

maintenance did not exist, the facility's physical plant would gradually self-destruct. HR had to see to the maintenance of the workforce, the overall sustainability of the organization would steadily erode. Recognize HR for what it is: an essential part of the organization run as efficiently as possible.

HR SERVICE

HR doesn't do, and especially learn why the department does what it does. It's a continuing working relationship with the HR department, making it a service from this essential service department. Challenge HR to do more, to really improve service—and put the HR department to work for you and

FRIENDS LIKE THIS ...

the start of your department's normal working hours, you were enjoying the camaraderie, shaping up your calendar of tasks and appointments for the day, and by one of your employees. The employee, Millie Norman, one of your professionals in terms of service, seated herself across from you and said, "I'm in the department that you need to know about, and I've waited far too long to be here. I reacted internally with both impatience and annoyance—you were not at all doing, and you had not even invited Millie to join you."

Millie ("In strictness confidence, please—I know you'll understand why") was a professional employee. Cathy Johnson, had been making a great many derogatory comments throughout the department and generally questioning your competence, showed you with criticism of you, your management style, and your employees, all attributed to Cathy Johnson. On exhausting her tirade, Millie said, "I'm not ordinarily 'carry tales' but that she felt you 'had a right to know, for one thing—but please don't tell her I said anything.'"

Comments were filled with "she said's" and "she did's"—the "she" being Cathy—without connection to specific incidents, something extremely disconcerting while you were listening. Recently your posted departmental schedule showed your knowledge, in a way indicating that someone had tried to copy your initials. Two separate, seemingly unconnected comments by Millie and Cathy—one of two people could have altered your schedule. Those two people were Millie Norman herself.

As Millie finally fell silent, you were left with an intense feeling of disappointment. You wondered if you could ever again fully trust two of your key employees.

Instructions

Write at least a fully developed paragraph in response to each of the following questions:

1. What should be your immediate response to Millie Norman? Why?
2. Do you believe you have the basis on which to proceed with disciplinary action against someone? Why or why not?
3. How can the HR department help you in your present concern?

CASE: THE MANAGERIAL "HOT SEAT"

Background

Carol Greeley had been a registered nurse for 25 years and a nurse manager for more than 10 years when she was asked to take over as nurse manager of a particular medical-surgical unit known throughout the hospital—none too affectionately—as the "hot seat." Although she had heard a few things about this floor, because of the size of the hospital and her recent assignment in a relatively removed area, Carol had little information about why the hot seat was so designated.

After 3 months on the job, Carol had formed some strong opinions regarding the bases of many of the unit's problems. To her, the majority of staff on the unit exhibited a complete lack of professionalism. Carol became convinced of this for a number of reasons, including the following:

- There were many appearance problems and many violations of the department's none-too-often-enforced dress code. If there were a worst-dressed list maintained, Carol concluded, surely her nurses would be on it.
- The unit's rate of absenteeism was the worst of any unit within the nursing department.
- Two (thankfully unsuccessful) attempts by unions to organize the hospital's nurses had apparently originated with the nurses in Carol's unit.
- Carol had never before seen a unit with such a high level of schedule juggling—shift trades, requests for specific days off, and especially changes to the schedule at the last minute.

It was not long before Carol found herself becoming highly cynical about the unit and its future. It seemed to her that nursing meant no more to many of these people than the paycheck and that they constantly put their social lives and personal preferences before the needs of the patients.

When she had been on the job 6 months, Carol received a startling piece of secondhand information from a friend in the nursing department who swore her to secrecy as to the source. It was apparently a closely guarded secret in nursing administration that her particular unit was deliberately maintained as a concentration of marginal employees. It was, in the words of Carol's friend,