

Report of the meeting about : What if you discover that some co-workers (in your team) falsified important research results ? Discuss the consequences of you possibly informing the manager.

For this meeting, Léa was the chairwoman accompanied by Avin, Louise, Alimou and Louis. The subject was about « What if you discover that some co-workers (in your team) falsified important research results ? Discuss the consequences of you possibly informing the manager. » and the meeting lasted for 20 minutes.

Léa started the conversation by introducing the subject, stating that being a scientist involves respecting ethics and it can lead to having a lot of responsibility. However, some people are tempted to falsify important research results, and when others are confronted to it, they can have different approaches dealing with it.

The discussion started by asking participants if they ever had such an experience at university and if yes, what they did about it. When comparing groupwork at university and groupwork in a laboratory, we can see that the consequences have way less importance at university. In general, cheating for a grade does not reflect your real capabilities and it can be detrimental in the long run.

When facing such a situation, your feelings may vary based on who's involved and how much you trust them, as it may feel like betrayal. Seeing someone cheat to get ahead can be really frustrating and it makes it harder to believe in them. It's shocking when it's something important, like crucial research, because it could be dangerous for the scientist and the company. In science, both good and bad results help move research forward. At some point, the truth will be revealed and there are going to be punishments.

When faced with this situation, it could be a good idea to first talk to the person involved to try and understand why he did this and to try and help him. However, it might not always be the best idea as it might create some tension if you go talk to them first instead of the manager. For smaller issues, it can usually be resolved quite easily, but for more serious falsifications, it might be harder to contain.

To discourage cheating, companies should have penalties in place that are applied when there are any incidents, but not too much to inspire fear. After all, there's no real benefit in falsifying papers.

As a manager, it's crucial to address the situation promptly. Start by having a conversation with the individual involved to understand their perspective and discuss the consequences of their actions. Depending on the severity of the situation, appropriate measures should be taken. Additionally, regular meetings, both one-on-one and with all employees, can help maintain transparency and accountability, especially when significant results are involved.

After an initial incident, a manager can apply lessons learned by implementing additional checks in the research process. In more serious cases, the manager may choose to issue warnings to each team member as a precautionary measure.