Case Notes

# Chapter 5: Attending to Tasks and Relationships

# Case 5.1: From Two to One

## Case Summary

In this brief case, Mark Schmidt is tasked with a common, yet complicated business decision, determining which of his talented managers to let go from his business, Co-Ed Cleaners. Each of the managers, Asher Roland and Dan Cali, have different strengths and different leadership styles which make them valuable to Mark’s business.

Dan Cali is a process-oriented manager focusing on supervising his employees through checklists and direct supervision should a problem arise. He takes the initiative to change ideas based on efficiency and displays both talent and knowledge. He works hard and supervises in a similar fashion. His team members think he is an extremely hard worker and efficient in his position.

Asher Roland manages through providing his groups with autonomy, and works alongside his groups to understand their problems better and to build relationships. His team members come to him for advice and believe that he is fair and honest.

In addition to letting one of the two managers go, Mark must also make a selection based on which manager can best integrate the qualities the other manager has in their management style. Therefore, the decision Mark makes is not only to let an employee go, it’s also to select which manager could better handle additional responsibilities.

Case Analysis

This case is a comparison and contrast case between **concern for people** and **concern for production**. One manager, Dan Cali, operates on **task-oriented leadership** focused around **production orientation**, and the other manager, Asher Roland operates on **relationship-oriented leadership**. Because Mark Schmidt is forced to let a manager go, he is faced with the task of determining whether or not he can sacrifice a manager concerned with production, or a manager concerned with relationship building. Each have their own strengths and leadership style that is beneficial to the company.

The other consideration that Mark must make is whether Dan or Asher is capable of integrating part of the other’s leadership style into their work and practice. This case is interesting because there are two acceptable answers. Responses will vary, possibly based on the leadership style preferred by the respondents.

## Sample Answers to Case Questions

*1. Using ideas from the chapter, describe Dan’s and Asher’s styles of leadership.*

Dan initiates structure through task leadership. He organizes work, defines role responsibilities, and schedules work activities. He is production focused, and stressed the production and technical aspects of the job. He also displays a concern for production, as he is constantly seeking methods to make processes more efficient.

Asher uses consideration behavior through relationship leadership. He manages with an employee orientation where he takes interest in workers as human beings, values their uniqueness, and gives attention to their personal needs. He clearly has a concern for people, which has caused his employees to value him as a supervisor and work hard for him.

*2. How will Asher’s employees, who are used to being able to manage themselves in their own way, respond to Dan’s task-oriented style?*

Asher’s employees will probably not respond to switching over to a task-oriented style well at all. Because Asher’s employees are driven by relationships, being regimented and more production-focused will be a difficult challenge for them to adjust to. It could be assumed that turnover would occur, simply because the employees would be changing their styles and be more results-focused.

*3. How will Dan’s employees, who are used to being given clear direction and procedures, respond to Asher’s more relationship-oriented style?*

Dan’s employees may respond better to a relationship-oriented style, as they might feel less pressure and less worried about meeting objectives in a timely manner. They may seek more direction and procedures and it might take them time to adjust to a more self-directed work style. It is also possible that their productivity will decline, as they may begin to believe results do not matter as much as they did with Dan as their manager.

*4. If you were an employee at Co-Ed Cleaners, would you want Mark to let Dan or Asher go? Explain your choice.*

There are two different perspectives for this question. By letting Dan go, Asher acquires employees that are already driven, focused, and results-oriented. It may be much easier to convince Dan’s employees to self-manage than convincing Asher’s employees to work with direct supervision and task-driven leadership.

By letting Asher go, Asher’s employees will now have a radically different management system that will take time to get accustomed to. But keeping Dan ultimately may increase the productivity for the business, if he can get multiple teams to be task-driven and focused on production.