

Roll Number:

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Name of Faculty: A.K.Dhingra

Note: All questions are compulsory.

Section- A

Case: Consolidated Products

Consolidated Products is a medium sized manufacturer of consumer products with nonunionized production workers. Ben Samuels was a plant manager for Consolidated Products for 10 years, and he was well liked by the employees. They were grateful for the fitness center he built for employees, and they enjoyed the social activities sponsored by the plant several times a year, including company picnics and holiday parties. He knew most of the workers by name, and he spent part of each day walking around the plant to visit with them and ask about their families or hobbies.

Ben believed that it was important to treat employees properly so they would have a sense of loyalty to the company. He tried to avoid any layoffs when production demand was slack, figuring that the company could not afford to lose skilled workers that are so difficult to replace. The workers knew that if they had a special problem, Ben would try to help them. For example, when someone was injured but wanted to continue working, Ben found another job in the plant that the person could do despite having a disability. Ben believed that if you treat people right, they will do a good job for you without close supervision or prodding. Ben applied the same principle to his supervisors, and he mostly left them alone to run their departments as they saw fit. He did not set objectives and standards for the plant, and he never asked the supervisors to develop plans for improving productivity and product quality.

Under Ben, the plant had the lowest turnover among the company's five plants, but the second worst record for costs and production levels. When the company was acquired by another firm, Ben was asked to take early retirement, and Phil Jones was brought in to replace him.

Phil had a growing reputation as a manager who could get things done, and he quickly began making changes. Costs were cut by trimming a number of activities such as the fitness center at the plant, company picnics and parties, and the human relations training programs for supervisors. Phil believed that training supervisors to be supportive was a waste of time. His motto was: "If employees don't want to do the work, get rid of them and find somebody else who does."

Supervisors were instructed to establish high performance standards for their departments and insist that people achieve them. A computer monitoring system was introduced so that the output of each worker could be checked closely against the standards. Phil told his supervisors to give any worker who had

substandard performance one warning, then if performance did not improve within two weeks, to fire the person. Phil believed that workers don't respect a supervisor who is weak and passive. When Phil observed a worker wasting time or making a mistake, he would reprimand the person right on the spot to set an example. Phil also checked closely on the performance of his supervisors. Demanding objectives were set for each department, and weekly meetings were held with each supervisor to review department performance. Finally, Phil insisted that supervisors check with him first before taking any significant actions that deviated from established plans and policies.

As another cost-cutting move, Phil reduced the frequency of equipment maintenance, which required machines to be idled when they could be productive. Because the machines had a good record of reliable operation, Phil believed that the current maintenance schedule was excessive and was cutting into production. Finally, when business was slow for one of the product lines, Phil laid off workers rather than finding something else for them to do.

By the end of Phil's first year as plant manager, production costs were reduced by 20 percent and production output was up by 10 percent. However, three of his seven supervisors left to take other jobs, and turnover was also high among the machine operators. Some of the turnover was due to workers, who were fired, but competent machine operators were also quitting, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to find any replacements for them. Finally, talk of unionizing was increasing among the workers.

Questions:

1. Describe and compare the managerial behaviour of Ben and Phil. To what extent does each manager display specific relations behaviours (supporting, developing, recognizing) and specific task behaviours (clarifying, planning, monitoring)? To what extent does each manager use participative or inspirational leadership? (3)
2. If you were selected to be the manager of this plant, what would you do to achieve both high employee satisfaction and performances? (3)
3. Compare Ben and Phil in terms of their influence on employee attitudes, short term performance, and long term plant performance, and explain the reasons for the differences? (5)

Section- B

Case: The Intolerable Boss

It was three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and Bob Parker's stomach began to hurt. By dinner he wasn't hungry, and at bedtime he couldn't sleep. In the morning, the persistent buzzing of the alarm took forever to pierce his troubled dreams. As he drove to the office, with each mile he felt the spring inside him coil tighter.

It was not the challenge of the job. The adversity and risk of turning a business around or building a plant in the jungle were exhilarating, not immobilizing. Success in tough business situations marked his career, and he had numerous and rapid promotions. No, it wasn't the overwhelming responsibility of his current

job that brought this 40-year-old executive to his knees; it was his boss. For the first time in his career, Bob was faced with a situation that he didn't know how to handle. Even more frustrating was the feeling that, with such an important job to be done, this situation simply should not exist.

It was evident how his boss got where he was. Extremely confident and incredibly talented in handling technical problems, he got results. But his remarkable results were achieved at a horrible cost to others. Bob's boss was completely devoid of sensitivity, kindness and patience. He treated people as if they were no different from material or financial resources, to be bought, sold and used up. If one of his people made a serious mistake, he'd write the person off no matter how competent and successful the person was previously. Moody and volatile, he might come down on anyone at any time. His intelligence was a club that he wielded with impunity, chewing out subordinates in front of others, mounting scathing attacks on other people's ideas, and sometimes deliberately setting up subordinates to make them look stupid. Ironically, he could be charming and pleasant¹ when it suited his purpose, which was usually when interacting with top management.

Bob tried to cope with personal despair and frustration by playing mind games with himself. He tried to convince himself that he worked for the company not for the boss. As he watched his boss exploit and demean subordinates, he vowed never to treat anyone that way himself. As more Mondays went by Bob had to learn skills for dealing with adversity that were not needed in previous tough assignments. He learned to maintain his composure under direct personal assault. He began to time his moves around his boss's moods, and gave up some things to get what he wanted from others. He leaned on others for support, as they did on him. He learned that even when you can't do much to change someone else; you can change your own behavior to make the best of a bad situation.

In his bleakest moments, Bob felt that top management had forgotten him and his brilliant career was at an end. Then, unexpectedly, his boss was fired and Bob was promoted to the boss's job. He found out later that the company had already written off his boss weeks ago, and it was Bob who was being judged. By keeping cool and by continuing to do his job despite the terrible circumstances, Bob had passed a test he didn't even know he was taking. He learned that he could handle this type of adversity, and he learned that his company would not tolerate behaviour like that of his former boss. Ironically, while watching the dazzling brilliance of his boss in action he also learned how to be more effective in dealing with technical problems.

Questions:

1. What traits and skills explain how the boss has initial career success but eventual derailment?(3)
2. What traits helped Bob survive and learn from his ordeal? (3)
3. How difficult is it for someone in Bob's situation to learn useful lessons for experience? (3)

(3)