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THE BATTLE BETWEEN PERSONAL PERFORMANCE AND WORK POLICIES

Joanne Snead
Tracy Guyette
Saint Leo University

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Paul, a loyal employee of 20 years, faced a difficult decision and contemplates on what to do. A pivotal point has been reached where either Paul, or his employee are going to be held at the chopping block. Will it be Paul, who out of concern and sympathy has let his employee, Elliot, slack off at the expense of the organization, or will it be Elliot who suffered the consequences for his actions of blatantly taking advantage of his manager and co-workers?

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INTRODUCTION

Paul was rereading the organization's code of practice to ease his conscience; he knew the company rules and what the grounds were for an employee sanction. Paul became frustrated with himself, and with his employee for how far the situation has gone. Paul still battled with his conscience to make the right decision to make, as he walked into his senior manager's office, he thought to himself, "I hope I've made the right decision."

THE PROTAGONIST

Paul was a hard-working employee who has been with the Synergy Solutions Group for 20 years. Paul was always interested in software and hardware, due to his ability in solving challenging puzzles. As Paul worked in IT, everyone around him saw his passion and the fulfillment he gained from it. Paul had completed his Bachelors in Information Technology from a state university in the Southeast. Paul attained one of the highest GPA's in his program because he had a knack for troubleshooting and finding quick resolutions.

Paul was right out of college when he applied to Synergy Solutions Group to start his career in IT. Within the first several years of Paul's career, the organization saw his commitment and enthusiasm, as a thank you, Synergy Solutions Group paid for his master's degree in Computer Science from the University of Georgia. Paul diligently worked a 40-hour week while attending night classes. He clearly had a calling for IT. Paul knew with hard work and dedication, success could be achieved. Throughout the countless years, Paul has remained committed to the organization

while continuously pushed himself to actively gain new certificates for CompTIA A+, CompTIA Network+, etc. He continually earned new certificates to improve his knowledge and gain value within the organization. Through his hard work and dedication, Paul became the head programmer and was given his own team to lead. Paul attended annual conferences and training to be kept up to date with standard operating procedures (SOP's), to be an example to his department and co-workers. Paul has remained at Synergy Solutions Group for the majority of life, and he saw the company as a second home. As the head programmer, Paul continually gave all employees the same type of respect, regardless of their position, wanting the same respect in return. He gained a reputation for being loyal, trusted by employees, and actively following the organization rules.

THE ORGANIZATION

Synergy Solutions Group was an educational technology consulting company. The organization was known for being one of the best in the field for their learning management systems and the availability for virtual learning. Synergy Solutions Group's system was most popular due to being very user friendly to its online based students and professors. The organization was headquartered in Atlanta, GA, and founded in 1989. The company had about 2400 employees, with 900 in office, 400 remote employees, and 1100 employees overseas. Overseas offices were also located in Europe, such as Ukraine, Germany, and Canada. This organization provided software for colleges globally; competitors included, Desire2Learn, Blackboard, and Coursera. Synergy Solutions Group promoted ethical employee behavior and supported high productivity. Ethical employee behavior and high productivity was promoted through the company's upper management and leaders who led by example.

THE ANTAGONIST

Elliot, who had been employed at Synergy Solutions Group fewer than ten years, had worked as a systems engineer dealing with hardware and software issues. Elliot grew up in a wealthy family, achieved his bachelors from a private University and majored in Information Technology and Management. After graduation, Elliot did not take his career seriously, as he jumped from job to job. His parents realized if they continually supported him, Elliot would proceed to solely rely on them instead of growing into a responsible adult. After Elliot lost his last job, his parents stopped supporting him to make Elliot realize he needs to hold a job and to start making his own income. Soon after, Elliot and his parents began to have more disagreements, where they were fighting almost every day. Elliot and his parents did not see eye-to-eye, so he decided to move to Atlanta, GA. After his move, he limited the contact with his parents by choice. Coming from the Midwest to a large city like Atlanta, Elliot initially did not know many people. Elliot grew up as an only child, had no immediate family in the area, and had no pets, hobbies, or other interests outside of

the organization. He was somewhat of a loner. He turned to bad habits such as gambling, excessive drinking, and overspending to fill the void of being alone. Elliot's bad habits had led him to credit card debt.

THE SITUATION

With Elliot's growing vices, his work began to suffer, and his manager Paul started to notice. Elliot had confided in Paul several times over his years of employment about his issues. Paul began to feel bad for Elliot due to his life situations. Paul wanted to be a supportive manager for Elliot, to help Elliot get through this rough patch in his life; Paul slowly gave Elliot fewer tasks, with no consequences for incomplete or sloppy work. Paul understood what is like to struggle as a young adult, with no one's help. Paul thought if he could give Elliot a few chances, Elliot would break free of his bad habits and start to get his life together. For a short period, Elliot showed progress at work with coming in early, completing tasks with no mistakes, and assisting other co-workers. Paul believed he had handled the situation correctly with Elliot, and Elliot needed help to succeed.

A few weeks later, Elliot had a bad night at the casino and lost the majority of his savings. With Elliot's one bad night, he lost all of his progress at work; his performance was slipping, tasks were not completed on time, and assignments were building up. Elliot asked to see Paul in his office to speak about the current situation. Elliot told Paul about his night at the casino and how Elliot lost his money playing blackjack. Elliot was worried about paying his rent and bills. Paul listened to Elliot and decided to give him another chance. Elliot drug this on for months, and he was profoundly behind on tasks. Even if Elliot were to become suddenly motivated, it would almost be impossible for him to catch up on his own. Elliot resorted to asking another co-worker to help him catch up on his own work.

To make matters worse, a client of Elliot's was going through a Go-Live, which required a minimum of eight consistent working hours in case of a crash or bug in the program. The Go-Live comprised of a patch or HotFix that needed to be installed into the system, which meant Elliot needed to test the application before it could be handed back to the users. Paul was gently pushing Elliot to prepare for his Go-Live; however, Elliot did not complete his previous tasks, nor was he getting ready for his major project. Work was very important to Paul as he was in the same position as Elliot less than two decades ago.

Employees from the same department started to become frustrated with Elliot. They began to believe Paul showed favoritism toward Elliot. Additionally, Paul began to worry about his own reputation which he had worked so hard to build. He had not foreseen Elliot's actions as having such a large impact on the team. Elliot began to care less about his job, and he started to leave company grounds for hours, while

still clocked in. Rules concerned with this type of behavior are very specific and are found in the time clock policy: Time clock stations are located at each exit of the building; all employees who leave company grounds are required to clock out, Time clock fraud leads to sanctions. Paul was upset with Elliot, especially because Elliot did not seem to care about the upcoming project. Paul began to feel as if Elliot was taking advantage of him, and Elliot took his acts of kindness as an excuse to be careless at work. Paul did not want to believe Elliot would have taken advantage of Paul's kindness.

Upper management noticed Elliot's actions, and decided to schedule a meeting with both Paul and Elliot. Before the scheduled meeting, Paul met when his senior manager to explain Elliot's past and the reasons for his actions. Paul's senior manager patiently listened to him and asked Paul to decide if he should keep Elliot on his team. Paul was battling with his conscience and his guilt on what the right decision is; whether to keep Elliot on his team even with his work habits worsening or he would lose respect and confidence from his team members. Paul was most worried if he let Elliot go, Elliot would truly be buried in his gambling and credit card debt. Paul knew he was the only one trying to help Elliot with his issues. He knew with Elliot having a job, it gave him something to focus on to break his gambling and alcohol addiction.

Paul began to think everything through, he realized he should not have been so flexible with Elliot and rules should have been created. From the beginning Paul knew with hard work and dedication, success can be achieved, but now he believes not everyone is willing to achieve success. Before the upcoming meeting, Paul felt angry with Elliot and torn with his principles. Paul was battling with his conscience. Minutes before the meeting with his senior manager, Paul was anxiously tapping his fingers on his desk, nervously watching the clock while scanning the room hoping to find an answer. As time was running out, Paul was walking down the hall to his senior manager's office. In the corner of his eye, Paul saw Elliot walking through the maze of cubicles. In only a matter of seconds Paul had changed his mind from yes to no, no to yes. As Paul slowly opened the door, with Elliot just steps behind him, Paul thought to himself, "I hope I've made the right decision."

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APPENDICES

Workplace policies are a statement of principles for the employees of the organization to follow; these are a set of procedures and principles. Workplace policies are used as a reference to employees for how the organization will handle day-to-day operations, issues, and how issues will be handled accordingly. The benefits of workplace policies:

- Employees clearly understand what their responsibilities and duties are
- Framework of business plans are provided
- Time is saved when handling disciplinary problems
- Clients see the organization is efficient
- Synergy Solutions Group is consistent with operational procedures and decision making

Code of Practice

The code of practice is designed to help employees, employers, and representatives.

- Disciplinary action will be taken against employees who are in situations including poor performance and/ or misconduct. The basic principles of fairness are applied to all employees and should be followed.
- Issues of grievances are concerns as well, and all issues will be raised with the employee's supervisor.
- Employees are to complete their tasks/work in a timely manner with honest representation of productivity.
  - Employees who are not completing tasks could face sanction.
- The code is used to promote fairness when dealing with procedures and rules when handling disciplinary actions. All employees are expected to understand the rules and procedures
  - All issues employers face with employees should be dealt with promptly, issues are not to delay normal daily workflow.

Policy for Time Clock

Time clocks are useful in organizations with a number of employees.

- All employees are required to clock in and clock out. Clocking in records an employee's time of hours worked. The time clock is used for employers to keep track of employees' attendance.
- Time clock stations are located at each exit of the building; all employees who leave company grounds are required to clock out.
- Employees who have repeated offenses to time clock policy allow the employer to use disciplinary actions. Situations of disciplinary actions include employees who are clocked in and are absent from their workstation and company grounds.
- Time clock fraud leads to sanction.