DELEGATING TO THE ACTING SUPERVISOR

You are the supervisor responsible for packaging and shipping. Ten team members report to you. Your team packages and ships all products for the company.

The objective of your work unit is to package and ship all products the same day they are assembled. Your other objectives include maintaining worker safety, placing packing and shipping priority on products A and B, keeping absenteeism to a minimum, and developing team members for assignments to other units. Your budget is tight and there is no overtime.

Your manager calls and asks that you fill in for him at an off-site, four-day executive conference that begins tomorrow. You will have to appoint one of your team members to be the acting supervisor.

You decide that Susan is the best choice to fill in for you. She is a capable team member and has experience in packaging and shipping. But she has never been in a leadership position before.

On your calendar for tomorrow is a meeting with the manager of product A to discuss an increase in the amount of product A assembled per day. Your position is that you can't promise same-day shipment without one of the other products suffering.

You also have a safety meeting scheduled for 2 P.M. tomorrow with your work unit. You have prepared a PowerPoint presentation on safe packaging for the meeting.

The following day you have a meeting with the new-products group about how packaging and shipping works. You think about canceling this meeting but decide not to.

Ken, another team member, will return to work tomorrow following four days off because of the flu. This is his third illness absence of the year and he must be warned that any additional absence from work this year will result in his dismissal. Medical must see him before he starts work.

You have time for a short meeting with Susan before you leave for the airport. Using the seven steps, what are you going to say to Susan? She needs clear and concise instructions. Be sure to include feedback as part of your delegation. Use all of the seven steps that apply.

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INSTRUCTOR'S ANSWER KEY FOR H1

Groups should include the following in their delegation to Susan:

1. Appoint Susan acting supervisor. Tell her she has complete authority to manage. Describe what she is to do. Be sure to get agreement. (Steps 1, 4, and 6)
2. Susan is to attend meetings and make presentations as needed. (Steps 1 and 2)
3. Susan is to send Ken to Medical, but she should not talk to him about possible dismissal. (Step 1)
4. Work unit is to meet its objectives without overtime. (Step 2)
5. Susan is to be available for a 5 P.M. telephone call each day to give a status report. (Step 5) (**NOTE:** This is just one example of a suitable feedback plan. The group should have devised a feedback plan other than "We'll talk when I get back.")
6. Manager needs to inform the work unit that Susan is in charge. (Step 7) (**NOTE:** It is better for the manager to notify team members than to leave it for Susan to do.)

(**NOTE:** Step 3 does not apply in this situation.)

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CASE STUDY: PROBLEM SOLVING

Objective: Use the seven steps to solving problems. (Assume that Steps 1 and 2 are already completed and skip Step 7 in this exercise.)

Scenario: You are the new manager of a work unit where productivity has fallen by 25%. You investigate the situation (Step 2) and conclude that morale is low, absenteeism is above normal, and four employees need skill training.

Step 3: Restate the problem.

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Step 4: Identify alternative solutions. Consider at least two approaches to solving this productivity problem.

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Step 5: Evaluate the alternatives. Identify the best solution and the associated risks and benefits. Will this solution result in new problems?

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Step 6: Implement the decision. Briefly describe how you would implement your solution.

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LEVEL OF MONITORING

Objective: Determine in each situation how closely you will monitor the employee's delegated assignments.

Situation 1: Rahella is an experienced employee and can be relied on to complete assignments on time. Everyone feels she has a lot of potential. But her organizational and decision-making skills need improvement. You delegate a special project to her. She is to study the packaging process and determine if packaging time can be reduced. The results of this study will go in your report to your boss. She has five days to complete her study.

How often are you going to monitor Rahella's work? Who will make the decisions about her conclusions? Will you allow Rahella to organize the study? How are you going to keep her on track? What is your monitoring plan?

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Situation 2: Kesh is an exceptional employee and was rated outstanding in his last review. You delegate a special project to him. He is to analyze current shipping methods and costs and contrast them with potential new methods and costs. The results of his study will go in your report to your boss. Kesh's personality is more outgoing than analytical. You feel this assignment will force Kesh to be more analytical.

Are you going to monitor Kesh's work? If so, how and when? Will Kesh draw the final conclusions to the study? What is your monitoring plan?

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LEVEL OF MONITORING (CONT'D)

Situation 3: Nate is an experienced employee. When he focuses on an assignment, he does well, but focusing for Nate is often a problem. You ask Nate to write a report identifying the issues between your work unit and the call center. You reach agreement with Nate on how to proceed and you establish a completion date. You tell Nate that if he needs help to let you know. The report will go no further than your desk. You decide not to monitor Nate because he is capable of completing the report if he will concentrate. Nate never asks for help and he finishes about half of the assignment by the completion date. Later he decides to give up.

Your boss hears about Nate's failure and asks you what went wrong. She also asks if you purposely let Nate fail. How are you going to explain the lack of monitoring? Was it okay to let Nate fail?

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INSTRUCTOR'S ANSWER KEY FOR H3A-H3B

Answers to the situations will vary. Participants will respond based on their own management styles. Look for solutions that are too controlling, fail to provide enough control, or lack balance.

Situation 1 calls for less monitoring, but Rahella will probably need some help with organizing the study and determining the right conclusions. The best approach is to let her do everything and then review and correct as needed.

Situation 2 calls for minimal monitoring, but the manager will want to review Kesh's conclusions.

Situation 3 will probably generate the most discussion. The solutions are likely to vary on how to handle this situation. Yes, it's okay to let Nate fail. Or is it?

Focus the discussion on the fact that every employee is different, which makes every situation different. We might let Nate fail, but that might not be the plan for another employee.

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