

CASES WHICH HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO JOB RELATIONS TRAINING 10-HOUR SESSIONS

In an electrical apparatus shop expansion has caused the company to tighten up on a number of easy-going customs, and the new product they are making has made it necessary to keep records of who is within the plant gates. Accordingly, a number of men whose work involved outside contacts and who formerly had not been required to punch a time clock were suddenly ordered to do so.

Included in the group were a number of men who were suspected of having taken advantage of their former freedom. They were known to have gone to baseball games during working hours, and yet at the end of the week would turn in paper records showing that during the time of the ball game they had been making contact calls on dealers.

One man in particular was undoubtedly the best man in the group as far as the work that he accomplished. He was also the worst offender, as far as taking advantage of the lack of restriction of his movements. On occasion he had turned in a report covering a week's absence from the city, and it had been learned later that he had spent only a few days on business and spent the rest on a fishing trip. However, the work which he did was more than "a good week's work."

All the men but this one man complied with the new rule but grumbled about it. This man simply refused to comply. The company definitely did not want to fire him, but the already disgruntled attitude of the other men steadily grew worse because the one man got away with it.

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In a radio tube company where a great deal of overtime is being worked a supervisor observed that one girl always became ill as soon as she received her pay check and had to go home for the rest of the day. Previously this company had had a very unhappy experience, when a girl had said she felt sick and the supervisor told her to keep on working. The girl really had appendicitis. Her appendix burst and she died.

The company now is scared of any recurrence and has issued orders that all girls who complain of feeling ill at all are to be sent to the first aid room where a nurse is in charge. On several occasions the supervisor had sent this particular girl to the first aid room where her description of symptoms was such that the nurse, who was also afraid of having "something else happen in the plant," would okay her leaving. The last few weeks the supervisor had called the first aid room to say, "Now I really want you to make sure that Helen is sick. I think she's just putting something over on me." The supervisor had also spoken to Helen and told her that she thought she was faking.

When the supervisor brought the situation up in a Job Relations Training session, she said she had it all figured out, that this was going to be one week when Helen was not going to get to leave the plant right after she had her pay check. She had arranged with the first aid room that they were to put the girl to bed and keep her there until the end of her shift, and the supervisor was quite pleased with the way she was going to keep Helen from going out and spending her pay check that one week, at least.

After discussion in the group, in which the question was asked, "Did you ever ask Helen why she always left on pay day?", a point which the supervisor had not considered, the supervisor said she would do it. At the next session she reported that she had talked to Helen and had found out that the pay check and Helen's leaving had nothing to do with each other at all, that Helen was engaged to a man who was going in the Army shortly and the afternoon of pay day was his regular time off from his own job. She did not think it would be any use to ask her supervisor to put her on a different shift or make any arrangement to let her spend these few hours a week for a few more weeks with the young man, so she was just playing sick in order to get out.

In a war production plant located in the country where public transportation is not available, there is a very definite problem concerned with the people who drive cars and bring other employees to work. When the plant was built the company expected to either arrange to have special busses put on this run by the public transportation system or to run a shuttle bus service of its own.

The plant is now completed and it is not possible for anybody to get busses. Consequently, any employee who drives a car and brings four or five employees with him has a very definite hold on his job and knows that the company "does not dare to fire him."

One supervisor presented this problem. In her department is a girl who performs very well on the job. She can hold the job on the basis of her own output. She has this extra strangle hold of owning and driving a car. Nevertheless she apparently is trying to build up a third form of insurance by bringing gifts to the supervisor. These gifts are far beyond what might possibly be accepted, the latest incident being a live tree suitable for planting. The supervisor feels that she is being put in a most unwelcome position. There is unfortunately no company regulation which can be used to discourage these gifts, and so it has to be handled on a personal basis.

The girl employee is a consistent liar and in fact tells lies where the truth would serve her much better. Recently a department collection was taken up to buy a group present for the supervisor. This girl volunteered to make the purchase. She came back and reported to the other girls in the department that she had bought a \$10 bottle of perfume. She bought it in gift wrappings, and presentation was made at the end of the shift.

The supervisor took the package home unopened and found in it a very obviously cheap bottle of perfume. That evening several girls from the department were curious to see what a \$10 bottle of perfume looked like and came to call on the supervisor. They had seen plenty of 10¢ bottles of perfume and recognized their gift as that variety. They promptly took the bottle and showed it to the girl who had made the purchase and told her to either make good on the \$10 bottle or return the \$9.90.

The girl did not come to work again for several weeks, with a report that she was ill. It was later found out that she was not sick. In the investigation of her supposed illness a long trail of fantastic stories was uncovered.

The girl is now back to work. She returned the \$9.90 and

she is again leaving gifts, large and small, at the gate house for the supervisor. The supervisor has tried to talk to the girl in each specific instance where her account varies from the truth but feels that she rarely gets more than just another story. The girl's work is all right, but her effect on the rest of the department is very disturbing.

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In an electrical assembly shop a girl who had recently had an operation returned to work with the stipulation that she should be put on a light job. In her department there are two light jobs, one on inspection and the other on an assembly line.

At the time that the girl returned to work the pay for both jobs was the same. The girl was asked which job she felt would be the better for her and she chose the inspection job. Within a short time a blanket increase was given the girls on the assembly line. The girl by-passed her own supervisor and went to the foreman and said that she was being kept on a job at low earnings and that her seniority would entitle her to a place on the assembly line where the pay was higher.

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A number of jobs are being changed in a plant which is being converted to a different kind of production. One girl with a greater seniority than the entire department is on a job which within a few weeks will be entirely eliminated. The supervisor began to try her out on various jobs which exist under the new set up explaining that the girl's own job would shortly be eliminated and that the sooner she learned one of the new jobs the sooner she would be able to improve her efficiency and earn bonus.

On each job on which she was so far being tried out the girl either says the work makes her nervous or bursts into tears and asks to be put back on her old job. This has been done almost daily over several months. The supervisor is now having to face the fact that only about two weeks more of the old work is scheduled. If the girl does not learn a new job there will be nothing for her to do in the department.

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Situations Brought Into Job Relations Training Sessions

A girl supervisor said that one of the worst problems that she had at present was a new girl who had lice. She was working in a group in close quarters. No other girl in the group was willing to sit next to this girl. There were constant complaints and the whole operation was being slowed down. The question of the supervisor who brought in this situation was: how is she going to get rid of those lice. Before the leader had to say a word another member of the group spoke up and said, "I can tell you how she can get rid of those lice. Go to the drug store and get green soap and shave it up and boil it in water until you get a soft jelly, and you put it in your hair and you let it dry and then you comb it out with an aluminum comb. I can tell you that, but nobody in the world will tell you how you are going to get that girl to go to the drug store and get the soap and the comb. You are her supervisor and you have got to figure that out."

**Kinds of Situations Brought in By Plant Supervisors
in 10-Hour Sessions**

1. Tightening up on plant entrance requirements means that some old-timers in the engineering department suddenly are required to punch time-clocks. They resent it.
2. A girl always became ill on payday and had to go home early. The supervisor jumped to the conclusion the two facts were related and tried to handle on that basis. It created new problems.
3. A new plant built in the country is dependent on individual drivers who bring others to work. The man who drives a car has a strangle-hold on the company. They don't "dare to fire him."
4. A worker with highest departmental seniority is on a job which will shortly be discontinued, refuses to be trained on any of the other jobs suggested.
5. A supervisor tells a new man to hang up his coat. The new man says: "Hang it up yourself." The supervisor says: "Neither one of us will hang it up. You're fired."
6. A new girl (a good worker) has lice and no one wants to work next to her. The production of the whole group is affected. How can the supervisor decide how to handle the situation.
7. A supervisor says: "Will you clean up those parts for Bill, he's got a big load ahead"! "That isn't a part of my job, count me out on that."
8. The "ringleader" of a group of workers comes to a supervisor and says: "So and so" of Dept A tells me that in that department they are getting raises next week. Why don't we?"
9. An employee says: "I want a raise." The supervisor says "You haven't been here long enough. The union contract don't permit it."
10. "I want you to go over to the plating department to help out over there this afternoon." "Not for me, those fumes make me sick" - "O.K. Go over to the receiving cage and help them" - "I'll go to the plating department." "No you won't, you'll go to the receiving cage."
11. After three days an employee says "I've looked over all the jobs in the laboratory. None of them appeal to me. The training department said I was the best one in the group and I want a better job. The other fellows feel the same way about it."

12. Superintendent to foreman - "I hear you have a pack of wolves in your department. The first woman on a machine in your department gets "pawed over" by your old timers. Is that the best you can do?"
13. A new foreman in the stock room has the former foreman under him now. The ex-foreman is constantly making remarks about the way the stock room is run. There is no place to transfer him, he has longer service than the new foreman and other employees.
14. Employee on night shift asked for a transfer to a day shift. The work was the same, the money was less on the day shift but employee claimed that his wife's health and home conditions were such that he would quit unless changed.
15. A worker with highest departmental seniority is on a job which will shortly be discontinued, refuses to be moved on any of the other jobs suggested.
16. A supervisor tells a how-to-to hang up his coat. The new man says: "That is up yourself." The supervisor says: "Neither one of us will hang it up. You're fired."
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