Manager’s Hot Seat Teaching Notes

Video #17 Cyber-Loafing

Introduction

The need for organizations to keep their data secure constantly infringes on workers’ electronic privacy rights. In this case, the challenges of internet monitoring are explored when a worker abuses his privileges and shirks his workplace responsibilities. The case also explores how outward sources of conflict may not actually be the real problem.

Learning Objectives

1. To recognize the role of electronic privacy in organizational settings.
2. To understand the role of performance appraisals in the workplace.
3. To identify the difference between real and presenting problems.

Scenario Description

Overview

Bryan Dobbs, Director of Marketing at Sarga Inc. has received multiple complaints about Davy Siegler over the past two months. Apparently, he spends his day surfing the net, passes all his own work on to subordinates, and disrupts those around him by dragging them over to view various videos, jokes, and timewaster findings online. Dobbs sets up a meeting with the intention of discovering what issues are causing Siegler's clear lack of motivation and poor production. During the meeting, Siegler is passive-aggressive and displays motivation and resentment issues. He recently received an “above average” performance appraisal but no pay increase.

Profile

* **Bryan Dobbs**, Director of Marketing, Sarga Inc.
* **Davy Siegler**, Product Group Manager, Sarga Inc.

Backstory

Sarga Inc. is a pharmaceutical company based in Boston, MA. Siegler manages the vaccinations product group. He has been with the company seven years, working his way from sales to management. During his first year as product group manager (3rd year with the company), he increased the amount of hospital and pediatrician 'adoptions' by 40%, a level of success higher than all other product groups except the pulmonary group. The adoptions/sales fell the last two years and are holding steady; the drop is partly attributed to new entries into the market. Siegler supervises a team of 15, all relatively self-sufficient and competent salespeople. Sarga Inc. as a whole is backsliding, with negative growth for the past year. HR dictated no salary increases, except for extraordinary performance.

Siegler’s cubicle/office is between the pulmonary product group manager, which is the only group currently excelling and the oncology product group manager, a group suffering even moreso than Siegler’s group.

Perplexingly, Siegler received a good performance appraisal 10 weeks ago included below.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Sarga Incorporated

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| EMPLOYEE NAME | DATE | COMPLETED BY |
| Davy Siegler | Thursday September 14 | R. Dobbs |

­

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| JOB ACCOMPLISHMENTS | |  | | |  | |
| List the employee’s job accomplishments during this review period as compared to your expectations. Provide an overall rating for the period.  \*Sales levels maintained  \*Led successful team retreat  \*Instituted promising mentoring programs and innovative incentive plans  \*Efficiently managed field sales force  \*Team morale is high given difficult competitive landscape and overall industry downturn | | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [**X**] **4**–Above average | | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| STRENGTHS |  |  |
| List the key strengths that the employee exhibited during the review period as compared to your expectations.  \*Excellent customer rapport  \*Friendly, effective management style  \*Creative thinking and problem-solving  \*Energetic presence | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| COMMUNICATION SKILLS | |
| Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the employee’s communication skills. Provide a rating for the review period.  \*Thorough sales reports  \*Clear and open communication with subordinates  \*Need to improve team problem-solving (rather than assuming responsibility for complex problems) | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [ **X**] **4**–Above average | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT |  |  |
| List the areas of improvement or development. | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TEAM BUILDING SKILLS | |
| Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the employee’s team building skills. Provide a rating for the review period.  \*Friendly, effective management style  \*Creative approach to building team morale and motivating group  \*Tendency to take over and fix situations rather than work with group on solutions | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [ ] **4**–Above average | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT | |
| [Describe and rate the employee’s degree of success in meeting predetermined goals.]  \*Implemented new reporting system  \*Worked toward improving team performance and skill set  \*Sales accounts steady  \*Fluent in product data for med upgrades | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [**X**] **4**–Above average | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TIME MANAGEMENT | |
| Does the employee seem to manage his or her time well? Provide a description and a rating.  \*Schedules travel sales calls across weeks to be available for team  \*Efficiently divides time between sales list and team management  \*Punctual, few sick days, vacation scheduled with workflow | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [ ] **4**–Above average | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| JOB KNOWLEDGE | |
| Describe the level of knowledge that the employee has about his/her job in particular and the company in general. Rate his/her job knowledge.  \*Thorough knowledge of product line, company mission, market positioning and policies. | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [ ] **4**–Above average | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| OVERALL PERFORMANCE | |
| Provide a summary of the employee’s overall performance. Rate his/her overall job performance.  \*Strong performing, valuable asset to the department.  \*Maintained team sales levels in face of heightened competition (exceptional handling of Roger-Smith account) | | | | | |
| [ ] **1**–Unsatisfactory | [ ] **2**–Satisfactory | | [ ] **3**–Average | [ ] **4**–Above average | [ ] **5**–Outstanding |

|  |
| --- |
| AGREED UPON ACTIONS |
| ACTION | | **BY WHOM** | **DUE DATE** |
|  | |  |  |
|  | |  |  |
|  | |  |  |
|  | |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| COMMENTS |
|  | |

Accepted and agreed to by:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| Employee Signature |  | Manager Signature |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date |  | Date |

Despite his “above-average” performance appraisal, there have been some formal complaints lodged against Siegler recently. They are as follows:

1. Duncan, HR Manager – There is an in-house protocol for measuring employees time spent online and tracking what sites are visited. This practice is well understood and accepted by all employees. This month’s report has flagged Davy Siegler as massively abusing the Internet and the employee procedure manual demands the supervisor take action.

2. Sanchez, Pulmonary Group Manager – Sanchez visited Dobbs’ office one afternoon. Here are his written notes on the conversation: “I don’t like to talk trash about my colleagues but Davy is really driving me nuts. He’s on You Tube all day long and every ten minutes wants to show me the stupidest thing he found. I can’t get anything done. When I tell him I’m busy, he finds someone else to distract—not to mention that it’s really hard to resist when you’re in the middle of ten spreadsheets to not sit around and watch stupid stuff online. My to-do list is getting out of hand; I cannot imagine what his looks like.”

3. Raffia, Vaccination Field Salesperson – Raffia requested meeting with HR to discuss difficulty with her manager – HR email flagging the issue for Dobb’s

Raffia reports that although she enjoys the challenge, her manager, Siegler, has offloaded work on eight of his accounts. She also reports that when questioned about details pertaining to the accounts, Siegler instructs her to ignore various protocols and to ‘wing it’. Raffia sought advice on how to handle the overburdening of her own workload and how to address Siegler’s direction to shortcut company policies.

4. Puckett, Vaccination Field Salesperson – Dobbs’ notes: Puckett came to me on the 22nd seeking advice to how to handle a client issue—a key competitor has blatantly lied about studies reporting a Sigma drug as dangerous and Puckett was unsure how to handle the distortion and win over the client without taking defense position or engaging in a he-said/she- said battle. When I asked why he didn’t take this up with Siegler, he sheepishly said he was not available to discuss it – Unusual.

Scene Setup

Dobbs has called Siegler into his office to have a chat about what’s going on in Siegler’s unit. He also wants to address some of the complaints he has recently received about Siegler’s performance, specifically the high internet usage report from HR.

Scene Location

Dobbs’ office at Sarga Inc.

The Meeting—Summary

Dobbs brings Siegler into his office to chat about how things are going with his work. Dobbs raises the issues of the complaint from HR about Siegler’s high internet usage. Siegler is somewhat shocked that they are monitoring his internet usage. He tries to deflect the accusation by accusing Dobbs of leaving for smoke breaks. Dobbs argues that the two things are not the same.

As the meeting progresses, Dobbs tries to dig deeper as to why Siegler’s performance at Sarga Inc. has changed since his stellar review. He also raises the point that some subordinates have complained about Siegler’s helpfulness.

Siegler finally admits that he was upset that he didn’t get a raise after the “above-average” performance appraisal. Dobbs informs him that no one, not even he, received a raise because things have flat-lined for the company. Siegler confesses that he is bored with his job and wants more of a challenge. Dobbs says that he could definitely see him moving up at Sarga, but not until the internet usage concern is resolved. By the end of the meeting, the two reach an agreement that they’ll have bi-weekly meetings to check in on how things are going.

Afterthoughts—Summary

Dobbs believes the meeting went well, but recognizes that this type of meeting is always difficult to have. Dobbs hopes that Siegler will make a conscious effort to stop the excessive internet usage now. Dobbs has a two-step approach for helping to motivate workers: identify and make it clear to the employee that a problem exists and then give guidance on how to change. Dobbs supports blocking certain internet sites to increase productivity among workers.

Discussion Questions

*Leaning Objective #1 To recognize the role of electronic privacy in organizational settings.*

Siegler seemed surprised to learn that Sarga Inc was monitoring his internet usage. How appropriate is it for Sarga Inc. to monitor their employee’s internet usage?

Discussion will vary based on students’ opinions on this topic, but be prepared for a lively discussion. Be sure to raise the point that as organizations respond to growing security concerns, their efforts often encroach on workers’ privacy. The division between the two has become increasingly complex and blurry. Many organizations monitor more than just internet usage; they store and review email, use video surveillance, record time spent on the phone and numbers dialed, and store and review computer files.

*Leaning Objective #2 To understand the role of performance appraisals in the workplace.*

Pretend you are in the role of Dobbs and that you have to provide an updated performance appraisal for Siegler. What would you write?

Performance appraisals documents are formal ways by which supervisors evaluate, or appraise, the performance of their subordinates. In most organization, employees have access to their appraisals. Appraisals need to both protect the organization and motivate the employee. Sometimes these two purposes are in conflict. Most will see a candid appraisal as negative; employees need praise and reassurance to believe that they are valued and can do better. But the praise that motivates someone to improve can come back to haunt a company if the person does not eventually do acceptable work. An organization is in trouble if it tries to fire someone whose evaluations never mention mistakes. So in the case of Siegler, it’s important that the internet usage concern be included. The writer may want to minimize the issue and say Siegler is already working on it, but it should be mentioned nonetheless.

*Leaning Objective #3 To identify the difference between real and presenting problems.*

Dobbs suspected that something else was going on with Siegler beyond increased internet usage. What was the real problem that Siegler confessed to during his meeting with Dobbs?

Siegler was upset that he had an excellent performance review and did not receive a pay raise. He also feels like his career has plateaued and that he would like more challenging work.

Sometimes when dealing with conflict, the problem that surface may not be the real problem, but just a presenting problem. In Siegler’s case, the presenting problem was using the internet and shirking of responsibilities. The real problem was hurt emotions about not getting a raise and not feeling challenged enough.