

Leadership in the Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution Sectors

Supervision and Employee Relations Case Study

Notes: This case study is designed to determine how well a new supervisor assesses problems or issues in their area, prioritizes time, develops plans to address employee issues, and prioritizes work. The new supervisor will need to understand where the team fits in the business structure. They will need to determine the pros and cons of a unionized workforce, how to improve morale, set goals for employee performance. The new supervisor will need to identify her or his own training/development needs and present a case to their boss.

Congratulations on being promoted to the new supervisor of Triple Z Express Delivery Services (TZE). Your company has a fleet of trucks and airplanes to transport goods across the United States. You also maintain contracts with shipping companies to accommodate your customers' needs for global delivery services.

TZE is a multi-billion dollar company. It provides delivery guarantees based on options for customer selects such as next day, second day, and third day. If the guarantees are not met, then customers are entitled to a full refund of their fees. The majority of your clients are other businesses.

You have stepped into the role of leading an existing team:

Jason and John - Two forklift operators

Three drivers – Alice, Reed, and Milo

Two packers who load the trucks – Alexi and Jorge

You have identified the need to have a logistical coordinator to handle customer requests.

As the new supervisor, you have met with the members of your team and determined the following:

Morale is low. The previous supervisor arbitrarily enforced company policy regarding performance management. There is a perception that not everyone is carrying their full weight. Your organization is currently union free. However, there have been rumblings throughout the company about the value employees believe they will gain by joining a union.

Employees have been operating without a clear-cut job description. Therefore, directions are not clear and employees feel pulled in multiple directions. They know they have to get their jobs done; however, the timelines are not enforced.

Walking around the area, you notice there are pallets of goods stacked waiting to be loaded onto the trucks to be driven to the docks. Waiting for you on your desk is a stack of backup orders for customers who are waiting to have goods picked up from their

facilities. These are large accounts such as a national manufacturer of consumer electronics.

When you open your e-mail, there is a notice from your boss wanting to see you urgently. She wants to know the status of the shipment for your largest client -- the electronics manufacturer. There are telephone messages from very unhappy customers whose waters are late.

Reed has left a message indicating that it is critical that he speak with you now. He does not feel her last performance evaluation accurately reflects how well he does his job.

Further, you are expected to learn in a trial by fire basis. You are left scratching your head and wondering if you made a mistake applying for this position.

Based on this scenario, complete the following:

1. Identify the critical issues facing you as a new supervisor and rank them in order of priority.
2. Develop a plan for addressing the morale issue on your team.
3. Describe the steps you would take to fill the logistics position. How would you determine the responsibilities, knowledge, and skills required for this position?
4. Analyze the pros and cons to TZE of the employees' unionization concerns.
5. Develop a plan for resolving your customers' concerns.
6. Identify the support and tools you need in order to perform your job effectively. Prepare a proposal to present to your boss.