

## **Human Relations Case Study—Personality Types**

The personnel division has just hired a salesperson for your department. The resume indicates the new salesperson has had four sales jobs in the past two years. Record high sales volume was achieved at each location but this person seems to have a problem staying at one job longer than six months. As sales manager you realize how much it costs to train and nurture a new sales person to the point where the company's income from the person's sales exceeds the expense of training. The break-even point is usually six months after a new person begins working for the company. What is your attitude toward bringing this person on board your sales staff? What sort of work environment will the new salesperson require in order to stay contented on the job?

## **Human Relations Case Study—Katie**

Katie prided herself on treating everyone the same and behaving the same way no matter where she was or who was around her. When she began working on her first job as an assistant claims processor for a large insurance company, Katie kept her breezy manner in the office. She called everyone by his or her first name, or by a nickname if she thought of a cute one. Her pet name for Salvatore, an elderly policyholder, was Senile Sal. She did not mean any harm; she just thought it was funny.

Katie liked to use coarse language that shocked people. Her friends had always thought this was funny and "with it." She assumed that people in the office would think so too. Before Kate's probationary period was up, Mildred Foster, the manager, warned her about her behavior and language in the office. Ms. Foster also warned Katie about not showing respect for others.

"I really don't know what you're talking about, Millie," Katie said. "I treat everyone the same as I treat my best friends. What's wrong with that? And I don't talk any differently here than I do elsewhere."

### *Analysis*

1.     What is the real problem?
  
2.     What solutions to this problem can you think of?

## **Human Relations Case Study—Attitude Matters**

Ann and George were both young, aggressive, and competent. They joined the M. K. Company on the same day and went through the same training program in preparation for identical jobs involving a great deal of close contact with fellow employees.

Although it was not easy, Ann made a good adjustment to her work environment. She was able to do this because of her warm, flexible personality and the application of the human relations skills she had learned and developed at technical school. George, on the other hand, made little progress. He appeared rigid and distant to those who worked around him. To a few older and experienced employees, he even seemed aloof and hostile. George's supervisor, watching him from a distance, felt he was waiting around expecting others to approach him and be friendly. He seemed to be standing on the sidelines, unable or unwilling to meet people halfway. Perhaps he did not know how to communicate with others.

A few weeks later, during lunch, George told Ann he was going to look for another job. His reasons were as follows: (1) he felt some co-workers were unfriendly, (2) he resented some of his fellow employees, who seemed excessively critical of him, and (3) he felt his supervisor was trying to push him into a mold of conformity that was simply not his style. Why should he go all out to adjust? After all, building working relationships is a two-way thing. He felt confident that he could find another company that would appreciate him more and give him all the freedom that he needed to be himself.

What chance do you think George has of finding a job environment that would make him completely happy? Assume you are George's supervisor and willing to spend thirty minutes in a two-way communications session trying to help him and keep him with the firm. What points would you attempt to cover?

## **Human Relations Case Study—Friendliness**

Maria was an intelligent, sensitive tech school student who worked part-time with a local banking organization. She hoped to move into a good full-time career with the same company upon graduation in June.

Although she was fairly successful in her part-time job because she was accurate, reliable, and conscientious, Maria did not communicate well with her fellow workers.

When one of her fellow workers tried to be friendly, she was polite, but backed away. When someone tried to involve her in a discussion by asking a question, Maria came up with a quick answer but made no effort to keep the conversation going.

Maria's supervisor, an individual with many years of experience, said, "I have talked with her a number of times, and I still can't understand her. She is a good producer, but she seems to be afraid to put even a little of herself into a relationship.

"She does not seem to understand that all good working relationships must encompass, to some extent, the mutual reward theory. At any rate, she doesn't recognize that she has a responsibility to communicate. Until she learns this, I am not going to recommend her for a full-time position because it would not be fair to her fellow workers and to her future success."

Assuming you are Maria's supervisor, how would you go about helping her to learn to communicate and understand the real meaning of mutually rewarding conversation?

## **Human Relations Case Study—Positive Relationships**

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following paragraph and then answer the questions below.

Lee works for Ash Computer Electronics, Inc. She works in the word processing department and, generally, likes her job. Lee gets to work around 8:50 a.m. most mornings. As work starts at 8:30 a.m., June, one of her co-workers, covers for her by answering her phone during this time. Lee is an excellent typist and feels a great deal of confidence in her ability. She often helps June and her co-workers. Her best friend, Pam, works down the hall, and Lee will often leave her desk and stop by Pam's office for a "short" visit. Lee usually asks June to cover her leaving the office for the visit.

1. Has Lee developed positive relationships with her co-workers? How?
2. How do you think June feels about Lee?
3. List the ways that Lee is ignoring good human relations skills while dealing with June.
4. How could Lee improve her relationship with June?

## **Obnoxious Co-Workers Scenarios**

- ◆ The printers made an error and published the wrong schedule in the school's fall adult education brochure. Luis, the receptionist, had to deal with a lot of confused and irate students Monday morning and didn't even have the right calendar to refer to. When Rasheed, the public relations director, arrived at work, Luis barked, "You really messed up the brochure this time. Do you know what you're doing, or what?"

What should Luis have said or done?

- ◆ James is a clerk at the post office. There is a lot of mail to get ready for sorting today because of the upcoming Christmas holidays. James's boss told him to try to work a little faster. James argued, "Why don't we just hire more holiday help? I'm going as fast as I can!"

What should James have said or done?

## **Mutual Respect Case Studies**

A Guide to Developing Effective Relationships with Co-Workers and Supervisors

When communicating with others, strive to:

- ◆ Develop and maintain a positive working relationship with your co-workers and with your supervisor.
- ◆ Inform your supervisor upon completion of each assigned task.
- ◆ Be willing to assist co-workers when you are able.
- ◆ When you are unable to complete an assigned task by the deadline, consult with your supervisor as soon as possible.
- ◆ Inform your supervisor of the problems that you are unable to solve on your own.
- ◆ Treat everyone with respect.
- ◆ Be Polite.

Describe the proper response to achieve effective communications in each of the following situations.

1. Your supervisor has asked that you duplicate and bind twenty training manuals by next Thursday. He has hired several new employees and they will begin their orientation next week. You have the only available copy of the training manual on your computer. Your master hard copy was accidentally issued at the last orientation. The laser printer in your office is an older model and has required constant repair. Today, when you begin to print out a new “master hard copy,” you discover that you are having printer problems. You call Mr. Johnson, the service repair man, to come fix it. Mr. Johnson informs you that your maintenance agreement has expired, and he is unable to make a service call until a new agreement is signed.

What would you say to Mr. Johnson? To your supervisor?

## Module 9 v Activity 17 v COOPERATION

2. You are extremely proud of yourself because you recently completed a tough assignment ahead of schedule. Penny in Accounts Receivable was scheduled to help you with the project, but each time you called her she came up with an excuse.

What would you say to Penny? Your supervisor? Penny's supervisor? Other co-workers?

3. A friend of yours is unable to make a trip and you have been invited to take her place. It sounds like the vacation of a lifetime. The only problem is that you have to leave on Friday, which is the day after tomorrow and you are scheduled to work.

What do you do? What do you say to the person who invited you? What do you say to your supervisor?

4. Your supervisor gave you an assignment with a two-week deadline. Tomorrow is the deadline and you realize that you are not able to complete the assignment.

What do you do? Should you mention this to your supervisor? If so, how? Should you ask a co-worker for assistance? If so, who would you select and how would you ask for help?

## **Assertive/Aggressive Case Study**

Contrast assertive behavior with aggressive behavior by describing how a person could react to the following situation in each way:

Al and Ted live in the same neighborhood and work for the same company, 20 miles away. They decided to ride together starting in June and to alternate driving each week. The arrangement worked well for two months. Then, frequently, when it was Ted's week to drive, he had a reason why he couldn't. Several reasons have been "I seem to be having a little trouble with the brakes" and "Mary needs our car this week to take the kids to school." Ted has not made any type of offer to change the driving arrangement with Al. He seems to expect Al to drive when he has a problem.

Assertive reaction by Al:

Aggressive reaction by Al: