

Lisa sherman case analysis

People



Lisa Sherman worked for Verizon for many years. While there she never revealed her sexual orientation. Then one fated day, there was a diversification workshop with her fellow managers. The outcome of this was that her coworkers were bigoted towards homosexuality. Lisa Sherman had a tough decision to make, whether to stay or to leave. The following analysis shows a suggested solution. Lisa Sherman Case Analysis: Lisa Sherman spent many years not being true to who she was. She never told her coworkers that she was gay during her 15 years at Verizon Communications. Then, the company decided they wanted to hold diversity training. This is what led Lisa Sherman to the tough decision of whether to stay working at Verizon or put in her notice. The diversity training displayed general statements about different types of people, with statements such as “ gay people are...” written on poster boards. The corporate leaders then formed groups and wrote on the poster boards what their first concept of a particular group of people was. Their statements of groups such as Blacks and Jews involved only positive messages.

However when they got to the board regarding homosexual people, it was nothing at all positive, with comments such as “ immoral, pathetic, perverse, and spreading disease. ” (Audenaert and George, 2008). How could Lisa now open up and tell these people that she herself was Gay, when they thought such horrid things? Not only were negative derogatory statements bad for Lisa Sherman they were also bad for the company. The CEO Ray Smith wanted to enact a policy of diversification, to take Verizon into a more flexible and creative company.

He planned to establish policies that barred not hiring someone because of their ethnic background, religion, race, sex, and sexual orientation. However if his highest level managers felt this way about Gay people what did the rest of the company feel? Lisa Sherman was with Verizon for 15 years, working her way up the chain. She had always hid her sexuality and the existence of her partner Sophie, using pronouns such as “ him” and “ we” for “ her” and “ she” (Alboher, 2008).

She felt that if she were to tell anyone it would affect her career, which allegedly proved to be a correct assumption, from the comments that her co-workers made. One of the most homophobic individuals turned out to be one of Lisa’s mentors. In essence, the people Lisa had been closest to turned out to be bigoted individuals. When deciding what to do, Lisa needs to be sure it is in the best interest of her needs. Since she has been with the same company for 15 years, and quickly worked her way up, she probably has a myriad of opportunities waiting for her.

She can inform the CEO Ray Smith of her sexual orientation, as he wants the company to become more progressive and would (allegedly) not be bothered by her sexuality. However, the rest of her coworkers still feel that Gay people are immoral, disgusting people. Even if the CEO did not mind her sexuality, her coworkers would still see her in a different light. I feel the best decision that Lisa can make is to look for different work, with a more open, progressive company, then resign from Verizon. This decision would allow her time to get her finances in order.

However, if she had a large savings, then the best decision would be to resign immediately, because being around such bigoted individuals would cause her undue stress, and her performance may be affected. If Lisa Sherman chooses to resign, since the CEO Ray Smith is so open to becoming a more diversified workforce, perhaps he can use her and her experience, when she informs him of her sexuality, as a consultant for future policies. Lisa could be a great asset to the company, as she has experienced the bigotry and discrimination about her sexuality her whole adult life, since she first came out.

She understands what it means to not admit to others your true self, for fear of losing a job, or not gaining a job. Policies can be changed but unfortunately it takes much more work to change people's opinions. People are afraid of the unknown, they fear change (Pratt, 2005). To help change people's opinions training would need to be done, to show that Gay individuals are no different than anyone else. They do not choose their sexuality anymore than someone chooses their skin color. Someone should not be judged by something that they cannot choose.

If Lisa Sherman chooses to resign, Verizon Communications and the CEO need to reeducate their employees on what a diversified workplace should be like. There are currently no federal laws that prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation (Smith, 2010). However many states and companies have laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. The company should respond by offering condolences to Lisa Sherman, then start by making policies to make all workers comfortable.

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Lisa Sherman was a good employee and a hard worker for many years, yet she had to hide who she really was. No employee should have to hide their family life; it affects their stress levels and their mood. Lisa stated that while others had pictures of their wives and kids on their desks, she had a picture of her dog. Lisa should have been comfortable with having her partner's photo on her desk, as she was her family. Unfortunately, as the office was not a comfortable place for a lesbian woman to state that she was a lesbian, she was unable to.

Whatever the actual outcome was in this case, Lisa Sherman should leave the company for her own peace of mind, and sense of self worth. Verizon Communications and Ray Smith need to take the company to a modern, progressive state, by hiring openly gay people, and enacting policies to prevent discrimination in hiring, and the harassment of workers. Such a progressive policy is not only good for the workforce but for the company. As a company that is so open to diversification, they are bound to increase their customer base.

Works Cited

<http://www.life-with-confidence.com/life-change.html>

http://www.hrhero.com/topics/sexual_orientation_discrimination.html

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