MOTIVATION AT BALD EAGLE SOFTWARE*

Martin Blanchard, vice president for research and development at Bald Eagle Software, sat in his office staring at an urgent memo from his boss. Although the memo had been sent to all five of the company's vice presidents, Blanchard assumed that there was something personal in it that had been directed to him.

The message was simple but intense; orders were skyrocketing, but there was also a shortage of personnel to handle the demands of the high-tech company's rapid growth. "In short," the note said, "productivity has to improve."

For several minutes, Martin thought about his workers: Was there a bad apple who wasn't pulling his or her weight? Before long, he thought he knew who it was in his department who had inspired the memo.

Eager to take steps towards pleasing his boss, Martin buzzed his secretary. "Tell Hank ɹaver I want to see him right away," he said. When Hank arrived, Martin told his secretary to hold all calls during their meeting.

"There are some important things we need to discuss," Martin began, drumming his fingers on his oak desk as Hank took a seat across from him. "First of all, I want to tell you that I'm giving the team leader position to Olga Richardson."

"Really?" Hank replied, smiling. "That's great! I'll be sure to congratulate her."

Martin raised his eyebrows.

"Do you understand what I'm saying, Hank? Olga has only been working here for six months, and she's getting a raise and a promotion. You could have had that promotion if you had pushed yourself to earn it."

"Oh well," Hank replied, shrugging in his easy-going way. "I really wouldn't have wanted that job. If I got a promotion, I'd be stuck in an office with a pile of papers. I'd hate that. The best thing about my job is that I get to work with people. The guys in marketing— they're the best; they really make me happy to come in every morning."

Martin glared at Hank. "That's another thing I want to talk to you about, Hank," Martin continued. "It seems like you spend about an hour every morning chatting with the production workers, joking around with the marketing team . . . ?"

ank's sm ɪe faded, and he leaned forward in his chair.

"Well, sure . . . ," Hank replied, "but get the work done, don't I? Have ever let you down by not getting something done?"

"No," Martin admitted. "In terms of output—both quality and quantity—you're one of the best in the department . . . but that's not the point."

"Then, what is the point?" Hank asked, looking confused.

Martin slammed his fists on the desk.

"You're undermining my authority—that's the point!" Martin blurted out. "I'm in charge of this department! How do you think it makes me look when the president of the company walks through the production line and sees you sitting around having coffee? I want him to respect the control I have over my department. I want to be recognized as one of the strongest managers here! It makes me look bad when one of my most experienced software designers spends the whole morning making the rounds like a neighborhood gossip. You must become more productive."

"But, Martin," Hank objected, "I am productive—you said yourself that I'm one of the best in the department! Sure I like to chat with my buddies . . . but I also stay here past seven almost every night. I put in my hours just like everyone else."

"No, Hank," Martin replied, looking his subordinate straight in the eye. "From now on you'll put in your hours like everyone else. You're going to have to play the game by my rules."

Hank's face turned white. He loosened his tie before he spoke.

"What does that mean?" he stammered.

"First," Martin began, "it means you will work here from nine to five with a half hour break for lunch. That's it—no other breaks. Second, you can't go around visiting other departments unless you have my permission beforehand. I'll let you go—but only when a matter of company business is involved. Third, if you don't shape up, don't come crying to me next December when you don't get a bonus."

Hank was visibly shaken. "But, Martin," he pleaded, "you know I don't care about the money . . . It's just . . . " His voice trailed off, and he stared at the carpet.

"Look," Martin said stiffly, "I'm just trying to be fair to everyone who works here. I can't let personalities and relationships get in the way of these kinds of decisions. I'm even fair with Olga Richardson. Hey, I was skeptical when they hired a woman as a software designer, but she knows who the boss is, and she did what she had to do to get ahead. She's growing with this company, Hank. You're at a standstill. I hope that what I've said today will help you turn yourself around. We need everyone here to be as productive as possible."

Again, Hank looked confused. As he opened his mouth to reply, Martin stood up, clearly indicating that the meeting was over. Hank mumbled something about getting back to work and quickly left the room.

Alone, Martin strolled over to the bay window of his office. Clasping his hands together behind his back, he watched a group of Bald Eagle Software's second-shift production workers walk towards the building's entrance.

"Workers are like horses," he said to himself. "Leave them alone, and they'll wander aimlessly. If you expect to get any work out of them," he thought, "you have to keep them on a tight rein."