan have a conflict in the case because of their varying work styles, work environment and approach to life. Julie prefers to have a worklife balance and doesn't carry work to home. She adheres to her office timings of 8. 30 am to 4. 30 pm. During her office hours, she tries to perform her tasks to the best of her abilities. However, she is not willing to stretch in exceptional cases. She prefers to devote time to her home, husband and other fun activities after work. Susan, on the contrary, has a very hectic work schedule. Her work timings range from 7. 30 am to 10 pm. She has no time to socialize and communicate inspite of having an assistant. She was not very accessible and the communication took time because of her delayed response to e-mails or messages and handover with the assistant.

Studying the organizational behavior of Julie, it can be observed that she seems to have a good relationship with everyone in the university. She received good appraisals from her manager Pat Griffiths. She also received positive reviews from other faculty members. However, the surrounding environment has played a role in these relationships. Julie had several opportunities to interact with her colleagues and faculty members in informal gatherings which she did not do with Susan. Hence, there was a friendly emotional climate between Julie and other faculty members which was absent in case of Susan. This may have led to cognitive dissonance changing her attitude towards Susan.

All full time faculty members Julie works with, apart from Susan, are men. Therefore, there is a high probability of gender dynamics creeping in. Also, her manager is a man. Men could have a favorable gender bias while evaluating or appraising women. Susan is a woman and is bound to have a different kind of relationship with Julie. Mental ability could also have an

impact on the conflict between Julie and Susan. As confessed by Julie herself, she has been doing a lot of easy and normal work while the work given by Susan needed greater effort. Julie may not have the ability to handle such work due to her education or experience in the past which impacts her productivity.

Studying the organizational behaviour of Susan, she seems to be highly occupied with work. Her work habits seem to be a result of her neurotic personality. Susan's personality traits are that of an introvert which are quite opposite to that of Julie. In addition, Susan's communication through Internet or messages has been ineffective. While Julie's inability may be partially responsible for the communication gap, it is primarily Susan's responsibility to explain the work to Julie in a way she can easily understand. The communication gap has also increased because Susan is relying on her assistant to talk to Julie. This additional communication layer could have led to a loss in understanding. Also, Susan has taken a reactive approach rather than a pro-active approach. She reacts with anger when her expectations are not met but doesn't seem to care while the work is being done.

Going by the events in the case, Julie seems to be happy with her work environment and compensation. The conflict with Susan has been a one-off case. Therefore, job motivation does not seem to be an issue with Julie. In fact, her priorities are different. She is a kind of person who would prefer a decent paying stress free job over a high paying hectic job.

Finally, the conflict may be resolved in two possible ways. Another secretary may be assigned to work with Susan in the future. Alternatively, Susan and Julie must be encouraged to spend some time together in order to resolve

their conflicts. This could however be difficult in the current scenario and a third person or a moderator such as Pat may also be required.