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Erik Peterson at Biometra (D)

Scott Green took charge of Biometra on the Monday following the senior executives' visit. Peterson was still unsure exactly what his new position entailed, but assumed that he would report to Green on a daily basis and run Biometra's operations during the days that Green was absent from Boston. The previous week's events had so angered Peterson that he had fired off a formal request to Los Angeles to fire or transfer Curt Andrews immediately. Peterson felt that many of the problems leading to his removal as general manager of Biometra had been caused by Andrews's incompetence and SciMat's unwillingness to do anything about the situation. Green reacted very negatively to the request and reproached Peterson harshly for being so rash. Later that day, Peterson overheard employees in the cafeteria sharing the news that Jenkins had fired the general manager of one of SciMat's cardiovascular devices units the previous week.

Green made a number of changes to Biometra's organization in his first week. First, he moved day-to-day responsibility for managing the manufacturing consultants from Todd Jones to Curt Andrews. Second, he put Jim Wescott in charge of both sales and marketing activities with Trevor Burns reporting to Wescott until launch date; Green believed that this would better integrate the sales and marketing activities that had been increasingly fragmented and disjointed due to Wescott's and Burns' mutual animosity. Peterson argued against these changes, pointing out that Andrews had hardly shown that he could effectively manage his existing operational responsibilities much less one of the most critical obstacles to Biometra's catheter launch. Peterson also felt that putting Burns under Wescott would be demoralizing and might affect Burns's performance at a time when the marketing activities involved in the product launch were most intense. Green countered that it was critical for marketing and sales activities to be aligned, and in any case that the marketing function should play more of a support role to the sales department. To that end, Green cancelled the print advertisements that had been planned for medical journals and reallocated the funds for sales representatives to attend upcoming conferences and trade shows.

Luckily the Costa Rican contractor had finally been able to resolve manufacturing with the help of the external consultants. The sample run analyses were already showing improved quality metrics and Peterson felt confident that Biometra's manufacturing capabilities would be in place for the revised April 15 launch date. At times, Peterson felt that Green's presence and the changes he had

Professor John J. Gabarro prepared the original version of this case, "Erik Peterson (D)," HBS No. 494-008. This version was prepared by Professors John J. Gabarro and Thomas DeLong and Jevan Soo (MBA 2011). The circumstances described in this case are reported primarily from Erik Peterson's point of view. Although others' views have been incorporated, the case does not necessarily reflect all of them. The case was written with the cooperation of both the individual and the company involved. All names, places, and companies have been disguised. HBS cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management.

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made at Biometra had not significantly accelerated their progress towards launch. On the contrary, Peterson believed that Green's presence had created new problems in a number of areas. For example, Green had a tendency to focus exclusively on regulatory topics during their pre-launch staff meetings, which resulted in other critical issues not getting the attention they needed. Furthermore, Green's demanding and at times harsh management style was taking a serious toll on the office morale that Peterson had worked so hard to build. Several people complained to Peterson that Biometra had lost the sense of teamwork and camaraderie that existed before Green's arrival, and that they no longer felt fully invested in the success of the launch or even particularly enjoyed working there.

One area where Peterson felt that Green's efforts had made a major difference was in resolving the KOL (key opinion leader) problems, as Green was very effective in negotiating service agreements that ultimately won the clinicians over. It turned out that he had been classmates, at the University of Pittsburgh, with the sister of one of the key five clinicians. Green had also discovered that another one of the key clinicians had overlapped with Dash Harper in the same Cambodian health clinic on an overseas infectious disease rotation. Peterson was impressed by Green's resourcefulness in building relationships with people to achieve his objectives. Having listened in on one conference call between Green and a KOL at a premier medical center in San Francisco, Peterson noticed how skillfully Green was able to surface the clinician's primary concerns and find ways to address them. It seemed that underneath Green's smooth approach, he had a certain combination of "street smarts" and empathy that helped him get things done under difficult circumstances. Green had also been quick to get the additional funding needed to fund the service agreements that Peterson had originally requested. Indeed, Green had been outraged when he heard how Hardy had stymied Peterson's earlier attempts to get the funding he needed so many months ago.

Peterson felt particularly vindicated when Green decided to have Curt Andrews transferred out of Biometra. Green had become convinced that Andrews lacked the resourcefulness and flexibility required for the job. Unfortunately the woman Green hired to replace Andrews changed her mind days before her start date, as her current employer had given her a significant raise and promotion in order to retain her. Andrews was asked to stay on until a new director of operations could be found, and Peterson feared that his performance would decline even more in the interim. By early May, a replacement for Andrews had not yet been found.

Peterson's relationship with Green improved over time as problems were resolved and the prospect of a smooth product launch became more likely. Still he felt quite uncomfortable working with Green even though Green had hinted that Peterson might resume his full general manager role by late May or early June. In mid-May, however, a few management issues stirred up renewed tension between the two. First, Green insisted on handling Jim Wescott's six-month review, and denied Wescott the increase that Peterson had promised him. Green was angry that Peterson had implicitly promised an increase six months in advance, particularly when compensation increases at SciMat were typically on an annual cycle. Similarly, he criticized Peterson for offering Melissa Miczek a significant raise without receiving prior approval from Los Angeles. Finally, one of Biometra's sales representatives was caught charging personal entertainment items to his Biometra expense account. This had happened once before, but since he had been a strong performer Peterson had given him a stern warning but not taken disciplinary action. Though Peterson fired the man the second time it happened, Green was incensed that Peterson had not done so sooner.

These incidents left Peterson wondering whether he would ever be able to satisfy Green. It seemed that even his best work always met with Green's criticism, going all the way back to their first interaction during Peterson's orientation. It had been two months since Green had taken charge

of Biometra, with no clear indication of Peterson's future role or status. As a result, Peterson found that he was becoming increasingly anxious in his personal life as well, straining his relationship with his wife and parents and preventing him from fully enjoying his limited free time with his young daughter. Peterson felt an increasing sense of dread at work, and a sense of pressure that he could never fully escape.

In many respects, Peterson felt as though he was doing all the work—putting in long hours, solving dirty and yet crucial operational issues—but receiving little to no recognition or praise from anyone. He could not remember Green offering even a single word of encouragement about the operational procedures that had been strengthened or the once-endless list of problems that had been steadily whittled away. Peterson had accomplished these improvements despite feeling that he did not get enough support or tangible help from Green. He found himself constantly caught between Green, on the one hand, and Knight and others in LA, on the other, trying to explain one party's decisions to the other, often being criticized by both sides. He was working eighty-hour weeks, trying to maintain morale and get his work done even as his negative feelings toward Green and his uncertainty about his future at SciMat grew with each passing day. Feeling more and more exhausted, he found it harder to keep up the pretense that everything was going well and became increasingly irritated with his employees, snapping at them when they made mistakes. Peterson began to believe that his only hope was when Green departed Boston for good and Andrews was replaced, allowing him to renew his relationship with Knight and reestablish Biometra as the collaborative and well-run organization he had set out to build nearly a year earlier.