

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the spring issue of Volume 4 of *The CASE Journal*. This edition offers five cases (one a series), all in the area of management. Nevertheless, they cover a wide range of issues, from the human relations aspects of a personal career decision, to religious diversity, to ethical implications of a company's products. Other challenges include managing change in a large group setting and responding effectively to a changing external environment. Two cases feature non-business organizations that nevertheless face management issues with transferable learning for students.

The first case in this edition is "Sally's Dilemma: Making Tough Choices in Collaborative Visioning." Sally is the project coordinator for a university which is going through the process of defining the vision of its future. Her challenge is to pull together the ideas of many individuals and help them to come to agreement – not an easy task, given their diversity of programs, interests, and objectives. Students are given her task of creating and managing change in a large group setting.

"The Death of a Salesman Revisited: Parts A & B" is also the story of change. In this case, the protagonist is in the midst of a career change. In the A case, his concern is the risk of giving up his current position for a new retail opportunity that was offered to him by chance. In the B case, he has completed the training program and is facing the reality of his new assignment. The job search, interviewing and hiring processes are all issues that undergraduate students in particular will find relevant.

The focus of "Customer Service at the Jewish Community Center" is also on personal interactions in a service setting. Here, however, students are challenged to diagnose the sources of the problems facing the Executive Director. Customer service is only one of many issues that make day-to-day and long term management difficult and frustrating. Changes in the external environment as well as working with the Board of Directors and an unhappy staff create problems for the Executive Director and opportunities for students to apply many critical analytic and decision-making skills.

In "The Frozen Production Line," managers are faced with unfamiliar and potentially disruptive behavior by a new group of workers. The new workers are Sudanese immigrants who need time for the evening prayers required by their Islamic faith, but management must also consider the plant's union rules. The case gives students the opportunity to consider the implications of diversity. The case's epilogue, available in the instructors' manual, describes how Electrolux handled this situation, and also offers teachable moments around balancing conflicting interests.

The final case in this edition, “Dow Corning and Agent Orange in Vietnam,” asks questions relating to corporate responsibility. While lawsuits on behalf of U. S. soldiers had been settled out of court in the mid-1980s, Dow was still facing lawsuits from Vietnamese civilians who claimed that they and their children had been harmed by the dioxin in Agent Orange. The case gives students the opportunity to look at issues relating to ethics, moral leadership, stakeholder claims, and issue management, and can lead to discussion of the appropriate role for corporations as part of government/ military activities.

The authors of these cases have been concerned not only with the stories that their cases tell, but also, and more importantly, with how to make those stories translate into learning for students. All cases that are published in *The CASE Journal* have thoroughly developed instructor’s manuals, sometimes longer than the case, that offer pedagogical insights grounded in theory. While the Journal does not publish the instructor’s manuals, they are a critical part of the review process. Faculty members adopting a case should get in touch with its authors for the manual.

The cases also bear the influence of the dedicated reviewers who work anonymously with the authors and editor to make each case an effective teaching and research vehicle. The reviewers will often read several versions of a case and its instructors’ manual, making detailed recommendations at each stage. These dedicated people take on this task in addition to their own teaching, writing and research. Their only reward is the gratitude of this editor and of the authors, those already published and those who hope to be. If you would like to be part of this process, working with authors to create truly excellent cases and instructors’ manuals, please let me know!

I hope that you will enjoy this edition of the journal. Please feel free to e-mail your comments, cases, articles and suggestions to me at margaret.naumes@unh.edu.

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