

Teamwork Case Study

Jeff was one of several employees in a small department where productivity depended upon the close cooperation of everyone involved. He had a high potential and lived up to it, producing more than anyone else in the department.

However, Jeff liked to work alone. He seldom volunteered to help his fellow workers. Many of the people who worked with him felt that he had a superior attitude, and they resented it. As a result, the department was split between Jeff and the others.

Jeff's supervisor gave a lot of thought to the problem and looked at it this way. Although Jeff was producing at the highest level in the department, the total productivity of the department had not gone up since he joined the group. Instead, it had gone down slightly. Could it be that Jeff had done more damage (through poor human relations) than good (by his high personal productivity)? The supervisor came to the conclusion that Jeff was an outstanding employee when viewed alone, but that he was a very poor employee when viewed as a member of a group.

A few weeks later, the supervisor was promoted to a more responsible position, and management had to come up with a replacement. They decided to promote someone from outside the department. When Jeff discovered that he was not chosen, he demanded an explanation. He was told that he was the highest producer in the department but that his human relations skills were not up to standard. Management felt the other workers in the department would not respect him as their supervisor.

Do you agree with management's decision to pass over Jeff even though Jeff was the best producer? How responsible do you feel the supervisor was for Jeff's being passed over?