50 WORD CASE STUDY

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

BRIEF CASE STUDIES

Case #2
Monica versus Grace

The Employee Engagement Network

Produced by David Zinger, Luke Zinger and John Junson
Introduction

Welcome to the 50-word case study. This case study offers you a focused view of employee engagement in a concise narrative format with a range of brief responses.

Use this case to think about employee engagement and craft your 50 word response at the end. Share this case with co-workers or create your own 50-word case study to bring new light to engagement in your organization.

To read the original forum that was used to create this e-book click on the following link or paste the link into your browser: http://bit.ly/shGEXh

David Zinger
The Case: Monica versus Grace

Monica thought Grace was the worst boss she ever worked for. Grace bullied and berated Monica at every opportunity. Monica only talked about this with her husband. He was tired of her tirades. Grace thought Monica was incompetent. Results were plummeting and office morale was sinking as their relationship deteriorated.
Monica must speak to Grace about the inappropriate treatment. If together they can work this out, that is the best outcome. If Grace has a problem with Monica’s performance, it should be addressed appropriately not by the bully method. Monica may have to decide her own employment future with Grace.

Monica needs to ask herself the following:
1. What unsaid expectations of Grace are not met? What can be done in this regard?
2. Why am I not having a direct dialogue on how this situation is impacting me and others with Grace? And other stakeholders.
3. Am I doing all this to gain unnecessary attention?

Grace is the leader, and she has to act like one. Her ‘berating’ behavior is affecting everyone - not just Monica. Grace needs to prepare and conduct a thoughtful engagement discussion with Monica, with the intention of completing a development and learning plan for her. Behaving like the leader is not optional.
Grace needs to take a deep breath and talk professionally with Monica about her “incompetence” in very concrete behavioural terms, outlining the improvements she would like to see. Yet Grace also needs to acknowledge Monica’s areas of strengths and recognize them with Monica. This would start a better, more positive and productive, working relationship.

Monica’s reality is the focus. She must start fresh with no baggage. She should speak to Grace openly and positively about her desire to be successful in her job, establishing a set of realistic goals and an agreement, in writing, as to what success for both parties will look like.

I believe that in the equation boss plus subaltern, respect always should prevail. As Deri stated, I’m convinced that Grace should enhance her communication and leadership abilities to achieve Monica’s engagement.
CASE STUDY #2  Monica vs. Grace

DAVID BOWLES  
Monica talked to her boss who asked their HR consultant to interview each team member and look in-depth at the latest survey results. Monica was right, the whole team was unhappy. She’s the boss now. Morale is back up; at home too. The team’s performance has never been better.

DAVID ZINGER  
Our working relationships make work....work! I would encourage Monica and Grace to have a healthy conversation about their differences and their commonalities to see if they could determine a way to work together that works for both of them and others in the organization. Make it work or change it.

KELLIE AULD  
Monica and Grace are the only ones that can fix this problem. It’s time for a difficult conversation and some truths to be told. Both need to be specific about their concerns assuming Grace wants to keep Monica (who she deems to be incompetent) in her employ, she should have someone come in to help them deal with conflict.
Emotional intelligence is needed for both parties. Seek out alternative dispute resolution services.

They were both right. The office went out of business. The end.

Grace needs to take responsibility for Grace, and ‘manage herself.’ She needs to change the way she responds – not reacts – to her boss and be transparent and authentic. She could also try feedback if her boss is open to it “Monica, I think our relationship is strained and it impacts the morale of the office”. When I hear you say _____ to me it makes me feel ______. ” Grace does however need to be prepared for the fact Monica may not react the way she hopes.
Monica, unhappy at her position, applied for an internal promotion. Grace realising an opportunity to rid herself and the team of an ‘ineffective’ member promptly gave Monica a glowing reference and ensured that she was promoted out of the team. Whilst everyone within the organisation knew of the problems - it wasn’t actually dealt with. I suspect the above is more the reality of such a situation?

Grace’s public floggings of Monica created a toxic atmosphere for all, and a “hostile work environment” for Monica specifically. Monica won a huge harassment settlement and bought controlling shares in the company. Grace was banished to the mail room in utter shame, and for those in her old area...party time!

Grace is responsible for the performance of her employee (and company morale) and needs to initiate the discussion. She needs to approach Monica with a humble attitude and ask for Monica’s help in improving overall productivity, which will include specific, measurable performance expectations for Monica.
CASE STUDY #2  Monica vs. Grace

The main problem is communication, there is no communication between them.  
1. Grace as a boss is supposed to open communication, because as a good leader, she should have communication competence.  
2. Try to open discussion between them.  
3. Both of them should take responsibility as a boss and employee.  
4. Don’t tell the problem to her husband and try to communicate with Grace.

Monica and Grace must seek to understand each other’s perspectives. Anyone can initiate. Monica must seek specific feedback and look for her improvement areas. She must convey to Grace that she is an equally respected individual so should be treated well. Grace needs to act like a human being. It’s important for both of them to disengage from petty differences and look for targets for success.

I believe this is the point when Grace’s well intentioned boss shows up with coffee and donuts to try to raise office morale and improve results.
CASE STUDY #2  Monica vs. Grace

MONTARIOUS USHER
Grace could change her approach on how she gives Monica feedback. Most managers have good intentions when they give their subordinates feedback on their work, however, because Monica perceives Grace’s feedback as being negative, it’s up to Grace to align Monica’s perception with her intention which I believe is to help her perform better at work.

DOMINIC RAJESH
Monica should talk to Grace instead of her husband and Grace should take time to listen to Monica. If things don’t work out, one of them can find another job or would be forced to find another job.

SANDRA SHELTON
Monica should look at the root of the bullying, see if there is any truth to it. If there is, grow on, make changes if they are not against her values. If against, change jobs or learn communication strategies to stand up to the bullying. Most bullies project their own troubles on accepting others.
CASE STUDY #2  Monica vs. Grace

JEANNETTE PALADINO

First, Monica should have a conversation with Grace with specific instances of her bullying and discuss what is wrong and how they can establish a more positive relationship. If this doesn’t work, Monica should ask HR for advice and help. If productivity is falling, this is a company problem, too.

NAOMI CAIETTI

Leadership is certainly lacking in this situation; an opportunity for reflection to develop an action plan could turn this situation around. Grace ultimately was responsible for this relationship so she took time to reflect how to improve her leadership. Grace reached out to Monica to begin their one on ones.

ALLAN PREISS

Grace and Monica are both enabling the concerns they feel aggrieved about. They both must demonstrate the courage to be honest about what they are feeling and have a shared responsibility to change their behavior based on what they hear from each other.
SHARON QUARRINGTON

This is a leadership issue that must be addressed from the level above Grace. Corporate Culture and the tolerance for abuse begins at the top. If this behavior is tolerated within this organization looking for another place to work is her best bet. If this is abnormal for the organization Monica can start by finding some common ground with Grace as a place to initiate a dialogue on working together better. An outside facilitator (HR, Senior Manager or Consultant) will increase the chances of success.

LYDIA WOODROFF

Grace needs to manage Monica, setting clear objectives, behaviours and outcomes. An apology wouldn’t go amiss. Monica needs to change her mindset and take responsibility for her relationship with her boss. Honest but unemotional communication to reset the patterns. Involve someone else (eg HR) if she can’t do this alone.
CASE STUDY #2  Monica vs. Grace

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The Employee Engagement Network

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If you require additional information or assistance contact the network founder: David Zinger at zingerdj@gmail.com