



Public Works

You are the Public Works Director, you received a new employee, Susan Campbell. Her internal standards are high for correctness, and she expects herself to live up to those standards. She came in a day early to introduce herself and find out as much as she could about the department to relieve some anxiety before her first day on the job. You could see that she was very intelligent and eager to start her new career. Her records indicated that she graduated near the top of her class in all aspects of training and in fact, she scored the highest academic average. You also learn that she's older than most new employees (41) having successfully completed a military tour and graduated from college before attending the Coast Guard.

During a short conversation with her that day, you noted that the Southwest Region has a reputation of being tough on probationary employees at the plant. You explained, however, that all you and the training supervisors expect from new employees is that they work hard, fit in, and learn not only their duties, but also the values of the organization fast. You tried to bolster her confidence by praising her Academy performance and saying that smart, dedicated employees like her would not have any problems. You emphasized that as long as she worked hard, was safety conscious, and treated co-workers and citizens with respect and dignity, she could expect to pass probation without difficulty. At the end of your meeting, Campbell promised she would try hard not to disappoint you. She prides myself on the fact that if she's responsible for doing something, you can be sure she will do it right. As she departed, you briefly pondered that you'd lost the last three probationary employees and hoped she'd do better.

5:45 a.m.: Dawn is breaking, the birds are singing along the highway, and Campbell is on the road to work. She works 12-hour shifts three days a week and a half shift on Saturday. She enjoys this shift because it gives her more time with her family. Like most operators, she lives in the same community served by her plant. It's a short commute; she's protecting the lives of her friends and relatives, her children and her children's friends and everyone else for miles around when she performs her treatment job. She's proud of that. It's a wonderful thing to be able to walk into work knowing that she'll be doing something important and making an immediate difference in people's lives every single day.

Campbell arrived to begin her shift. A veteran operator, George Benjamin, a 27-year brought her into the office and crudely yelled to you, "Fresh meat, Sir." You decided from that moment on you were going to have an uphill battle making this new employee feel comfortable. You knew that all new employees had a tough time being accepted, but being the only female on the team might become an arduous experience for Campbell.





When you spoke with her, it was easy to see the excitement on her face. You again congratulated her on her academic and the many certifications she has in her arsenal. She has a master's degree in engineering and a minor in chemistry. Her work experience includes four years of hands on experience in public water system operations. Recognizing her background, you calmly explained that she was going to be assigned to one of the best trainers in the division, Doug Raymond. You advised Campbell to pay attention to everything Raymond taught her, and you were sure she would do well.

By 7 a.m., they are making plant rounds: walking past every basin and piece of equipment, she is being taught to use all five senses to evaluate plant operation. "Do the basins look unusually cloudy? Is that pump misaligned (It sure is making a racket when it runs.)? Hey, do you smell something burning she stated? There's an electrical short! That must be why the breaker tripped last night. Raymond stated, we need to get that fixed right away."

Campbell spent the next month working with Raymond. When you asked how Campbell was doing, Doug Raymond complained that Campbell seemed unable to advance beyond the limited scenarios she had been taught in the classroom and military. He said she could not improvise when the situation did not exactly match the facts she had been taught in the classroom. Sending water to millions of people daily is not for the faint of heart. Additionally, Raymond stated that, "Benjamin and the others have been riding her hard. They even set her up with some bad information at a training session that put her in a bind. When I tried to correct the situation, she just blew me off. She just doesn't seem very happy here, Sir. I don't know what's wrong with her. She just doesn't seem to fit in with the guys." You decide that it's time to speak with Campbell.

As you watch Susan Campbell walk into your office, you notice the defeated look on her face. You have seen that look many times before, when an employee knows that he or she is going to get "chewed out." You tell her you have heard about her lack of progress, and then ask, "What's the problem, Campbell?"

When speaking with Campbell, she stated, "Most morning flies by with collecting samples, running some lab tests and checking chemical inventories. She was taught to have to work out the math to determine how much of each chemical we are using per day, and then decide when it is time to order more. Running out would force us to shut the plant down, which would create a public health emergency, a lot of bad media attention and violations and fines from state regulators." The aforementioned situation was the bad information they provided her. In other words, they told me we were out of chemicals, just to see what I would do.

"Sir, I don't know what it is exactly, but I just don't seem to fit in here. Public Works runs in my family. My father was a Public Works Director for 30 years and my uncle also works for Public Works. My brother is a city manager of a neighboring city. I want to make public





works my career, but I just don't feel right here. With all due respect, the last thing I want to do is complain or ask for anything special. I want to be like everyone else here, but the male employees on the evening shift seem to expect me to act like a man. They tease me because I never go out with them after work. Well, they go to sleazy bars and try to pick up women. They tell off colored jokes about women. Sir, I just don't enjoy that kind of lifestyle, and if I did go my husband would kill me. Besides, they seem more concerned with their off-duty and social lives, not what happens on the job. She informed me that she sometimes has feelings of resentment when people don't try to do things properly or when people act irresponsibly or unfairly, although she usually tries not to show it to them openly. I want to be a public works director some day, not a lounge lizard." I really enjoy mixing chemicals and making sure the water we send to the city has the proper mixture of chemicals. I obtained my "A" license while in the military.

"Apparently, if I don't hang out with the men they ostracize me. And another thing, although I believe they're kidding, I hate their Asian jokes. Since I refuse to hang out with them, every time one of them talk to me about anything, they squint as if they are creating Asian eyes. I'm supposed to be learning from them, but I can't learn very much if they're not teaching me. I'm doing the best I can to teach myself and to learn from my mistakes, but then they criticize me for making so many errors! I really want to do the 'right thing,' I'm just not sure what that is!"

"Sir, I've been talking with a friend of mine who works for a nearby city. He and his wife have gone out to dinner a few times with me and my husband. From what he says about his department, all of their new employees, both male and female, feel good about their city. I think I'm going to quit this job and apply over there."

Identify the Areas of Interest.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

(If necessary, continue listing **Areas of Interest** on another page.)





- II. *Analyze* how individuals are being socialized into a group by describing the socialization process.

What is the relationship among the Areas of Interest listed above? More specifically, is there a chronological order or **logical chain of events** that helps you make sense of the facts you have? If so, outline the time sequence of events.

Do the facts of the case and your explanation form a pattern that allows you to identify a fundamental or **root cause** (i.e., is there something in the case information that suggests it is the underlying cause of all or most of the Areas of Interest)?

- V. *Apply* the situation in the form of a specific leader plan that addresses all Areas of Interest. The plan should be realistic and holistic, address all the Areas of Interest you have identified, and translate the theoretical leader strategies into action. What will you do and say to whom, when, where, and how?





