

Waco Incident Case Write-Up

CIS 410

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Waco Manufacturing is a leading supplier for custom machine parts in the automotive industry. This case revolves around the use of one of the security and information systems they have installed in one of their plants. Each employee is given a transceiver which communicates to other transceivers placed every 25 feet inside the plants corridors. This allows for the company to keep extreme tabs on the employees in the organization. Meaning that at certain times phone calls for certain employees will simply ring at the closest phone to them instead of at their personal desks.

Our problem arises when the area manager Monique Saltz informed one of the plant engineering managers that she was unhappy that a set of designs she deemed as important for their 1987 plans was behind schedule. Mr. Barber, the engineering manager, claimed that he had been informing them and meeting with them about it for several months and did not know why they had not been working on the project. When Mrs. Saltz later met with the engineering group they claimed they knew of the project but had no idea that it was so important for their yearly plans and that they could not remember meeting with Mr. Barber about it at all. This is where the system mentioned earlier comes into play. When Mrs. Saltz described the situation to the plant manager, Shelly Tomaso, she recommended they use the transceiver technology to get to the bottom of the situation and subsequently discovered that Mr. Barber and the three engineers had not all been in the same room at the same time even once so far this year. So the question arises of what should the company do about Mr. Barber and his lie about working with the other engineers. Even if he were to have told them each separately the evidence all points to them not having worked on it for the entirety of the year.

Before this question can be answered we should look at several different factors within the company such as the people the decision would affect. There are a total of four groups of stakeholders in this decision making process. The first two groups being the decision makers themselves, Mrs. Saltz and the plant manager Shelly Tomaso. The third group to be mentioned would be the group of engineers who are working under Mr. Barber who are under consideration for being at fault in this scenario despite claiming to have not heard about any of this. The final stakeholder would be the man who the problem itself is centered around, Mr. Barber.

As for the decisions to be made in this scenario it really comes down to who Mrs. Tomaso and Mrs. Saltz believe is at fault in this scenario. The first option is that they do nothing and simply wait for the behind schedule project to be worked on. The second option would be to blame Mr. Barber for lying to them and not working on a project that they had communicated in being very important for the year ahead. The last option would be for them to believe Mr. Barber and blame the engineers who were working on the project.

If Mrs. Tomaso and Mrs. Saltz decide to do nothing they would basically be accepting the idea that the issues that arose were neither Mr. Barber's fault or the engineer's faults but instead the fault of the communication system of the company as a whole. They did not notify the lower down engineers of what was important enough of they trusted Mr. Barber to have told them. Mrs. Tomaso and Mrs. Saltz would simply take the blame for the project being behind schedule and deal with whatever consequences may arise because of that with their superiors. Mr. Barber would simply be told to communicate more effectively with his staff and to ensure that they know what is important for the organization as a whole. The engineers

themselves would probably be faced with some form of chewing out from their superior Mr. Barber and then it would go back to being business as usual for the organization as a whole.

If they decide to go with the second option and blame Mr. Barber for the late order there would be several different outcomes for this situation. Mrs. Saltz and Mrs. Tomaso would have to inform and place the blame on Mr. Barber and he would have to face the consequences of that situation. If they decided to fire Mr. Barber for not meeting expectations and for lying to his superiors and blaming his workers for the issues then Mrs. Saltz and Mrs. Tomaso would have to find a replacement engineering manager to help oversee the plant. Mr. Barber would lose his job for obvious reasons unless he is able to convince his superiors why they shouldn't fire him. For the three remaining engineers it would be business as usual since they would simply have to work on the behind schedule project and finish it as soon as possible. They would also see the added benefit if Mr. Barber gets fired of one of them possibly getting a promotion to the engineering manager.

If they decided to go with the third option you would see a different scenario than the one where they believed Mr. Barber was at fault. If they go with option three than they would be assuming that Mr. Barber notified each of them about the project just at separate times. While it is commonly accepted good practice for a manager to notify everyone about a project at the same time so they can coordinate as a team, it is not necessarily required for the job to get done. Mrs. Saltz and Mrs. Tomaso would probably reprimand Mr. Barber at not running a tight enough ship with his employees. That reprimand would trickle down to the engineers who were supposed to be working on it and they would then be reprimanded by Mr. Barber. I do not believe that anyone would be fired in this scenario as there would not be any solid

confirmation of them being informed of the project other than Mr. Barber's word. However, they may be reprimanded by several groups of people for not putting priority on this task.

After considering each of these options the only thing that continuously comes to mind is what we discussed in class with Dr. Barker and the discussion of Occam's Razor. Occam's Razor is the theory that if there is a decision to be made the odds are high that the decision which you make the least assumptions in would be the correct decision to make. (Barker) In this scenario the decision in which you would make the least assumptions would be the second decision, it is Mr. Barber's fault that the project was not completed. I believe that the strongest tool in determining who was at fault in this scenario would have to be the transceivers that Waco uses to keep track of their company's employees. The first decision would not work because Saltz and Tomaso would be assuming that it was something wrong with the communications of the company as a whole and that while Mr. Barber may be slightly to blame it was not necessarily his fault that the others had not found out about the priority project. That would be a ridiculous decision to make because the evidence shows that they have not all been in the same room the entire year which means he likely just didn't inform them. The third decision would be wrong for the same reason. They would be assuming that Mr. Barber had informed them of the project and its importance despite clear evidence that the entire team had not been in the same room as each other the entire year. Again, this is an assumption that they would be making where as with the decision that he was at fault is using every bit of evidence they have to determine that he was at fault without any assumptions needing to be made.

To further elaborate with this decision, I also believe that Mr. Barber should be fired, demoted, or in some way punished for his actions over the past year. The issue was brought up during Mr. Barber's third quarter performance review and as such means that he did not prioritize the products for their 1987 plan until almost September of 1987. These were products designed for the 1987 business plan and without those products successfully designed they would not be able to implement them which means that Barber's actions were costing the company money. We learn through Goldratt that the goal of an organization is to make money and to survive. (Goldratt) We additionally learn with Porter's Five Forces that a company must continually innovate in order to stay competitive in their markets. (Team FME) Both business rules that we have learned in the past semester have been violated by Mr. Barber's actions, not to mention he lied to try and save face. It's because of this that I recommend he be removed from his position to keep further issues from arising that could be damaging or harmful to the organization.

Sources:

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Morgan, Gareth. *Images of Organization*. Sage Publications, 2014.

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