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What I felt:

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**In Class:** The instructor can divide students into pairs—listener and speaker—in class to practice this exercise. The “speaking” students can be asked to talk about some small problem or annoyance they encountered in the previous day or two. The “listening” students can be given instructions to not speak during the first trial, and instead just maintain a soft gaze into the speaker’s left eye and respond only with body language (facial expressions and nods). The speaking students should continue until they have nothing more to say or until they feel an emotional shift and the problem seems to have disappeared. After students switch roles and play both speaker and listener, the instructor can ask the class for perceptions of what happened and what they were feeling during the conversation.

It works well to have the students choose a second pairing, and redo the exercise with a new problem. The only difference the second time is that the “listener” role is given fewer restrictions, so the listener can make brief comments such as to paraphrase or ask a short question. The listeners, however, should keep spoken comments to a minimum and definitely should not offer their own ideas or point of view. After the students finish, the instructor can gather opinions about what the experience was like for both the speaker and the listener. Key questions include the following: What did it feel like to listen rather than respond verbally to what another person said? What is the value of this professional listening approach? In what situations is professional listening likely to be more or less effective? If the instructor desires, the exercise can be done a third time to help students get more comfortable with a true listening role.

Source: Adapted from Michael Ray and Rochelle Myers, *Creativity in Business* (New York: Broadway Books, 2000), pp. 82–83.

## Leadership Development: Cases for Analysis

### THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DIRECTIVE

Educational administrators are bombarded by requests for innovation at all educational levels. Programs to upgrade math, science, and social science education, state accountability plans, new approaches to administration, and other ideas are initiated by teachers, administrators, interest groups, reformers, and state regulators. In a school district, the superintendent is the key leader; in an individual school, the principal is the key leader.

In the Carville City School District, Superintendent Porter has responsibility for 11 schools—eight elementary, two junior high, and one high school. After attending

a management summer course, Porter sent the following e-mail to the principal of each school:

“Please request that teachers in your school develop a set of performance objectives for each class they teach. A consultant will be providing instructions for writing the performance objectives during the August 10 in-service day. The deadline for submitting the performance objectives to my office is September 21.”

Mr. Weigand, principal of Earsworth Elementary School, forwarded Porter’s e-mail to his teachers with the following message:

“Please see the forwarded e-mail from Superintendent Porter. As he explains, you will need to write performance objectives for each course you teach. These are due one month from today. This afternoon, during the in-service meeting, you will receive training on how to write these performance objectives.”

After receiving this e-mail, several teachers at the elementary school responded with a flurry of hastily written e-mail responses. One well-respected and talented teacher wrote the following e-mail, accidentally sending it to Mr. Weigand instead of her colleagues:

“This is nonsense! I should be spending my time focused on the lesson plan for the new advanced English class the board of education approved. Porter is clueless and has no idea the demands we are facing in the classroom. We never even hear from him until he wants us to complete some empty exercise. I am going to start looking for a school district that values my time!”

Mr. Weigand was stunned by this e-mail, wondering if he was close to losing a valuable teacher who was admired by her peers and others in the school system. He knew this e-mail had been written in haste and that this teacher would be embarrassed to know that he had received it. He was concerned that other teachers may have reacted in similar ways to his e-mail. He also wondered how to respond to the angry e-mail and how to improve morale at the start of a new school year.

### QUESTIONS

1. Evaluate the e-mail communications of Mr. Porter and Mr. Weigand. To what extent are they communicating effectively about the new performance objectives? Explain. If you were a teacher, how would you have felt after receiving the e-mail? Why?
2. If you were Mr. Weigand, how would you respond to the angry teacher? Be specific about how you would communicate with her and what you would say. How could he have communicated differently about the performance objectives to influence the teachers more positively?
3. Identify the mistakes that the teacher made when composing and sending her e-mail message.

### THE SADDLE CREEK DELI

The Saddle Creek Deli serves fresh sandwiches and hearty salads at moderate prices to skiers in the bustling ski resort town of Vail, Colorado. The deli is known for its cozy ambiance, Western décor, and two-story stone fireplace. Catering to skiers, the Saddle Creek Deli serves fresh meals in a hurry to people taking a break from the slopes and is located 10 minutes from a popular ski lift. Large windows provide a dazzling view of the nearby mountains. The deli’s major attraction, however, is a high-quality, old-fashioned soda fountain that specializes in superior ice cream sundaes and sodas. Business has grown steadily during the seven years of operation.

The deli has been so successful that Richard Purvis, owner and manager, decided to hire a manager so that he could devote more time to other business interests. After