

# **MODULE 7**

## **Appendix**



## EXERCISE: HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THE DECISION?

### Answer Key

#### CASE 1

You are a director of a large child support enforcement agency. Your agency has done well under your leadership and your four managers hold you in high esteem. You appreciate that, but you know that your success is based mostly on simple hard work and a few good decisions. Lately, you feel that your managers are becoming increasingly dependent upon you and rely too much on your judgment.

Nine months from now, an additional site will be added to the already existing satellite offices so that the agency can better serve its clients. You are to determine the best location for the new site. Your managers will have to support the site in “concrete” ways, not just in attitude. The staff of this new site will come from among the staff of the existing units, and the existing units will have to provide technical assistance and support, at least for a little while.

You have asked each manager to develop a list of possible locations with information explaining why each location would be good and what problems might be present. To decide where to locate the new site, you will:

- A. Talk to each manager privately, reviewing in particular the locations common to the four lists to get enough information to make your final decision.
- B. Review the lists and reasons; then make a decision.
- C. Call the managers together as a group to review their lists and fully discuss the options before they, as a group, make a final decision. This is an example of the consensus method.

This is the recommended answer. There is a concern for quality in this decision; therefore it's important to hear from the managers. There is also a concern for acceptance. Although the managers have a high regard for the leader and would probably accept the decision, they need to rely much less on the leader. The managers' acceptance is important because they will have to support the new site in “concrete” ways. Time doesn't seem to be a great concern at this point.

- D. Go over the set of lists with each manager and get each manager's best ideas and evaluations; then you will take these into account when making your final decision.

## EXERCISE: HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THE DECISION?, CONTINUED

### Answer Key

#### CASE 1 (continued)

- E. Meet with the managers as a group to share information, review their lists, and get their ideas and suggestions as a group; then you will take this information into account when making your final decision.

With options A, B, D, and E, there is the risk of:

- Not having all the managers' acceptance or buy-in regarding the decision that is made. And, more than anything, their support is needed if the new site is to be successful.
- Having the managers continue to rely on the leader's judgment too much. The leader is missing an important chance to empower his or her staff when he or she needs their support more than anything else.

In addition, with A, B, and D, there is the risk of:

- Missing out on a possible superior decision produced by the synergy that can occur in group decision-making. It is more likely that the group will identify problems and solutions that an individual would not have seen.

## EXERCISE: HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THE DECISION?, CONTINUED

### Answer Key

#### CASE 2

You are the project manager of a group that provides technical support for the statewide-automated child support enforcement system. You are responsible for installing additional computers and related hardware to bring people “on line” in five of the agency’s largest units. It is important to have a clear and accurate schedule so that equipment will arrive when it is needed.

You have experience working on similar projects and have the technical and historical data needed to determine the earliest and latest times that the equipment will be needed. So it’s relatively simple to calculate the time at which the equipment needs to be delivered for each of the units.

In preparing the schedule you will:

- (A) Use your knowledge and data to set up a plan that will ensure equipment is available when needed and will be there a bit early if, as hoped, the project continues to go a bit ahead of schedule. This is an example of the leader-led or individual method.

This is the recommended answer. There is a concern for quality since the decision will impact the work of five of the largest units. However, the information needed to make this decision is based mostly on substantiated calculations. The project manager knows what information is needed, where to get it, and what the right answer will be. Based on this, it’s highly likely that the staff will accept the decision. There appears to be enough time for the project manager to prepare the schedule.

- B. Meet with your staff and have them work out a schedule to encourage them to move the project ahead as fast as possible.
- C. Meet with each staff member individually to make sure your information and calculations are correct; then you will go ahead and set up the schedule.
- D. Call the staff together to review the information as a group and check out all the data; then you will go ahead and set up the schedule.
- E. Meet with each supervisor alone to share the problem of developing the schedule and to get their ideas; then you will prepare the final schedule yourself.

With options B, C, D, and E, there is the risk of:

- Over-kill. There are technical and other historical data readily available that establish the facts that the project manager already has.

## EXERCISE: HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THE DECISION?, CONTINUED

### Answer Key

#### CASE 3

You have recently assumed the job of managing the technical training provided for those who use the region's automated child support enforcement system. Caseworkers are still experiencing difficulty using the system, and your first task is to oversee the development of a new training program that will increase their technical knowledge and skills. Your agency contracts out the training, and three vendors have submitted proposals for the work. Some of your staff have had experience with the vendors. You will therefore:

- A. Analyze the proposals you have received. Based on your understanding of what needs to be done, what each vendor is proposing, what you know about each vendor, and the proposed costs, you will decide which vendor to use.
- B. Talk to the staff members who have had experience with the vendors you are considering to get as much information as possible. Then you will use this information to make your decision. This is an example of the consultative method.

This is the recommended answer. The quality of the decision is important as caseworkers must be able to use the system correctly. Acceptance doesn't appear to be a big concern. The staff members are probably more concerned about getting the training developed than about the costs. It's unlikely that the decision will lack acceptance or cause conflict. As long as the staff members provide the necessary information, the manager can probably make a reasonable decision that is acceptable. Time is of concern since the sooner caseworkers are trained on the system, the better.

- C. Ask each staff member individually for ideas or suggestions on which vendor to choose to develop the training. When you have talked with all of them, you will make your decision.
- D. Meet with the staff as a group to get their ideas and suggestions. Based on this information, you will make your decision.
- E. Meet with the staff as a group to discuss the problem and have the group decide which vendor to go with.

**EXERCISE: HOW WOULD YOU MAKE THE DECISION?,  
CONTINUED****Answer Key****CASE 3** (continued)

With option A, there is the risk of:

- Not making a quality decision. The manager needs the information from the staff members who have experience working with the different vendors.

With options C, D, and E, there is the risk of:

- Over-kill. The manager only needs information from those staff members who have had experience with the vendors. He or she does not need input from everyone to make a quality decision nor is everyone's acceptance of the decision a concern. It's unlikely that the decision, based on input from specific staff members, will lack acceptance or cause conflict.

