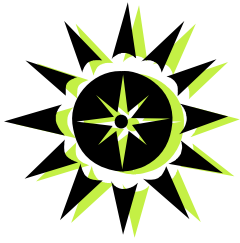


## Ever-Ready Security

### Stage 1: An Awakening Problem?



“Marsha, we’ve got a problem here.”

The phone call had come from Dennis, the Operations Director at United Technologies’ parts storage facility. He continued, “this is the *second* time I’ve found graffiti on the back of the building—and not just one bad word, Marsha. I’m talking about a really detailed, multicolored portrait by some punk who thinks he’s an artist. Your man Steve must have been sleeping on the job.”

Marsha took a deep breath. She was the Director of On-Site Services for Ever-Ready, the security company that handled overnight services at United Technologies’ storage facilities. The guards were supposed to patrol the site, verify that the entrances were secured, and report any unusual activity to management and—if necessary—the local police or fire station. Steve was supposed to make one loop around the site each hour, from dusk until the first shift reported in the morning.

Marsha asked, “You’re sure the graffiti wasn’t there before Steve’s shift started that night?”

“I’m positive. A couple of nights ago, when I entered the building unannounced, I’m positive that Steve had just woken up from a little nap in his chair. Listen, I’m going to give you a few days to figure this out. But for your sake and mine, I’d better not see any more sleepy-eyed security guards.”

“Dennis, thank you for alerting me. I’m sorry to hear you’ve had a problem with security, and I promise to do whatever is necessary to ensure that it doesn’t happen again.” She hung up, feeling a little nervous: United Technologies was Ever-Ready’s biggest client.

Marsha called Steve at work that Thursday night. Steve acknowledged not catching the graffiti, and apologized for not reporting the incident. But he said, “The loading dock is in a really dark area in the back of the building. There is no lighting. So I doubt I would have seen it even if I were looking for it. Not to mention those bushes and pallets back there...whoever did it could have hidden behind them while I walked around. I told Dennis that I’m going to check out those areas from now on. Really—I’ve got a handle on it, Marsha. It’s definitely not going to happen again.”

### Discussion Questions

1. (Work individually). Assume you are Marsha and you just talked to Steve. What information do you know? What information do you need to know? How can you get this information?
2. (Work as a team). How would you handle Dennis’ concerns? What actions—if any—would you take with Steve?

**Ever-Ready Security:**  
**Stage 2: An Increasingly Candid Situation**



The next Monday evening, Marsha drove out to the United Technologies storage facility thirty minutes before Steve's shift. She told Dennis, "I'm here to determine whether or not Steve is doing his job. I'll be back tomorrow to follow up. Can you let me into the guard's office?"

Dennis admitted Marsha to the office and left for the day. Marsha took out a small video camera from her purse and turned it on. She then hid the camera in the bookshelf next to Dennis' chair and left the building.

**Discussion Questions**

1. (Work as a team). Discuss the issues around Marsha's decision to hide the camera. Using the attached theories of ethics, decide whether or not Marsha's actions are ethical.
2. (Work individually). Imagine you are Marsha's supervisor. Write a memo to Marsha, evaluating her handling of the situation at United Technologies.

## Ever-Ready Security: Teaching Notes

### Stage 1:

#### Learning Objectives

Stage 1 focuses on managing employees in difficult situations, something all management students will face. This case explicitly explores how to solve problems and make decisions regarding employees in ambiguous situations.

1. (Work individually). Assume you are Marsha and you just talked to Steve. What information do you know? What information do you need to know? How can you get this information?

#### What we know

- Customer is not happy and may drop MarTech
- There is a problem at the client site
- Boxes and Pallets may be contributing to the problem

#### What we don't know

- Is Steve sleeping?
- Steve's past performance record
- Has Steve been adequately trained?
- What is the company's discipline policy?
- Has United Technologies had trouble with our employees in the past?

2. (Work as a team). How would you handle Dennis' concerns? What actions—if any—would you take with Steve?

- Examine Steve's performance history and talk with his immediate supervisor.
- What is the official company policy if an employee is sleeping on the job? Is there a policy?
- Has Steve been properly trained?
- Ask Steve if he has ever slept on the job. Sometimes employees will be honest. In that case, terminate based on the admission.
- If Steve has an acceptable performance record, discuss the situation with him and counsel him on the company's policy. Discuss the actions that will occur if it happens again.

### Stage 2:

#### Learning Objectives

Stage 2 shifts its focus away from Steve and toward Marsha, but the focus remains on management decision-making. To what extent are managers justified in pursuing the company's best interests?

This case also requires students to evaluate other's actions using an accepted ethical framework. Three are listed below to guide the instructor and the discussion:

**Stockholder theory.** Management's ethical duty is toward the stockholders. Management's responsibility is to use its resources in a manner that maximizes profits and returns to the owners of the corporation. This responsibility is qualified in two ways:

- Management is bound to use legal and non-fraudulent means
- Management must favor a long-term view of stockholder interest over a short term view

**Stakeholder theory.** Management is bound to the stockholders of the company, but also has a fiduciary responsibility to all who have a stake or claim to the firm. A stakeholder is "any group that vitally affects the

survival and success of the corporation, or whose interests the corporation vitally affects" (p. 199).

Stakeholders might include:

- Customers
- Employees
- Suppliers
- Local community

Stakeholder theory states that corporations must balance the rights of all stakeholders when evaluating the ethics of a decision. They must also be careful not to impinge on the rights of any one stakeholder.

**Social Contract Theory.** Social contract theory states that a corporation must strive to create more value to society than it consumes. In short, corporations must create value for consumers and for its employees, and the decisions made must reflect a movement toward that value creation. Profits are of less a concern than improvement of society and basic tenets of fairness and justice.

### Suggested Answers to Questions

1. (Work as a team). Discuss the issues around Marsha's decision to hide the camera. Using the attached theories of ethics, decide whether or not Marsha's actions are ethical.
  - Answers here will vary, depending on the ethical theory used.
  - Instructors should explain organizations and individuals should evaluate the ethical framework that they feel is best for them, and then stick to it over time.
2. Now imagine you are Marsha's supervisor. Write a memo to Marsha, evaluating her handling of the situation at United Technologies.
  - Memo should be professional in style and content.
  - Memo must evaluate Marsha's actions as appropriate or inappropriate, describe the specific actions that will be taken, and justify the action.
3. (Do as a concluding class discussion) Final thought question: Assume the video camera illustrates that Steve is actually sleeping on the job. Do you terminate?
  - If the evidence only comes from the video recorder, you should not terminate. Instead, put policies in place that make it clear another incident will result in termination.
  - Company may actually terminate if Steve was actually sleeping on the job.
  - If Marsha did not know there was a policy against recording employees without their consent (or if there isn't a policy!), then counsel her and explain this is unacceptable behavior. Put policies in place to prohibit it happening in the future.
  - If the video recorder action did not result from ignorance, then there is a problem and she should be disciplined.
  - If a policy is in place that she knowingly violated, you might terminate.

## Master list of learning objectives for the Ever-Ready Security problem

Participants in this problem will:

1. Be introduced to a difficult management situation based on a real world situation.
2. Learn to define what they know and don't know in an ambiguous management situation involving an employee and an angry client.
3. Practice forms of business communication, including writing memos, talking to clients and addressing concerns with employees. In such communications, it will be important to describe specific actions that will be taken, and to justify decisions in writing.
4. Be introduced to three theories of business ethics, and have practice applying them to a situation.
5. Discuss a manager's options, including when he or she is justified in pursuing a company's best interests.
6. Be introduced to problem-based learning procedures, including writing learning issues, discussing difficult cases in small groups, and writing collaboratively.
7. Learn the importance of company policy in guiding managerial actions and decisions.
8. Practice discussing when an employee can or should be terminated.
9. Practice ways to sensitively question employees about their own job performance.