

Human Resources Case Study

The Perfect Little Mousey Employees

<http://lu.com/management/mousy.cfm>

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Comprehend the case situation: data, identify relevant facts

Teng-Zeng is having back problems and has seen an orthopedic surgeon who has suggested that she undergo an operation to have her vertebrae and discs realigned. Teng-Zeng would like to avoid having a risky operation and has consulted a chiropractor who has suggested a series of treatments, massage, and even using a particular chair at work. Teng-Zeng is afraid to ask for the chair directly so she asks for a new chair via Mariah.

Mariah is secretary to Frank, the boss, and has a way of working with Frank where her requests and questions are not seen as a threat, so employees often ask her for intervention on their behalf.

Frank is an 'insensitive' boss who often takes requests and questions as complaints or criticism of his abilities. He is hard to approach and often loses his temper with his staff. He has denied the request for a special chair for Teng-Zeng, who needed the chair for medical purposes. Teng-Zeng did not ask directly but via the secretary, Mariah, due to Frank's explosive habit during confrontation and she did not provide a 'doctor's note. Frank's reply was short and insensitive: "We could all use new chairs. And chiropractors are quacks."

Mariah feels bad that Frank has denied Teng-Zeng's request and does what she can in sympathy when she tells her so.

Define the problem:

The problem is that Teng-Zeng needs an official doctor's note to have her request taken seriously and she should be able to approach her supervisor with this type of request without fear of his temperament.

Generating alternative solutions/implementing a plan and following up:

Teng-Zeng needs to check with her medical insurance provider to see if her chiropractor is one of their accepted. If so, then she needs to contact the chiropractor and get an official 'doctor's note' to give to both her boss, Frank, and to her insurance providers. If her chiropractor is not on the accepted list, she will need to see an accepted provider and get their opinion. If chiropractic practice is not covered by her insurance provider, then she will need to see if her orthopedic surgeon is on the accepted list and if so, discuss her plans with him or her to determine the best options. If her surgeon is not on the list, then she will need to see a new doctor and go from there.

Once Teng-Zeng has seen an accepted provider and has gotten a note for a chair--if this is determined to be the best option, and she then presents the note to Frank and is still denied; then she will need to get her medical insurance providers involved to handle her claim. Frank is obligated by law to conform to a

'doctor's note' and most insurance providers would rather pay for the costs of a chair over the cost of a risky surgery.

Considering the other part of this problem, that of Frank's managerial attitude to his staff. The best option here might be for the whole staff as one group discuss to their problems with Frank. Frank needs to understand that in perpetuating his fear of being criticized or complained to he has in fact brought criticism down upon himself. Had he been more open to staff requests and suggestions, he would not feel as if he was being attacked and the staff would not feel like mice living near the cat. As mentioned in the analysis, Frank probably does need some psychological help, but for now knowing that he has made his own employees feel afraid to even talk to him about legitimate concerns may actually open his eyes to something he had not realized he was doing.