

Ethical Dilemma: The Research Project

Bill and Rachael are both analysts in the market research department at ABC Company. Bill is generally viewed as a top performer. Objectively his work is good, but he really excels at self-promotion. When dealing with others he is a tough negotiator, confident to the point of being cocky. He likes to win and win big. He is unafraid of stepping on anyone's toes and lives by the motto that it is easier to beg forgiveness than to ask permission.

Rachael is bright and hard-working; however, she is modest and relies on others to notice the good work she does. She believes it's more important to spend her time working than promoting herself and publicizing her accomplishments. She views conflict as a complete waste of time and has a difficult time standing up for herself. This often results in others taking advantage of her.

Bill and Rachael have recently been assigned to work together on what has the potential to be a highly visible project. The project involves a lot of research, writing a report, and presenting the findings to the senior executives. They just finished meeting to lay out the tasks involved and establish a plan for the project. In their meeting Bill told Rachael that she can do the research and draft the report, and he will make the presentation. When Rachael suggested they work together on the

research and jointly make the presentation, Bill told her that she needs to do the research and draft the report because she is better at "that sort of thing," while he needs to make the presentation because of his superior presentation skills.

Bill left the meeting satisfied that he had won yet again and believing that since he will be making the presentation he will get the majority of the credit for the project. This is important to him because he has heard there will be an opening in the near future for a senior analyst. He wants the promotion and thinks the visibility of this project will make him a shoo-in for the job.

Rachael left their meeting feeling resentful and put upon but not knowing what to do about it. While this sort of thing has happened to her in the past she was especially upset this time because she has heard there will soon be an opening for a senior analyst and she is very interested in the position.

Questions

1. Is Bill behaving ethically?
2. What do you think he should do in this situation?
3. How might Rachael negotiate an outcome that better meets her needs?