

Background Information : Scenario 1

Laura : Director of Research and Development

Your colleague George has worked in your department for the past three years. Although it has always been company policy that a staff member may progress and move from one department to another, this has only been done when you encouraged the move. Part of this comes from the fact that you have been with the company the longest and can most clearly see how the departments interact.

This time, Joyce (the director of operations) asked George if he would be willing to switch to her department—without discussing the move with you first. Joyce then makes a call to you, but the conversation does not progress well, and you believe a face-to-face meeting is crucial. She needs another person and thinks that this would be a good career move for George. This really unsettles you, because George is a very valuable part of your department because he understands the current issues, as well as the difficulties involved in getting out the current product. There is no one else on your team who portrays this strength.

You know that you can leave the details to George, and he will take care of any outstanding issues. George has also been your point person when it comes to training each new member of the department. George just called to tell you that Joyce has asked both of you to go to a meeting to finalize the particulars of George's move. The meeting will take place later today. It isn't entirely clear from the conversation, but you think George is upset. As you briefly discuss the meeting with George, you tell him that you don't want him to leave the department. You now realize that expressing your own disappointment at the prospect of losing him might look like you are not supportive of his career advancement.

As part of your preparation for the meeting, you go to Ellen, the director of human resources, for her suggestions. (This is not "actually" done but gives you the chance to embellish details. What you discover there is known only to you.)

Take a few minutes to prepare for the meeting in Joyce's office. (Use the preparation worksheet.)

Background Information : Scenario 2

Joyce (Director of Operations)

You have an open spot in your department. It is company policy to first look within, to encourage lateral and promotional moves. You have noticed that Laura has increasingly been relying on one of her staff members, George, to maintain the efficient inner workings of her department. It is clear to you that George is very competent and enjoys the additional responsibilities given to him. You believe that George deserves a chance for promotion. In order to be considered, you think he should work in several other departments, and probably get some additional formal training as well. It seems logical to you to suggest that George make the move. It's part of the company policy, and George certainly meets the criteria for advancement.

You call Laura to discuss it and tell her that you have been giving it serious consideration. You were met with silence. This did not come as a surprise to you: You long suspected that Laura deliberately obstructed a few other transfers. You don't know if anyone has tried to get George to transfer to another department before now, but you think Moreen (director of quality) was interested at one time.

You are on your way down the hall to ask Moreen for some background and to talk with Laura about this issue, when you bump into George. You make a "spur-of-the moment" decision to tell him that you are going to move him, preempting Laura's "permission." You also tell George to call and inform Laura and then the two of them should come to your office to discuss the details.

You then go off to Moreen's office to try to understand the background. (This is not "actually" done but gives you the chance to embellish details. What you discover there is known only to you.) You feel guilty that you didn't talk it through properly with Laura, but you know that she would not have been receptive. You believe that the transfer is clearly best for George.

Take a few moments to prepare for the meeting with Laura and George in your office. (Use the preparation worksheet.)

Background Information : Scenario 3

George (currently a scientist)

You have worked in the same department since joining the company about three years ago. You thoroughly enjoy your work. Some people have been moved to other departments, but Laura has consistently given you more and more responsibility, sees that you are well-compensated and makes sure that you get bonuses and training opportunities. The additional responsibilities have kept you from becoming bored with your position, and in a true sense, you have learned some of the detailed inner workings of the department. In fact, you probably have more "hands-on" knowledge than Laura does. She counts on this when she asks you to handle the orientation of new staff members. She has also had you act as liaison to the director of quality (and you have established a very close working relationship with Moreen, the director).

When Joyce sees you in the hall and tells you that she intends to transfer you, you are flabbergasted. You have found your niche working with Laura, and you believe that it is in your best interest to stay. If you don't stay there, the next-logical move is to go to Moreen's department because she knows your work and your capabilities, and you believe that she would treat you well.

You don't feel that you can refuse the offer to move to Joyce's department, because it is part of company policy that you should be willing to move. You are very upset to think that Laura didn't say anything to you about the move and didn't protect you from having to make the move. Joyce asked you to contact Laura, and when you call her you learn that she wasn't conniving behind your back, and she actually wants you to stay. You are confused. You go to Maxwell, a member of Joyce's department, to try to understand Joyce. (This is not "actually" done but gives you a chance to embellish details. What Maxwell tells you is known only to you.)

Use the preparation worksheet to get ready for the meeting that will take place in Joyce's office.