

Status Report - Dale Flowers 7/6/99

Confidential

Background

In January 1999, I was hired by SMUD as an outside consultant to work with Mr. Jim Saum in helping him to improve his communication and interpersonal skills. I was also contracted to provide coaching and facilitation assistance to others who are directly involved in this situation, particularly Mr. Jim Field and Mr. Steve Redeker. The need for improvement and the expectations for change are defined in the agreement outlined in the General Manager's letter dated October 30, 1998. My role was to be a coach and facilitator in this problem situation. The specific tasks of this assignment are outlined in attached work statement.

Assessment

In making my assessment, I met first with Mr. Saum to get his perceptions of the situation and to go over my role and responsibilities in the project. After meeting with Mr. Saum, I conducted interviews with six of his co-workers to get their perspectives on Mr. Saum's communication and interpersonal skills. In addition, I had separate interviews with Mr. Field and Mr. Redeker. My purpose in all of these interviews was to gather specific behavioral information that would serve as the basis for a training and development plan.

My findings from the interviews and my personal interactions with Mr. Saum during this period were that he did have deficiencies in his communication

Information in this record was deleted
in accordance with the Freedom of Information
Act, exemptions FC
FOIA- 5000-0194

BJZ

and interpersonal skills. The deficiencies are specifically outlined in the Performance Plan dated 4/6/99 under Areas Needing Improvement.

Strategy

Based on the assessment, my chosen strategy was to provide Mr. Saum with ongoing feedback on how he was communicating and interacting with his co-workers and then to work with him in acquiring skills for any deficiencies. I estimated that with his full cooperation it would take six months to overcome his deficiencies and develop his skills. The first problem that needed to be addressed was that Mr. Saum had to accept the fact that he has deficiencies. I conveyed this information to Mr. Saum and then proceeded to implement this approach.

Results

At this time, Mr. Saum is not cooperating sufficiently in the training process to make it work. We are at an impasse and are unable to make satisfactory progress. My point of view is based on the reasons outlined in the following pages.

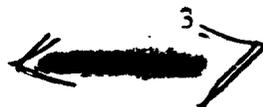
1. In my initial meetings with Mr. Saum he continually insisted that he had been unfairly criticized and wrongfully terminated and that his communication and interpersonal skills were not the problem. His perception of the problem was that his supervisor, manager and some employees did not accept the way he performed his job. He believed they were the real problems. On numerous

7c

occasions he restated that his work was, and continues to be, done in a professional manner. He also pointed out that he had documented evidence to support his case and he was not going to accept misrepresentation and unfair judgement. Because of his view the situation, he continually rejected my coaching attempts.

2. Another factor that made the coaching relationship non-functional was Mr. Saum's continued refusal to accept the conditions of the General Manager's letter. We had numerous discussions regarding this letter. In a recent meeting, he stated to Mr. Field and me that he had agreed to the conditions of the letter under duress. If this fact had been made known to me when the project commenced, I would have materially changed my approach. Without a clear agreement by all parties about the problem, making change is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

3. Mr. Saum continues to pursue problem solving from a legal standpoint. This makes a training and development strategy problematic. In fact, his pursuit of a legal strategy exacerbates most of the difficult situations that have arisen during the project. He asks co-workers to sign statements that validate his view that he has good communications and working relationships, and he refers to witnesses who will testify on his behalf. The net result is that there are two strategies at work in this situation. This is counterproductive.

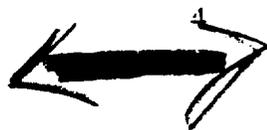


7c

4. Mr. Saum will not accept coaching from me. It came to my attention that since the beginning of the project he has been describing me to fellow employees as the "terminator". When I questioned him about this, he stated it was true. He maintains that I was brought on to facilitate his termination. Trust is an essential ingredient for a successful coaching relationship and it does not exist in this situation.

5. Mr. Saum is unwilling to fully participate in the PDQ problem solving process. This is a clearly defined expectation in the General Manger's letter. Mr. Saum, Mr. Field, Mr. Redeker and I, together and separately, had several discussions on this issue. Two of the meetings resulted in serious differences of opinion, and the final meeting resulted in a complete breakdown of the problem solving process. Mr. Saum stated flatly that he would not participate in discussions on this matter while his discrimination complaint is being reviewed. Under these circumstances, it does not seem possible that this condition of the General Manager's letter will be met in the prescribed six month probationary time frame.

6. Mr. Saum continues to act in ways that his co-workers describe as uncivil and discourteous. The incident with Phil Terry in which a disciplinary letter was written is one example. There are other examples that will be cited in his next performance review. The interpersonal problems Mr. Saum denies exist continue to manifest themselves in current situations.



7. It is very difficult to give feedback to Mr. Saum. Critical feedback is always challenged. Any criticism of his communication or interpersonal skills is rejected and he wants to confront the person who, in his view, is falsely accusing him. Feedback as a coaching tool is useless in this type of situation.

Conclusions

At this point in time we are at an impasse. We are working from two very different perceptions of the situation. Mr. Saum contends there was never a problem with his interpersonal and communication skills. This is particularly troublesome when it is clearly stated in the General Manager's letter that there is a problem and that he be willing to cooperate in fixing it. The way we are proceeding now will not work. We need another strategy, one in which Mr. Saum agrees in fact and deed to comply with the purpose and goals of the General Manager's letter. We are at a point where progress can only be made if Mr. Saum accepts responsibility for his behavior.

