**MEKDELA AMBA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

**Individual Assignment (20%)**

**Course Title: Organizational Behavior**

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**Instruction:**

1. **Copying from others is strictly forbidden and punitive.**
2. **Detail answers are required for the given questions.**

**Questions**

1. What challenge do managers and employees face in work place of the twenty- first century?
2. “All organizations would benefit from hiring the smartest people they can get”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer.
3. Why do you think the subject of organizational behavior might be criticized as being only common sense? Why we would rarely hear such a comment about a course in Physics or statistics? Do you think this criticism of OB is fair?
4. One day your boss comes in and he is nervous, edgy and argumentative, the next day he is claim and relaxed. Does this behavior suggest that personality traits are not consistent from day to day?
5. **Case Analysis 1**: **Tip Says ‘*No* Way’**

Marc Lattoni is supervisor of an eight-member cost accounting department in a large metals fabricating plant in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was promoted about six months ago to his supervisory position after only a year as an accountant, largely because of his education: He has an MBA, whereas no one else in the department has a college degree. The transition to supervisor went smoothly, and there were hardly any problems until this morning.

The need for another cost accountant in the office had been obvious to Marc for over a month. Overtime had become commonplace and was putting a strain on department members as well as the department's budget (overtime was computed at time and a half). Marc had his *eye* on one particular individual in production control who he thought would fit his needs quite well. He

had talked with the production control supervisor and the personnel manager, and the three had agreed a young African-American clerk in production named Ralph might be a good candidate to move into cost accounting and help with the increased departmental workload. Ralph had been with the company for eight months, shown above average potential, and was only six units shy of a bachelor's degree (with a major in accounting) that he was earning at night at the University of New Mexico.

Marc had discussed the cost accounting position with Ralph earlier in the week, and Ralph had been enthusiastic. Marc had said that, while he could make no promises, he thought he would recommend Ralph for the job. However, Marc emphasized it would be a week or so before a final decision was made and the announcement made official.

When Marc came into his office this morning, he was confronted by Tip O'Malley, a 58-year-old cost accountant who has been at the plant since its opening over 24 years ago. Tip, born and raised in a small town in the Deep South, had heard a rumor that Ralph would be coming up and working in the cost department. Tip minced no words: "I've never worked with a black and I never will." Tip's face was red, and it was obvious this was an emotionally charged issue for him. His short one-way confrontation closed with the statement: "I have no intention of working in the same department as that fellow."

**Questions**

1. What is the source of this conflict?

2. Assume you're Marc. Which conflict-handling intention is most appropriate for this situation? Why?

3. Describe, in detail, what you would say to Tip.

4. Do you think your approach has permanently resolved this conflict?

Explain.

**Case Analysis2**: **Reflex Systems**

As the plane took off from the Loss Angeles airport for Chicago and home, Henry Rankin tried to unwind, something that didn’t come naturally to the Reflex Systems software engineer. He needed time to think, and the flight from Los Angeles was a welcome relief. He went to L.A. to help two members of his project team solve technical glitches in software. Rankin had been pushing himself and his team hard for three months now, and he didn’t know when they would get a break. Rankin was responsible for the technical implementation of the new customer relationship management software being installed for western and eastern sales offices in L.A. and Chicago. The software was badly needed to improve follow-up sales for his company, Reflex Systems. Reflex sold exercise equipment to high schools and colleges through a national force of 310 salespeople. Reflex also sold products to small and medium-sized businesses for recreation centers.

Rankin knew CEO Mike Frazer saw the new CRM software as the answer to one of the exercise equipment manufacturer’s most persistent problems. Even though Reflex’s low prices generated healthy sales, follow-up service was spotty. Consequently, getting repeat business from customers—high schools, colleges, and corporate recreation centers—was an uphill battle. Excited by the prospect of finally removing this major roadblock, Frazer ordered the CRM software installed in just 10 weeks; a goal Rankin privately thought was unrealistic. He also felt the project budget wasn’t adequate. Rankin thought about meeting the next day with his three Chicago team members, and about the status update he would give his boss, Nicole Dyer, the senior vice president for Information Technology. Rankin remembered that Dyer had scheduled 10 weeks for the CRM project. He had always been a top performer by driving himself hard, and had been in his management position three years now. He was good with technology, but was frustrated when members of his five-person team didn’t seem as committed. Dyer told him last week that she didn’t feel a sense of urgency from his team. How could she think that? Rankin requested that team members work evenings and weekends because the budget was too tight to fill a vacant position. They agreed to put in the hours, although they didn’t seem enthusiastic.

Still, Frazer was the boss, so if he wanted the job done in 10 weeks, Rankin would do everything in his power to deliver, even if it meant the entire team worked nights and weekends. He wasn’t asking any more of his subordinates than he was asking of himself, as he frequently reminded them when they came to him with bloodshot eyes and complained about the hours. Rankin thought back to a flight one month ago when he returned to Chicago from L.A. Sally Phillips sat next to him. Phillips was on one of five members on Rankin’s team and told him she had an offer from a well-known competitor. The money was less, but she was interested in the quality of life aspect of the company. Phillips asked for feedback on how she was doing and about her career prospects at Reflex. Rankin said he didn’t want her to leave, but what more could he say? She got along well with people but she wasn’t as technically gifted as some on the team. Rankin needed her help to finish the project and he told her so. Two weeks later she turned in her letter of resignation, and now the team was shorthanded. Rankin was also aware that his own possible promotion in two years, when Nicole Dyer was eligible for retirement, depended on his success with this project. He would just take up the slack himself. He loved studying, analyzing, and solving technical problems when he could get time alone.

Henry Rankin knew that Nicole Dyer had noticed a lack of commitment on the part of the team members. He wondered whether she had discussed the team’s performance with Frazer as well. Rankin hadn’t noticed any other problems, but he recalled his partner on the project, Sam Matheny, saying that two Chicago team members, Bob Finley and Lynne Johnston, were avoiding each other. How did Sam know that? Matheny was in charge of nontechnical sales implementation of the CRM project, which meant training salespeople, redesigning sales procedures, updating customer records, and so forth. Rankin called Finley and Johnston to his office and said he expected them to get along for the good of the project. Finley said he had overreacted to Johnston from lack of sleep, and wondered when the project would be over. Rankin wasn’t certain because of all the problems with both software and hardware, but he said the project shouldn’t last more than another month.

As the plane taxied to the gate, an exhausted Rankin couldn’t quell his growing fears that as the deadline fast approached, the project team was crumbling. How could he meet that deadline? As the plane taxied to the gate at Chicago, Rankin wondered about the project’s success. Was there more to managing this team than working hard and pushing others hard? Even he was tired. Maybe he would ask his wife when he got home. He hadn’t seen her or the kids for a week, but they had not complained.

**Questions**

1. What personality and behavior characteristics does Henry Rankin exhibit? Do you think these traits contribute to a good person-job fit for him? If you were an executive coach hired to help Rankin be a better manager, what would you say to him? Why?
2. Does Rankin display type A or type B behavior? What are the causes of stress for his team?
3. If you were Rankin, how would you have handled your team members (Sally Phillips, Bob Finley, and Lynne Johnston)? Be specific. What insights or behaviors would make Rankin a better manager?

**Case Analysis 3:** **"What Am I Going to Do About Stella McCarthy?"**

Jim Murray had worked as a cost accountant at Todd Brothers Chevrolet for nearly three years. When his boss retired in the spring of 1994, Ross Todd, the company's president, asked Jim to take over the accounting department. As the company controller, Jim supervises four people: Stella McCarthy, Judy Lawless, Tina Rothschild, and Mike Sohal,

Six months have passed since Jim took over his new job. As he expected, Judy, Tina and Mike have been easy to work with. All have been in their jobs for at least four years. They know their jobs backward and forward. And they require very little of Jim's time.

Stella McCarthy, unfortunately, is a completely different story. Stella was hired about three months before Jim got his promotion. Her age and education aren't significantly different from his other three employees- she's in her early 30s with an undergraduate degree in accounting, but in recent weeks she has become his number one headache.

Stella's job is to handle general accounting records. She also acts as the accounting department's link to the service department. Stella provides advice and support to service on anything having to do with credit, cost control, the computer system, and the like.

The first sign of a problem began three weeks ago. Stella called in sick on both Monday and Tuesday. When she showed up for work on Wednesday morning, she looked like she hadn't slept in days. Jim called her into his office and, in an informal manner, began trying to find out what was going on. Stella was open. She admitted she hadn't been ill*.* She called in sick because she didn't havethe emotional strength to come to work. She volunteered that her marriage was in trouble. Her husband had a serious drinking problem but wouldn't seek help. He had lost his third job in as many months on that last Friday. She was concerned about her children and her finances. Stella has a 7year-old son from a previous marriage and twin daughters who are 3. Jim tried to console Stella. He encouraged her to keep her spirits up and reminded her that the company's health plan provides six free sessions of counseling. He suggested she consider using them.

Since that initial encounter, little seems to *have* changed with Stella. She's used up three more days of sick leave. When she comes to theoffice, it's clear her mind is somewhere else. She is spending an inordinate amount of time on the telephone, and Jim suspects it's almost all related to personal matters. Twice in the past week, Jim has noticed Stella crying at her desk.

Yesterday was the third working *day* of the new month. Stella should have completed the closing of last month's books yesterday, an important part of her job. This morning, soon after Stella arrived, Jim asked her where the dosing numbers were. Stella got up and, with tears welling in her eyes, went to the ladies' room. Jim saw last month's books on Stella's desk. He opened them up. They were incomplete. Stella had missed her deadline, and Jim wasn't sure when he would have the final figures to give to Ross Todd.

**Questions**

1. Do any motivation techniques appear relevant to helping Jim deal with Stella? If so, what are they?
2. From an ethical perspective, how far do you think Jim should go in dealing with Stella's personal problems?
3. If you were Jim, what would you do?