

11.1 CASE STUDY

Office Space

The five members of the Web programming department at a marketing company are being relocated to a new space in their building. The move came as a big surprise; the head of the company decided to cut costs by leasing less space, and with just a few days' notice, the department was relocated.

The new space is a real change from what the programmers are used to. Their old space was a big open room with one wall of floor-to-ceiling windows. Their desks all faced each other, which allowed them to easily talk and collaborate with one another. The new office space has a row of five cubicles along a wall in a long, narrow room. Four of the cubicles have windows; the fifth, which is slightly larger than the others, is tucked into a windowless corner. The cubicle walls are 6 feet tall, and when they are at their desks working, the programmers can no longer see one another.

The team leader, Martin, assigned the cubicles that each programmer has moved into. He put himself in the first cubicle with Rosa, Sanjay, and Kris in the next three cubicles with windows. Bradley was given the larger cubicle in the corner.

Bradley is the first to complain. When he sees his new space, he goes to Martin and asks for a different cubicle, one with a window. He argues that he has been employed there longer than the other programmers and should get to choose his cubicle rather than be told where

he is going to be. Because he and Martin work very closely on a number of projects, Bradley feels he should be in the cubicle next to Martin, rather than the one farthest away.

Sanjay is also upset. He is in the middle cubicle with Rosa and Kris on either side of him. Rosa and Kris used to have desks next to each other in the bigger space and would banter back and forth with one another while working. Now that they are in the row of cubicles, they still try to chat with one another, but to do so, they more or less shout to each other over Sanjay's space. When Martin offers to let him trade places with Bradley as a solution, Sanjay says he doesn't want to give up his window.

Martin leaves everyone where they are. He hasn't told them, but he purposely put Sanjay between Rosa and Kris in order to discourage their constant chatting, which he viewed as a time-wasting activity. Martin also felt like the larger cube was better for Bradley because he has more computer equipment than the other programmers.

During the next two months, the Web programming department starts to experience a lot of tension. Sanjay seems to be in a bad mood on a daily basis. When Rosa and Kris start chatting with each other over the cubicles, he asks them loudly, "Will you please just work and stop shouting to each other?" or says sarcastically, "I'm trying to work here!" As a result, either Rosa or Kris will leave her cubicle to walk down to the other's space to chat.

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having conversations that last longer than their old bantering back and forth used to.

Bradley stays in his corner cubicle and avoids talking to the other programmers. He believes that Martin purposely gave him what Bradley perceives is the worst cubicle but doesn't know what he did to deserve being treated this way. He is resentful of the other staff members who have windows in their cubicles and feels like Martin must think more highly of Rosa, Kris, and Sanjay than he does of Bradley. As Bradley observes Rosa and Kris spending more time talking and less time working and the crabbiness from Sanjay, he becomes very upset with Martin. It seems Martin is rewarding the programmers who behave the worst!

Bradley becomes even more reclusive at work and avoids talking to the other programmers, especially Martin. He communicates with them mainly by email messages, even though he's only a few yards away from some of them. He no longer collaborates closely with Martin; instead he tries to work on projects without involving Martin. Unfortunately, if he encounters a problem that he needs Martin's help for, Bradley

will try to solve it himself. Often, Martin won't even know there is a problem that needs to be solved until Bradley realizes he can't solve it alone and the problem becomes a crisis.

The only time all five of the programmers actually see one another is in weekly staff meetings, which are held in a conference room with a large table and a dozen chairs. In their old space, they didn't have weekly meetings because they were able to talk about projects and schedules with each other whenever it was needed. In their new staff meetings, it seems like Martin is doing all the talking. Rosa and Kris sit on one side of the table and try to ignore Sanjay who sits by himself across from them. Bradley sits at the far end of the table at least two chairs away from everyone else.

After another unproductive staff meeting where no one spoke or looked at one another, Martin sits at the head of the conference table after the other programmers have left with his head in his hands. He doesn't know what has happened to the cohesive team he used to lead and why things changed. It seems absolutely ridiculous to him that this is all about space.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the conflict that has arisen between the members of the Web programming department?
2. Is the conflict a relational conflict? If so, what type of relational conflict? Is there a content dimension to this conflict?
3. Using Fisher and Ury's method of principled negotiation, how would you separate the people from the problem? What do you think is really, really going on in this conflict?
4. Using the Kilmann and Thomas conflict styles, how would you characterize Sanjay's conflict style? What about Bradley's? Do Rosa and Kris have a style as well?
5. How could Martin use fractionation and face saving in attempting to resolve this conflict?

12.1 CASE STUDY

The Write Choice

Each semester, community college professor Julia Ramirez requires her students to do a 10-hour community service project at a nonprofit agency of their choice and write a paper about the experience. In the paper, they are to discuss their volunteer experience and incorporate concepts presented in class into this reflection. This is the sixth semester that Professor Ramirez has used this assignment, and she has always received positive feedback about the benefits of the assignment from her students and the nonprofits.

The community college that Professor Ramirez works at is making an effort to be "green" and, in order to cut down on paper usage, requests that faculty and staff utilize online tools for giving and receiving assignments and providing feedback to students. Professor Ramirez takes advantage of these green initiatives, requiring her community learning papers to all be turned in electronically at noon on the last Friday before exams. She likes having the papers turned in electronically because it has significantly cut down on late papers and it is now very easy to check student work for plagiarism.

That day has arrived, and Professor Ramirez downloads her student papers from the class webpage and begins to grade them. The papers are informal in nature, written in first-person narrative as if the students were talking directly to Professor Ramirez. After grading a number of papers, Professor

Ramirez comes to the paper written by student Kelly Declan. Kelly's paper reads less like a personal narrative and more like a brochure for the organization where she volunteered. At first, Professor Ramirez is impressed with the amount of detail that Kelly retained from volunteering, but after reading part of the paper, she becomes suspicious. To be safe, Professor Ramirez decides to copy a passage from Kelly's paper into her Internet search engine to see if it matches any other published sources. It does; in fact, it is a direct match for an online brochure of a similar organization in a neighboring state. Professor Ramirez tests a few more sections from Kelly's paper and finds that 90% of it was plagiarized from this one source on the Internet.

Plagiarism is taken very seriously at the college. Students accused of plagiarism are reported to the student review board, and if the board confirms that a student's work is not his or her own, the student is dismissed from the college. Students who have been dismissed for plagiarism are able to reapply to the college after waiting one semester, and if they are readmitted, they are placed on academic probation for a year.

Despite the college's policy, Professor Ramirez is conflicted about how to deal with this situation. She knows that Kelly had a very difficult semester. Her mother is ill with cancer, and during the semester, Kelly drove twice a week to her hometown two hours away to

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take her mother to doctor's appointments and chemotherapy. Knowing this, Professor Ramirez accommodated Kelly's schedule during the semester so that she did not have to drop the course. This is also Kelly's last semester before graduation, and she will be the first person in her family to graduate from college. Kelly also has a job lined up after graduation, for which Professor Ramirez wrote her a letter of recommendation, and if she does not graduate, she will most likely lose the job. Losing the job will be certain if Kelly is ejected from the college.

Professor Ramirez decides not to report the incident of plagiarism to the review board right away. She chooses instead to approach Kelly one-on-one and will proceed based on what Kelly has to say. During their meeting, it is apparent to Professor Ramirez that Kelly did complete the required service hours but was overwhelmed when it came to writing the paper.

Kelly had let the assignment go until the very end and then when she had to write it, she could only come up with one page rather than the three pages required. She added the plagiarized information to make the paper reach the required length. Kelly is genuinely remorseful and admits she is terrified of the consequences.

In the end, Professor Ramirez gave Kelly a zero for the assignment, but she still passed the class with a grade of a B. She did not feel that having Kelly kicked out of school would benefit the college or Kelly. Despite going against college policy, Professor Ramirez believes her behavior is consistent with her personal values of acknowledging that people make mistakes and deserve second chances. She personally felt that this behavior was out of character for Kelly and, had Kelly not been under tremendous personal and academic stress, she wouldn't have acted in this way.

QUESTIONS

1. Even though Professor Ramirez deviated from the college's policy regarding plagiarism, do you feel that she acted ethically?
2. If you were a student in this class and learned Professor Ramirez made an exception for this student, would you think she acted ethically? Explain.
3. In Table 12.1, the Six Pillars of Character are detailed. Which of these six pillars did Professor Ramirez display in consideration for her student, and how?
4. Professor Ramirez's actions ultimately brought into question whether or not the ends justify the means. Do you feel that her leniency in this case made her a stronger or more ethical leader? Explain.

13.1 CASE STUDY

Book Quiz Blues?

As a community service project, Trey Morgan volunteered to coach a Book Quiz team of fourth graders at a local elementary school. As a college student majoring in education, Trey was excited for the opportunity to work one-on-one with children to prepare them for the competition. He felt it would give him a good indication of how much he would like teaching and whether he would be a good teacher.

The Book Quiz is a competition where teams of students read 10 books and compete with other teams, answering questions about the books. The teams have 10 weeks to prepare by reading the books and doing practice quizzes.

Trey's team members were selected by their teacher, who mandated that all students in her class be on a team. Trey spent an hour each week with his team. He made a chart, and as the students finished reading the books, he would put a star next to their name. He also established that the first student to finish all the books would get a prize.

After three weeks, one of the team members, Claire, had finished five of the books already and was moving way ahead of the other team members. Shelby had admitted to starting to read four of the books, but "they were boring" so she stopped reading them. Marco, who announced at the first meeting that he would win the prize for reading all 10 books first, had read three of them, but his progress had slowed considerably. Every time a new star was added to Claire's name on the chart,

Marco became visibly discouraged and frustrated. Garrett, on the other hand, wasn't progressing at all. He was still reading the same 80-page book he started the first week. Trey observed that during their meetings Garrett would get up frequently and move around the room. He also liked to spin in circles, often hitting the other kids accidentally with his swinging arms. When Trey tried to encourage Garrett to go for the prize, he shrugged and said, "I can't win that. I don't read fast like Claire and Marco."

At the six-week point, Trey panicked. His Book Quiz guidebook said that each team member should have read at least five of the books by now. Claire had only read one additional book in the past three weeks because she had joined the track team and had little time after track practice and homework for reading. Marco had read four books, but didn't seem interested in any of the remaining books. Garrett finally finished the one he started, and Shelby had started them all but not completed one. Trey hadn't even begun to quiz the students on the books because there was no point if they hadn't read them. He did have Marco and Claire work together on the four books they had both read, writing questions and quizzing each other.

With four weeks left, Trey has to figure out a way to get his team motivated and focused. He has given up any hopes of winning, but does want his team to at least make a good showing.

As he tries to give them a pep talk, encouraging them to focus so they "won't look like idiots in the competition," Garrett interrupts.

"Who cares if we look like idiots?" he asks. "I didn't ask to be on this team. I got put on this team. It's a stupid competition."

Marco gets mad. "Garrett, we are going to lose because you and Shelby won't read. I don't like losing, and when we do, it will be your fault."

Shelby and Claire both start to cry, with Claire saying she feels awful because she can't read as much anymore and she is letting everyone down. "I have too much to do," she wails.

Garrett gets up and spins in circles.

Marco looks at Trey. "Aren't you going to do something?" he demands angrily.

Trey thinks to himself that if he does anything it will be to change his major to business.

QUESTIONS

1. Obviously, things are not working out well for Trey and his team. If you were Trey, how would you have proceeded from the beginning to help the team avoid or overcome its obstacles?
2. Based on the seven obstacles discussed in this chapter, identify which obstacles each of the team members (Claire, Shelby, Marco, and Garrett) is facing.
3. Some of Trey's team members seem to lack motivation. Based on *expectancy theory*, how could Trey help his team members *feel competent*, *get what they expect*, and *value what they do*?
4. Based on how his team is feeling and doing, identify three specific things Trey could do to help his students.