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Social Psychology

Week 11: The Virtual Office

“The time has come once again for the annual job satisfaction assessment at the United

Cardboard Company. The human resources department has brought in an external

consultant to interview the employees and learn what is making the office a satisfying or

not satisfying place to work and why. Click on the avatar of each employee to view the

consultant’s notes on that employee’s job satisfaction level. After reviewing the notes

for each employee, consider what changes could be made to create a more satisfying

job environment.”

Kathy

Overall Job Satisfaction Score: 9 out of 10

Work Related Notes: Kathy expresses an overall very high job satisfaction level. Kathy

feels very capable of doing her job and made a strong point to mention that she feels

particularly well trained for the job by saying, “The training process that we go through

here is extremely helpful. The instructors have always been fantastic and attentive

whenever we’ve had training courses. Our managers have also been really good about

following up to make sure the training sticks and that we have the resources we need.

All in all, I feel strongly that I have what I need to do the job that is expected of me and

more importantly – to do it well!”

Personal Notes: Kathy commented in the course of our meeting that not only is her

work life going well, but things are also going well at home. She expressed happiness

that she and her husband just bought a new home, which will be closer to their

children’s school and give them a lot more room to play.

Teresa

Overall Job Satisfaction Score: 4 out of 10

Work Related Notes: Teresa displays a relatively low job satisfaction level that stems

mostly dissatisfaction with the nature of teams here at United Cardboard. While feeling

reasonably happy with other aspects of the office, her scores significantly declined

whenever teams were mentioned. In her own words: “There is absolutely no stability

here when it comes to teams! We are constantly being put on them for new projects -

which is great - but there is no consistency! Members of different teams are always

being shuffled around and replaced so there is no cohesion for anyone. This is especially

hard when group leaders change and leave everyone hanging. There is most definitely a

group leadership void.”

Personal Notes: Teresa notes a fairly steady life outside of work with little to no

complaints. In fact, she revealed that she and her partner have begun discussing

adopting another child.

Jeannette

Overall Job Satisfaction Score: 2 out of 10

Work Related Notes: Jeannette has what is easily the lowest level of job satisfaction in

the company. Her complaints about work conditions essentially spanned the entire

spectrum of categories in some very concerning ways. With dissatisfaction on

everything from having too many projects at once to the physical temperature climate

of her cubicle, Jeannette is a highly unhappy employee. When I asked what her biggest

concern was though, this was her response: “It’s so hard to pick just one thing that isn’t

working around here but if I have to I’d say the technology. It seems like we are always

being asked to download new software systems but our computers are so old that the

software rarely works properly. My computer is constantly freezing, crashing, and in

need of IT help. I can’t tell you how many projects I’ve had to start over from scratch

because of lost data. It’s extremely frustrating to say the least.”

Personal Notes: As with her work life, things aren’t very happy at home either for

Jeannette. Her divorce was recently finalized and she was forced to move into a studio

apartment not being able to pay her old house payment on her own. On top of that, she

also ended her relationship with the man she was seeing following the separation from

her husband.

Ken

Overall Job Satisfaction Score: 8 out of 10

Work Related Notes: Ken expressed a very high level of job satisfaction and had some

really great things to say about his manager’s management style as well. In his own

words: “One thing that really blew me away this year was working on a team where my

manager encouraged divergent thinking and dissent. There was absolutely no pressure

or need to be nervous if you ever had doubts about something and wanted to express

that. We got into a lot of really productive discussions about strategy this way and

ultimately it led to a much better product with much happier clients. I honestly wish

every work situation in my life was like this!”

Personal Notes: Ken has had a rough year with the death of both of his parents but has

been seeing a counselor and focusing his energy into his surviving family and work,

which has had a very positive effect on his mood and overall outlook on life.

Brian

Overall Job Satisfaction Score: 5 out of 10

Work Related Notes: My interview with Brian did not yield a satisfaction survey result

on either extreme of the spectrum but I would ultimately classify his satisfaction level as

low due to his overwhelming focus on how changes are affecting his productivity. He

says, “There have been so many changes in the past year that it’s getting really hard to

keep up. Team members, leaders, processes, and rules are almost always being

revamped or changed. And sometimes it feels like it’s just being done for the sake of

changing something! At first I was able to roll with it but I’ve noticed that lately it’s been

affecting our productivity. We spend so much time double-checking who is doing what

and with whom on which process, that we never get a chance to do the actual work

properly. I know if this isn’t corrected soon we’re going to be in major trouble.”

Personal Notes: Brian was very closed off regarding his personal life and didn’t share

many details beyond the fact that he is single