Erik Toy Case Study Essay, Research Paper

ERIK TOY CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As the manager of a highly regarded budget division of one plant in a multi-plant organization, I must choose a suitable employee to fill the position of the head of the budget office in a smaller plant. I have narrowed my choices down to the leaders of the two main sections in our department: Sissel and Tom. To help the ease of decision, we must compare each candidate’s qualifications and select one person, keeping in mind that our own department will be affected by this move.

Sissel, a 29-year-old college graduate with a Master’s degree in Accounting, has been with the company for 4 years. Young for the responsibility required, she has done an outstanding job, easily getting others to work for her. She obtains excellent planning and delegating skills, and is persuasive in getting others to agree with her ideas. She is also very friendly, and gets along with everyone.

Tom, a 45-year-old husband and father, has an undergraduate degree in math and philosophy. His 15 years with the company has yielded slow yet steady progress. A dedicated employee, he is the hardest worker, often putting in extra hours. He is very creative and possesses a strong technical know-how of the job, developing many effective, yet simple procedures to carry out his plans. He has also mentioned interest in a promotion, should one arise. His weakness is in his ability to converse with co-workers. When he is in the office, he is all business and expects the people working for him to be the same. As a result, he seems somewhat abrupt in his contact with others.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY PROBLEMS

The main problem is to choose the most qualified person for the job at the smaller plant. Doing this creates many secondary problems. It is up to me to ensure that my own department is left running smoothly and efficiently, maintaining our reputation for excellence, informing both the recipient and the non-promoted candidate(s), how my departments will feel about losing their leader, how the department at the smaller plant will feel about having someone new managing their division, and how my selection will perform under the new environment.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

a) For the Personnel Within the Organization The absence of either of these two candidates would greatly impact the production of the overall department. Both Sissel and Tom are leaders, positions that could not be replaced by just anyone. Tom’s 15 years experience is not easily substituted. Losing him might affect the production of the other workers, since Tom is a hard-worker, and does not waste time socializing. This would lift a possible barrier on the acceptable amount of casual conversations between employees. He is also a valuable role model, due to his dedication and creativity. He sets a pace for his employees which could potentially be destroyed if he were to leave.

On the other hand, Sissel is also a key figure in the department. She possesses excellent planning skills, and is often successful at convincing department heads in other parts of the organization to go along with new and different budgeting ideas. Since most managers tend to resist change, they could be skeptical of the ideas of someone new, someone they don’t know or trust. The currently friendly atmosphere could also be diminished if Sissel were to leave.

b) For the Organization As a Whole For overall performance within the organization, some departments and plants may benefit more than others. For instance, the smaller plant is about to gain a very strong, dedicated budget head. Both candidates are very organized, hard-working and willing to take on new challenges. They are creative in their work, and will surely develop some new budgeting ideas that will work well in the plant. From the other end, our department is going to be at a loss. We are losing a valuable employee, that cannot be easily replaced. Sissel and Tom are both experienced and educated individuals, who will put 101% of their efforts into making sure their job is complete to the best extent they can possibly perform.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

One possible alternative would be to transfer Tom to the smaller plant, and grant him the promotion he was hoping for. This would allow him a chance to implement more creative innovations and devise his already effective and simple procedures. On the down side, Tom is comfortable to his present subordinates, as they are with his business-oriented personality. They understand that he is somewhat abrupt in his contact with them, but this does not affect their work performance. They still see him as a model, and inspiration to work harder. His potential subordinates at the smaller plant are not familiar with his attitude. This may cause some conflict among them since they would find it difficult to communicate pleasantly with him. The fact that the job is also fifty miles away requires that the aspirant relocate. Tom, being 45 years old with a wife and 2 children, might not want to relocate, especially if he has already developed his life here (i.e. buying a home, children in school, etc.). When he requested a chance at a promotion, he was most likely thinking a promotion within the plant.

Our other possibility is to assign the position to Sissel. Her 4 years experience could be more easily replaced than Tom’s 15 years. She has also mentioned that “one or two of her people were showing great promise and developing quickly.” This could lead to a possible promotion for one of them to resume Sissel’s position. Her Master’s degree in Accounting could prove to be valuable in the new plant. She is somewhat creative, not to the extreme that Tom is, but she is able to convince department heads to go along with her “new and different budgeting ideas”. The fact that she works well with others will make the transition to the new department a lot easier. She is a mediator, and could possibly help her new department to work together better. The new job would require some new budgeting ideas, and the implementation of them. If Sissel were to move, then possibly Tom and Sissel could keep in regular contact, exchanging ideas and thoughts, working as a team. Sissel is also younger, and has not settled into life as deep as Tom. Thus, she would be more willing to relocate.

THE BEST SOLUTION

In order to send one of the most qualified employees from our department, yet maintain our reputation for excellent results based on the development and implementation of new budget techniques, Sissel would be the better choice. Although she is an outstanding worker, she has only 4 years experience, making her easier to replace than Tom, who has 15 years experience. One of the key reasons is due to her comment that one or two of her people are “showing great promise”. She would be easier to replace. She can also relate to others better, and would be better suited to work with new people. Tom has a tendency to be abrupt in his contact with others. Although Tom is more creative and innovative, Sissel can more easily implement her plans, and can delegate jobs more efficiently. To make the best of both plants, Tom and Sissel should communicate regularly, sharing ideas, and implementation strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEST SOLUTION

a) Immediate Action We can start by informing Sissel that she has been chosen for the new position at the smaller plant. Consult with her as to which employee she would feel could best handle her current position, so that together you could train the new person with Sissel’s responsibilities and duties. Tom must be informed, that due to his importance at our plant, he is more needed where he is. Make sure that Tom understands that he is not turned down from the promotion due to age, experience, performance, or other factors. Reassure him that he has creative and innovative ideas and the success of the plant is greatly dependent upon him. The transfer would not only affect the smaller plant, but our own as well.

b) Short Term Action During the first year following the transfer, Sissel should remain in close contact to her previous employees and offer suggestions on her methods and shortcuts. This will help make the transition for her replacement smoother.

c) Long Term Action If any other promotions should arise, let Tom know that he will definitely be considered for them, and that he is a very valuable employee. Follow up on the progress of Sissel at the small plant, and, if things are not going well, offer to bring her back and replace her with Tom. She can then resume her old job, or take on Tom’s job in a different department.