

Embryo Case Summary Sheet

(Not to exceed 3 pages total)

Working title of the case: Too Many Decorations

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Source of case data: _____ Library research _____ Interviews _____ Consulting

___X___ Personal experience _____ Combination (check all that apply)

Expected level: _____ Graduate ___X___ Advanced Undergraduate ___X___ Undergraduate

Industry setting: Not specified; white-collar office setting.

Main character, job title: Anna, an Analyst at a medium-sized organization

Relevant theories to be applied

Organizational culture, specifically the Competing Values Framework

Influence tactics

Conflict-handling approaches

Social identity

Group norms

Power

Envisioned case issues (for the Teaching Note):

What are the reasons that someone would or would not want to go to a manager about this?

What is a reasonable expectation of your stuff not being stolen at work?

What's the expectation of what is or is not appropriate decoration of your cubicle at work?

How can employees influence their own work environment to improve productivity?

Questions/issues we'd like help with:

Please note: this will be a short case (3--5 pages).

We have moved several management courses to Open Educational Resources (OER), and want to create cases that can enrich OER teaching. We especially want to teach integration of concepts, among and within levels. For example, the most effective/appropriate conflict-handling approach depends on organizational culture and relative power of the people involved. We plan

to publish this under a creative commons license that will allow unrestricted use and adaptation. Because of this, we would like the teaching note to include suggestions for adapting the case.

- What kinds of details/information should we include in order for this to be applicable for a wide range of management concepts (including but limited to OB concepts)?
- What kinds of information in a teaching note would be most useful: answers for specific theories? Ideas/instructions for customizing the case and/or discussion for your own course and goals? Both? Other?

Synopsis of the case as you currently envision it:

Anna works in a cubicle farm with other analysts and managers at a mid-sized company. Anyone below director level is in the cubicle farm, although managers have corner end cubes. Anna's cubicle is next to that of one longtime analyst, Amy, who decorates her cubicle for every holiday, about once a month, even minor ones like Flag Day. The decorations are not only visually excessive; many of them include lights and/or sound, including ones that are activated by motion sensors. So whenever someone walks past her cubicle, everyone nearby is subject to a serenade. No other employee decorates their cubicle anywhere close to that level.

Not surprisingly, the constant sounds and motion are annoying and make it difficult for Anna and other nearby employees to concentrate on their work, even to the point of interfering with telephone conversations with other employees or clients. People have begun to avoid Amy's entire area -- including walking a different way to meet someone for work, neighbors leaving more than they would otherwise, going out for lunch, or meeting in other people's cubes that were far away from her. In addition, people did not want to work with her on projects, even though she was very good at the technical aspects of her job.

To further complicate matters, Amy tends to react strongly and defensively whenever someone disagrees with her, so the group has tacitly chosen to avoid the situation and find ways of coping with it. She sees herself and her decorations as 'helping keep spirits up', and improving office life. Amy would say that people "needed to get into the holiday spirit" if they disagreed. Once when someone asked about taking

something down, she didn't. A coworker (or several) in the office started taking things away from her displays at night, just one thing at a time, every so often, although Anna had never heard anyone admit to doing so. Amy would get very upset, accuse people of taking things, and search surrounding cubicles.

What should Anna do?

Below are open-source images that we plan to include in the case. They are an accurate reflection of the nature and scope of the decorations.

