

Case Analysis Preparation: Gary and Rhonda at Hyperion (36 points)

Submitted by:

- Respond to all questions/prompts, focusing on issues and actions described in the assigned case.
- Draw from this course's required and supplemental readings (both found in Canvas Modules) to support your observations and conjectures. Required readings include:
 - McShane (2019) "Chapter 3 Perception of Self and Others in Organizations" in *M: Organizational Behavior*, McGraw Hill, pp.54-72.
 - OpenStax. (2024). *Organizational behavior*. OpenStax. <https://openstax.org/books/organizational-behavior/pages/13-introduction>
- YOUR RESPONSES MUST BE WITHIN THE BOXES BELOW THE PROMPTS TO BE GRADED

A. Perspective Taking

1. Perceptions of Rhonda (6pts)

1a) How do you think Rhonda would describe herself? Include what you believe to be her primary agenda. Use first-person quote (i.e. "My primary agenda is to... and I am ...")

My primary agenda is to spread awareness about women's leadership, to continue to come into my full potential, and to rapidly expand my career. I am a leader, a go getter, and am not afraid to shake things up.

1b) How do you think Gary would describe Rhonda? (i.e. "Rhonda is...")

Rhonda is energetic and charismatic, but lacks any sense of respect for how things are done, is not a team player, and is not afraid to go behind people's backs. While she is a productive worker, her disinterest in conformity can be troubling.

1c) How do you think Brenda would describe Rhonda? (i.e. "Rhonda is...")

Rhonda is efficient, highly charismatic, and an overall exceptionally talented worker. She is not afraid to question how things are done, willing to go above and beyond and frequently thinks outside of the box.

2. Perceptions of Gary (6pts)

Case Analysis Preparation: Gary and Rhonda at Hyperion (36 points)

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2a) How do you think Gary would describe himself? Include what you believe to be his primary agenda if he stays at Hyperion. Use first-person quote (i.e. "My primary agenda is to... and I am ...")

My primary agenda is to reassert my own sense of control and value within the company. I wish to be seen as the true leader of my team, and do not want to feel taken advantage of. I am a kind, gracious leader who works well with other people.

2b) How do you think Rhonda would describe Gary? (i.e. "Gary is...")

Gary is a nice guy, but a little set in his ways. He expects things to go his way, because of his stature within the company, and is afraid to adapt to new and challenging ways of working. While I like him as a person, and find him to be kind, I do not view him as a strong leader.

2c) How do you think Brenda would describe Gary? (i.e. "Gary is...")

Gary is a wonderful and loyal worker that has been with the company for many years. His work is valued and he leads his team well. That being said, he can drift into being stuck in his ways and sometimes lacks the creativity to adopt new ways of being.

3. Perceptions of Brenda (6pts)

3a) How do you think Brenda would describe herself? Include what you believe to be her primary agenda. Use first-person quote (i.e. "My primary agenda is to... and I am ...")

My primary agenda is to further the dominance of our company, primarily by expanding women in leadership roles, and by ensuring that the best ideas win. I am a thoughtful leader that respects go getters, especially when they further female leadership causes.

3b) How do you think Rhonda would describe Brenda? Use first-person (i.e. "Gargi is...")

Brenda is a great co-worker who I have a lot in common with. We think the same way and that is what makes us work well together. She respects my ways, and I respect hers.

3c) How do you think Gary would describe Brenda? (i.e. "I am...")

Case Analysis Preparation: Gary and Rhonda at Hyperion (36 points)

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Brenda has been a valued mentor of mine and leader within the company. She is kind, caring and a great listener. Recently, her behavior has puzzled me, but I still believe she is the same person I admired when I started working here.

B. Bases and Contingencies of Power

4. Bases and Contingencies of Power (8pts)

4a) What are Gary's two most important bases and contingencies of power to use if he wishes to influence Rhonda's behavior? Ensure you provide your rationale and an example of how he might use each.

- Legitimate Power: Gary is the leader of a team in a very specific part of the company, one that Rhonda dips in and out of, spending 40% of her time with his topics. Gary therefore has the legitimate power of being the figure of authority when it comes to this line of work, and he has the right to utilize it. He could express to Rhonda that while she has good ideas and seems to be liked, she is young and has a lot to learn. Making it about the material itself and the years of experience Gary has accumulated, could lead to Rhonda being more influenced by Gary.
- Coercive Power: The reality is that Rhonda has been disrespectful of Gary's authority, going behind his back, not communicating and not participating in his regular agenda. He is, however, still her superior and has the ability to use more coercive power to regain control. He could instill some fear, some authority and increased respect by having a stern, open conversation with Rhonda that addresses the issue head on, without beating around the bush or leaning on pleasantries. Given Rhonda's favorable perception in the eyes of the other executives, though, this would need to be done with care in order to avoid Gary being viewed unfavorably by his colleagues.

4b) What are the two most important bases and contingencies of power that Rhonda used to rise within Hyperion? Ensure you provide your rationale and an example of how Rhonda uses each.

- Referent power: her charismatic nature, including the loud laughs, open minded and friendly composure, have allowed Rhonda to gain the favor of most everyone there, except Gary. She has used her strengths to 'infiltrate' the company, spreading awareness of her agendas and ideas. While she makes great use of referent power, she also makes use of another.
- Expert Power: her knowledge, specifically when it comes to her niche of work, as well as her prominence in women's leadership initiatives, have allowed Rhonda to really excel at this job. She was hired very quickly, and rapidly rises to leadership roles. She takes initiative and thinks very creatively within her expert niche, which then in turn allows her to be viewed very favorably by senior leadership. The people in charge of the company like her a lot, as she does her job well, and fast. They admire her expert power and Rhonda has used it very efficiently.

C. What Gary Needs to Do (10pts)

- Use approximately 300-500 words in a well-structured essay response to the following questions:
 - ☐ Critique Gary's behavior concerning his primary agenda. Discuss what he attempts to do and why it works or doesn't work.
 - ☐ Without assuming capabilities or circumstances not given in the case, what advice would you give Gary to follow to realize his primary objective within Hyperion?
 - ☐ What necessary step would be the hardest for him to take or accomplish? Why?
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[Please begin your response here]

Gary's primary agenda is to remain in control of his team, and to be viewed favorably within the company in order to continue to rise in the ranks. Rhonda's arrival shakes things up very quickly, and challenges Gary's way of doing things. The most poignant critique that can be leveled against Gary's handling of the situation, is his lack of use of 'coercive power'. He does not tackle the issue at hand with any force. He sits back and hopes that someone will notice his displeasure. Meanwhile, he is extremely frustrated inside, which then affects his daily life and relationships. While we could argue that the situation is somewhat unjust, and that Rhonda likely should show a little more respect to Gary's seniority, the way in which Gary handles the situation is rather poor. Perhaps he would need to have a stern conversation with Rhonda directly, instead of complaining to Brenda. Perhaps he should take initiative into his own hands, instead of sitting back and hoping the situation will somehow fix itself. This ties in well with what advice I would give Gary in order for him to reach his full potential at Hyperion. He needs to rise to the occasion and challenge Rhonda. Not to a one on one duel of course, but to adjust to her way of doing things and beat her at her own game. He needs to take initiative and combine the use of coercive power with his already existing expert power (having worked there for so long), to increase his own productivity and value within the company. It is no use to sit back and let Rhonda take his power, as that will inevitably lead to his position remaining static. If his ambition is to rise, he needs to show senior leadership that he is willing to adapt, willing to become more creative and to increase value in the company. Is this difficult? Absolutely. We get stuck in our ways and have a hard time dealing with someone else taking our spotlight/being viewed more favorably. But the answer is not to roll over and do nothing. It is more to view it as a game almost, to level up your own skills and then come back with a bang. This is likely the hardest step that Gary would need to face. The notion that in order for him to remain an asset to the company, he may need to adjust his approach to become more agile, more creative and more assertive. These are all traits that are deeply embedded within our nature, so this transition would involve a whole lot more than just work performance. How assertive we are in our own lives depends on many things, including self esteem. This is why I think such a transformation is likely quite difficult, although by no means. impossible.