

Job Relations – Session III Weighing and Deciding

Review with the participants the 4 steps for handling a Job Relations problem. Underneath each step discuss some of the key points in detail.

1. Get the facts
2. Weigh and decide
3. Take action
4. Check results

Review 4-Step Method

1. Now do we all have our JR cards? Suppose we take a look at the 4-step method. In our last session the problem I presented about Tom who lost his girl friend stressed the importance of getting the facts, especially with reference to personal opinions and feelings.

We looked at the way a supervisor got the facts in order to make a good decision. It takes time to do this, but in the long run it does save time, doesn't it?

2. It is interesting to notice that a similar method is used by professional people. For instance, let us see how a doctor handles a problem.

Step 1 – Does the doctor get the facts?

- Records personal history, temperature, blood pressure
- Rules and customs, medical knowledge, practice ethics
- Talks in order to get more facts. Stays confidential.
- Opinions and feelings, very important

Step 2 – Diagnosis

- Fit the facts together. Assembly the facts.
- Consider the bearing on each other – symptoms.
- Possible actions – medicine, operate.
- Check practices and policies – must comply with laws
- Effect on individual – group, contagion.
- Don't jump at conclusions – careful diagnosis

Step 3 – Treatment

- Take action – prescribe, operate.
- Handle yourself – his specialty or others?
- Help in handling – nurse, technician, other specialist?
- Refer to supervisor – more experienced doctor, specialist.

- Timing – depending upon importance and severity

Step 4 – Check results (X-rays etc.)

- How soon – depends upon the case
- How often – it differs by symptom
- Watch for – changes in condition

As you can see this method we have been talking about works in other professions doesn't it? The doctor in an emergency of life or death still takes time for all the steps.

3. Now let's turn the spotlight on Step 2 of our method, Weigh and Decide.

- Good decisions must have a good foundation
- You must have the facts
- They must be weighed

Note: 5 minutes to here

PRESENT THE SHIPYARD PROBLEM

1. Let's take a look at something that happened in a shipyard and particularly at the decision the supervisor made since we are today stressing Step 2.

(Tell the opening of the problem in a lively manner)

The electrical shop supervisor in a shipyard told an employee to get purchase some specific tools. This company required that certain personal use tools be purchased by the worker and not the company. The employee said that he couldn't he was saving his money for something else. So the supervisor reminded him that he could have the money taken from his paycheck and ordered through the company. The man refused saying he didn't like the shop anyway and he wanted to return to work back outside in his former department. The supervisor was pretty sore about the man's refusal to purchase the recommended tools.

This employee was an "old-timer" with the company. He had always worked on an outside job in his former department but he had hurt his foot and was transferred to an inside shop job while his foot healed. He was put in this shop so that he could earn the same rate as his other job instead of having to draw part time pay under workmen's compensation. His foot had been healed now for some time, and he had asked when he was going back to his outside job. But the current inside shop was busy now so the supervisor wanted to keep him inside. They employee had become increasingly uncooperative ever since he came into the shop; now he flatly refused to do some types of

work. Many people in the department were watching to see how it would turn out in the end. The supervisor decided it was time to take action.

2. Discuss how the problem came up and how the supervisor had warning with an uncooperative old-timer in the shop.
3. Get the objective from the group and put it on the board.

Write “Get the job done without upsetting the department” on the board.

4. Continue with standard procedure to get these facts, but not necessarily in this order. Place on the board.

Facts

Old-timer
Hurt foot
Inside for full pay
Foot healed
Asked for transfer outside
Shop busy
Uncooperative inside
Refused to get tools
Department watching
Supervisor sore

(Review the card, subheads Step 1)

5. Step 2 – Follow standard procedure.

Get possible actions from the group. Some may include the following. Write Weigh and Decide on the board.

Weigh and Decide

Layoff
Transfer
Fire

(Test the possible actions against the objective and probable effect on individual, group, and production).

6. Not let’s finish the problem and see what actually happened.

The supervisor fired the old-timer. The employee protested to the union and his case was taken up. The union proceeded to get additional facts – facts that could have been obtained by the supervisor.

The old-timer had about twenty years of satisfactory service outside in the yard. He liked to work outside, although it meant being out in all kinds of weather. He did not like the indoor shop work. The employee had not known that the company had purposely found an inside job for him so that he could do it with a hurt foot and placed him in the inside shop so that he could earn more than drawing workmen's compensation. This had never been communicated properly. The employee was also under the impression that his former supervisor had told him that he could return to the outside job once he was healed. The outside yard supervisor had not been consulted about the old-timer and his years of service.

Eventually the union and management decided that the workman should be reinstated in the yard and given his old job with full back pay.

7. Get additional facts from the group and list them on the board.

Facts

Long OK service outside

Liked outside work

Not advised why inside – pay

Unclear terms regarding return to previous outside assignment

8. Continue with the standard procedure. Write "Action" on the board.

Action

Fired old-timer

- Have the group identify the facts which the old-timer's supervisor used when he came to the decision of firing the old-timer.
- Also have group identify the facts which were not used by the old-timer's supervisor in making this decision.

Question: "Does this make a reasonable case for the old-timer?"

Question: "Does this indicate to you that, if the supervisor had intelligently weighted all the facts which he had, he would not have fired the old-timer?"

- Stress to the group that the supervisor gave weight to only a very few of the facts which he had as a basis for his decision.
- Other supervisors by giving more weight to the facts which he missed, might arrive at other decisions, such as those already listed on the board under "Possible actions"

9. Comment on Step 3 subhead points. Have the group follow their cards.

Handle yourself? – This was his problem

Help in handling? – Didn't ask for help

Refer to supervisor? – Didn't refer to boss

Timing of action? Was this the time to take action?

10. Comment on Step 4 subhead points. Use the card.

How soon?

How often?

Read: "This supervisor did not check up on the results of his action. He evidently thought when he fired the old-timer that the problem was solved".

Question: "How did this change attitudes and relationships?"

Read: "This supervisor lost standing with the individual, the group, and his management."

11. Check objective.

Question: "Did the supervisor achieve his objective?"

12. Use foundation points as in the standard procedure.

- Hit hard on the additional facts, the importance of telling people in advance about changes that affect them, and make best use of each person's ability.

13. It is interesting to note in this problem that even though the supervisor did not have all the facts, nevertheless he did not do a good job of weighing the facts which he had. Perhaps if he had given more weight to several seemingly unimportant facts, he would not have taken the action which he did.

Clear the board.

Note: 35 minutes to here.

SUPERVISORS PROBLEM PRACTICE

Plan on handling three problems today. Use about 30 minutes for each depending upon the time allotted for the class schedule. Follow the standard procedure outlined at the end of this section.

Make sure there will be three problems ready to discuss and present at the next session.

Re-emphasize what you mean by a problem and how they come up. Remind the group that to complete the course they must bring in a problem, participate satisfactorily, and attend all five sessions.

Note: 2 hours to here.

White board guide – Old-timer Problem

Question: Just what is the supervisor trying to accomplish?

Answer: To get the job done without upsetting the department.

1. Get the facts
2. Weight and decide
3. Take action
4. Check results

Facts

Old-timer

Got hurt

Inside for full pay

Got healed

Asked for transfer back outside

Shop busy

Uncooperative inside

Refused to get tools

Department watching

Supervisor sore

Long OK outside service

Liked outside work

Not advised why inside – pay

Weigh and Decide

Possible actions

-Lay off

-Transfer

-Fire

Action

Fired old-timer

Standard procedure for discussing supervisor practice problems in Job Relations

Procedure	Key points
1. Ask supervisor to tell the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About a 5-8 minute verbal summary • Is this a current problem or an already solved problem? • Make sure the following is broadly communicated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What exactly was the problem? ○ What did the supervisor do? ○ What was the final result?
2. Next - confirm with the volunteer how the problem came up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was this a sudden problem? • Was it a repeated problem? • Did it slowly happen over time? • Was this due to any changes? • Any other factors involved?
3. Get the objective stated clearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain and write the “Objective” clearly on the board • Does the problem affect the whole group? • What specific result is desired after action is taken?
4. Step 1 - Get the facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the facts one by one and list them on the board. • Include feelings or other clues as well
5. Step 2 - Weigh and decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit the facts together. Look for gaps and contradictions. Discuss possible actions. What facts are used? Check options against current policies and rules. Check objective versus the action items with the group and supervisor. • Write the “Options” on the board • Discuss the probable effect on the individual, the rest of the team, other parties, production, etc. for each one.
6. Review the “balance” of case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the facts used in making a decision. Does it seem balanced? • Do the action items support the stated objective?
7. Step 3 Take action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down what exact action was taken by the supervisor?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was this action taken? • How was it taken? • What was the timing? • Does the action item clearly support the objective?
8. Step 4 Check results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down what result was obtained. • When was it checked? • How was it checked? • How often? • What else happened in the end? • What did the supervisor learn from the experience?
9. Check objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the objective achieved by the supervisor?
10. Foundations summary comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss which steps mattered the most <i>for this problem</i> and how they were used.