**West Coast Transit Case Study**

**West Coast Transit Company Profile**

West Coast Transit began as a small charter airline in 2005. Its initial vision was providing affordable, on-the-hour flights from California-based airports to its three adjacent states: Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon. West Coast Transit recognized that the need for affordable and convenient flights out of California was high enough to sustain a business. The company began its success using smaller commuter planes to transport customers to surrounding airports. There was no flight longer than 2 hours and there was minimal service during the flight. The company’s mission was customer-focused, to provide an opportunity for companies to fly their employees at an affordable rate and whole families to travel affordably.

West Coast Transit tripled in size after its first year. Growing demand required the addition of flights, employees, and larger airplanes. The founders of the company reevaluated the vision and future of West Coast Transit. The company was determined to maintain an emphasis on convenient, affordable flights and keep its focus on customer needs. This strategy proved successful. The company has established itself as a dominant regional competitor. West Coast Transit has over 10,000 employees and continues to see growth in its future.

Most employees at West Coast Transit rave about the company and appreciate its friendly and employee-centered culture. The company’s leadership cares about its employees and makes every effort to provide them with satisfactory benefits. Most employees are enthusiastic about the impact they make on customers, their salaries and benefits, and the advancement opportunities the company provides. They feel valued and respected. One major complaint that a majority of the employees has is the turnaround demand. Employees are given very little time and support to complete a project. There is just too much work to be done. Most employees are successful under pressure but would appreciate an environment that provides adequate time to complete projects productively.

**West Coast Transit Marketing Project**

Pete Denson, a manager in the marketing department, has been handed a last-minute project to lead a team consisting of other managers to develop a campaign. The team must complete the project swiftly and flawlessly. Failure is not an option. West Coast Transit’s biggest competitor just released 50 new flight plans at highly competitive fares. This has caused a significant decrease in sales for West Coast Transit. You and your team have been given the task to develop a marketing strategy to drive up sales. West Coast Transit was planning a release celebration for their new Boeing-747 in 6 weeks. The vice president of marketing, Bernie Hollis, demanded a new marketing campaign that will be introduced to the public simultaneously with the new aircraft. This task will require the team to collaborate effectively in a short timeframe.

You and three other managers must work under demanding conditions. There is a significant time crunch. Your employees are already overburdened by their daily tasks. Staffing has not kept pace with the recent growth of the company. Many employees are relatively new and are not yet fully trained in all aspects of their jobs. While leadership is empathetic to the demands placed on employees, the simple fact is that additional staffing is not an option at this time and the work must get done to support the ongoing success of the company.

This project is critical for the future of the company. The company is at risk of laying off hundreds of employees. With the release celebration for the new jet only 6 weeks away, employees need to be prepared to put in significant amounts of unpaid overtime to complete the project before the deadline. The project budget is adequate but could fall short considering the impressive results the company is hoping to achieve. This assignment requires a team that can work together for the good of the company and produce the needed results.

Denson calls a meeting of the managers at 4:30 p.m. on a Tuesday, made up of Lea Jing, Jon Mahonney, and Katarina Tanney. The first meeting turns out very different from what you envisaged. Lea Jing is the only participant who had reviewed the agenda, printed it, and came with some suggestions. Jing has always been conscientious, so it is no surprise that she is scheduled to be transferred to another department to head up a high-profile task within West Coast Transit in a month. Mahonney and Tanney acknowledge the receipt of the agenda, but immediately note that the agenda and proposed plan are “massive and unattainable,” considering the constraints of time and workloads. Tanney comments, “It doesn’t help when one does not get paid for doing this. How am I supposed to get my team on board?” You try to refocus the team by referring back to the agenda.

Although Lea Jing had been quiet and observant all the while, she notes that she had approximately a month left in the department before being relocated to another department. You reply that “one month is a lot of time to get the project done, considering it is a high priority for the organization anyway.” Once again, you proceed to refocus the team, but Tanney interjects by saying it is common knowledge that she has personal family problems, many of which stem from her spending more time at work rather than at home, and she feels that this new project will place an undue stress on her already fragile family life. She mentions that she is in counselling and has to leave right after work every day, so working overtime is out of the picture for her. Frustrated by all the negativity, Denson states abruptly, “We all have problems, we all have complaints. Let’s just all get it out now! Are there any other complaints?” There is an uneasy silence, Jon Mahonney finally speaks up: “C'mon guys, we have been selected to work on this project because the organization feels we are the only ones who can make this happen… Lea, Katarina, you ladies are the best at what you do….I know that the conditions are not ideal, but we have to pull together.” At this point, Tanney stands up and heads towards the door while muttering, “It’s 5 p.m., and I have counseling in half an hour.” She stops just shy of the door, turns around, and says to Denson, “Pete, I take exception to your condescending remarks and addressing my personal issue as a ‘complaint.’ Until you apologize and promise to treat me with the respect I deserve, I am not willing to work with you!”