

5.1 CASE STUDY

From Two to One

Mark Schmidt runs Co-Ed Cleaners, a business that employs college students to clean offices and schools during the night hours. Due to an economic downturn, Co-Ed Cleaners has lost customers, and although Mark has trimmed everywhere he can think of, he has come to the conclusion that he has to cut back further. This will require letting one of his two managers go and consolidating responsibilities under the other manager's leadership.

Dan Cali manages groups of students who clean school buildings. Dan is always on the go, visiting cleaning teams at each school while they are working. His employees describe him as an efficient taskmaster with checklists they are all required to follow and sign off on as they complete each job. Dan initiates most ideas for changing processes based on efficiency. When something goes wrong on a job, Dan insists he be alerted and brought in to solve it. "Dan is a very task-oriented guy," says one of his team members. "There is no one who works harder than he does or knows more about our jobs. This guy gets more done in an hour than most guys do in a day. In the two years I've been here, I don't think I've ever seen him stop and take a break or even have a cup of coffee." Dan's efforts have helped Co-Ed Cleaners

be recognized as "The Best Professional Cleaning Service" for three years running.

Asher Roland is the manager of groups of students who clean small offices and businesses. Asher has up to 10 teams working a night and relies on his employees to do their jobs and keep him apprised of problems. He takes turns working alongside his teams to understand the challenges they may face, getting to know each of his employees in the process. Once a month, he takes the teams to a restaurant for a "Great Job Breakfast" where they talk about sports, the weather, politics, their relationships and families, and, when they have time, work issues. One of his employees describes him this way: "Asher is a really good guy. Never had a better boss. If I am having problems, I would go to Asher first. He always advocates for us and listens when we have ideas or problems, but allows us to manage our own jobs the way we think best. He trusts us to do the right things, and we trust him to be fair and honest with us."

Mark likes both Dan and Asher, and in their own way they are both good managers. Mark worries, however, about how each manager's individual style will affect his ability to take on the responsibilities of the manager he replaces. He must let one go, but he doesn't know which one.

QUESTIONS

1. Using ideas from the chapter, describe Dan's and Asher's styles of leadership.
2. How will Asher's employees, who are used to being able to manage themselves in their own way, respond to Dan's task-oriented style?
3. How will Dan's employees, who are used to being given clear direction and procedures, respond to Asher's more relationship-oriented style?
4. If you were an employee at Co-Ed Cleaners, would you want Mark to let Dan or Asher go? Explain your choice.