

# ***SAMPLE CASE STUDIES FOR PGDBA(HR)/PGDHRM***

## **Case Study 1**

Satish was a Sales Manager for Industrial Products Company in City branch. A week ago, he was promoted and shifted to Head Office as Deputy Manager - Product Management for a division of products which he was not very familiar with. Three days ago, the company VP - Mr. George, convened a meeting of all Product Managers. Satish's new boss (Product Manager Ketan) was not able to attend due to some other preoccupation. Hence, the Marketing Director, Preet - asked Satish to attend the meeting as this would give him an exposure into his new role.

At the beginning of the meeting, Preet introduced Satish very briefly to the VP. The meeting started with an address from the VP and soon it got into a series of questions from him to every Product Manager. George, of course, was pretty thorough with every single product of the company and he was known to be pushy and a blunt veteran in the field. Most of the Product Managers were very clear of George's ways of working and had thoroughly prepared for the meeting and were giving to the point answers. George then started with Satish. Satish being new to the product, was quite confused and fared miserably.

Preet immediately understood that George had possibly failed to remember that Satish was new to the job. He thought of interrupting George's questioning and giving a discrete reminder that Satish was new. But by that time, George who was pretty upset with the lack of preparation by Satish made a public statement "Gentlemen, you are witnessing here an example of sloppy work and this can't be excused".

Now Preet was in two minds - should he interrupt George and tell him that Satish is new in that position OR should he wait till the end of the meeting and tell George privately. Preet chose the second option.

Satish was visibly angry at the treatment meted out by George but he also chose to keep mum. George quickly closed the meeting saying that he found in general, lack of planning in the department and asked Preet to stay back in the room for further discussions.

Before Preet could give any explanation on Satish, George asked him "Tell me openly, Preet, was I too rough with that boy?" Preet said "Yes, you were. In fact, I was about to remind you that Satish is new to the job". George explained that the fact that Satish was new to the job didn't quite register with him during the meeting. George admitted that he had made a mistake and asked his secretary to get Satish report to the room immediately.

A perplexed and uneasy Satish reported to George's room after few minutes.

George looking Satish straight into his eyes said "I have done something which I should have never even thought of and I want to apologise to you. It is my mistake that I did not

recollect that you were new to the job when I was questioning you".

Satish was left speechless.

George continued "I would like to state few things clearly to you. Your job is to make sure that people like me and your bosses do not make stupid decisions. We have good confidence in your abilities and that is why we have brought you to the Head Office. For everybody, time is required for learning. I will expect you to know all the nuances of your product in three months time. Until then you have my complete confidence". George closed the conversation with a big reassuring handshake with Satish.

### **Questions:**

1. Was it at all necessary for George to apologise to such a junior employee like Satish?
2. If you were in Satish's place, how would you to respond to George's apology?
3. Was George correct in saying that Satish is there to correct the "stupid mistake" of his boss and George?
4. Would you employ George in your company?
5. Did Preet make a mistake by not intervening during the meeting and correct George's misconception about Satish?
6. As an HR man, how would you define the character of George - bullying but later regretting? Does his attitude need to be corrected?
7. Would you be happy to have George/Preet as your boss?

### **Possible solutions**

1. Yes, it was necessary for George to apologise to Satish. Even though Satish is new to the Head Office and is much junior to George, in order to keep up the morale of Satish, George should apologise. This will not only reassure Satish's attachment towards the company but also motivate him in learning things faster.
2. If I were in Satish's place, I would thank George and promise him to learn things well within the given time.
3. The word 'stupid mistake' creates confusion. George only meant that Satish should not make the top-authorities feel that they have made a wrong decision by promoting Satish. What George wanted was Satish's support. Hence, the bosses expect Satish to work according to the policy (both written and unwritten) of the company.
4. Yes, I would employ George in my company. The ability of one to realise his mistake is truly appreciable especially if he is in a much senior position.
5. Not really. It was alright for Preet to remain quiet during George's talk. But he made it a point to remind him after the meeting.

6. George is a natural task-oriented leader. He becomes people - oriented only when stimulated. When he is into a task he does it with full dedication. He is a trustworthy person. He has to enhance his soft-skills by making himself an equally task-oriented and people-oriented leader.

7. Yes, I would be happy to have George or Preet as my boss.

A general comment: Satish's boss should have familiarised Satish with the formalities of the meeting with George.

Conclusion:

When a person goes up in a career ladder, he has to have an overall view of the people and the processes. He has to understand that it is people who do the processes. He has to understand the importance of HR Management. At the same time, he should be uncompromising in the processes and quality. This would make a leader a class apart.

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## **Case Study 2**

Adam, fresh from school was a newly recruited HR practitioner. During his one month into the job, he was asked to be in-charge of the orientation programme for the entire organisation. Being new, he followed closely to the processes. Recently, Roy joined the organisation and Adam was required to orientate him. On Roy's first day of work, Adam brought him around the organisation for introduction to the rest of the staffs. Unfortunately, Roy's assigned mentor was not around hence, Adam was unable to make an official introduction for Roy to meet up with his mentor. In the afternoon, during the HR briefing, Adam mentioned to Roy that there is a buddy system in place but it is only on an opt-in basis. Roy requested to opt for a buddy. Adam was rather surprised by Roy's request as according to Adam's manager-Jean, no one in the organisation has requested for a buddy.

Hence, Adam checked with Jean on the criteria in getting a buddy for Roy and according to her, Adam found out that it needed to be someone preferably from Roy's department. Having clarified on the criteria, Adam was supposed to get a buddy for Roy, unfortunately, this issue was clearly forgotten by Adam due to his busy schedule as he was involved in other HR matters as well and he did not follow up with Roy's request promptly.

One week later, Adam met Roy in a lunch gathering and Adam greeted Roy and asked him casually how is he doing and if he has adapted well to his job. Roy, asked Adam blatantly and angrily where is his buddy that he had requested. At that moment, Adam recalled on the existence of this request and unwittingly told Roy that he thought Roy was joking with him on the request for a buddy as he did not want to admit to Roy that he had clearly forgotten about the whole issue. Roy was very angered by Adam's response and told him off that he was very serious in getting a buddy and that its Adam's responsibility to do so. Adam, clearly embarrassed and guilty about his mistake, apologised immediately and promised to get him a buddy. On the very day, a buddy- Sam, was found for Roy. Roy was very unhappy with Adam and confronted Adam and his buddy when he was able to have an official meet up session with his mentor. Adam explained to Roy that the organisation has no current practice in place for meet up sessions to be arranged between mentors and mentees and its a practice for mentees to take self-initiative to do so in arranging for meetings with their mentors and also that his mentor is currently out of town and will only be back the next day. Adam, himself being a new staff also was at that moment in time speaking on personal experience and also based on what Jean had told him. Sam, who was present agreed and helped to explain to Roy on the practice. Roy kept quiet and Adam unknowingly thought that Roy has understood the organisation practice. Hence, Adam did not continue to check with Roy on this aspect.

The following day, Roy had a feedback session with his manager and Adam was called upon to sit in as a part of the orientation programme. Roy brought up the issue on Adam's failure to get him a buddy promptly and that he was not introduced to his mentor at all. He complained about the poor management of the HR mentor and buddy system and that it was not effective at all and that he expressed that he is very unhappy with Adam as he felt that he was not doing his job at all. Adam tried to explain to Roy and his manager about what happened and also reassured Roy that he will take his suggestions of improving on the

system and was apologetic about the issue. He told Roy's manager that he will bring Roy to see his mentor after the session as his mentor is back in the office after being on leave for the past week.

Roy was still very unhappy with Adam and continued telling Adam off in front of his manager.

**Questions:**

1. On an HR practitioner point of view, what should Adam do to resolve the issue?
2. Roy is very unhappy with Adam and holds it against him even though all has been done and followed up. What should Adam as HR do to resolve this and should Jean, as Adam's manager do something?
3. What role does Roy's manager play in this issue and should he be implicated?

**Possible solutions**

Adam was new to the job, therefore he himself was in the process of getting oriented to the job. However he did falter by not taking the buddy request by Roy seriously. This was probably the only mistake that he committed....for which he later apologised.

As an HR practitioner, Adam should let Roy know the whole situation and apologise, which he does.

As far as Roy's manager is concerned, it is upto Roy whether he wants to implicate him or not. Implicating him will only complicate the situation which is not needed.

As for Roy, he should get a life and move on in the organisation rather than harping on a single fault by Adam. It is understandable that he felt disappointed by the firm, but he should consider the fact that in an organisation sometimes these lapses happen. That is not to say it doesn't matter but after Adam apologised, he should forgive.

Fair enough, he complained about Adam, I think Jean should just warn Adam, as he is new. Also, Jean should make sure Adam goes through the necessary procedure and knows them well, lest he should repeat such a mistake.

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