

# ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE

## All Sports\*

### PROCESS

1. Make copies of the role-play exercise pages (one copy of background page for each student in the class; one set of five roles for every five students in the class).
2. Develop teams of five students (there are five unique roles in All Sports).
3. Have each student read the All Sports background page as an introduction to the exercise.
4. Assign each student a role to play and give him or her the specific role description to review.
5. Indicate the desired outcome of the process (for example, press conference, written and/or oral presentation, short-term plan, long-term plan, employee meeting, etc.).
6. Allow the teams to proceed without interruption for at least forty-five minutes, depending on the outcome specified above.
7. Create feedback mechanisms appropriate for the desired outcome.
8. Link exercise issues, processes, outcomes, and experiences to course training and learning objectives.

### Key Issues

1. Misuse of company time (employee theft of time)
2. Violation of social networking policies
3. Inappropriate sexual conduct (possibly sexual harassment)

\*This role play case exercise was developed by Jade Cook and Kerrin Stephan under the direction of O.C. Ferrell and Linda Ferrell. Jennifer Sawayda and Michelle Urban provided editorial assistance.

## **All Sports Company Background**

**(Everyone reads.)**

All Sports is a company founded in 1960 by John and Mary McBeth. The company sells all types of sports equipment and athletic clothing. Their major focus is to make sure that they and their employees have a balanced life, including what they called an “authentic, integrated, and whole life.” They want their employees to care about their family, spend time with them, take care of their health, and be viable and responsible members of the organization. In order to accomplish this, they think it is important to share their values at times. But above all they want to operate their business using Christian principles. Principles are viewed to be universal and absolute and specify boundaries that must be respected. They are used to develop rules and values across cultures. Their purpose is not to require their employees to be Christians or to incorporate their personal religious beliefs in any of their products or business operations. But they do have a goal of people referring to them as a Christian-based business, not a business that sell products and services with Christians as the target market.

All Sports has grown to become a market leader in retail sales of ski and snowboarding equipment. The company headquarters is located in Provo, Utah. There are about 30 retail locations throughout the United States, most concentrated in the southwest region. The couple that founded the company thought that their Christian principles would help maintain high ethical standards in the company. They did things based on their religious beliefs, such as closing the retail locations on Sundays, so that employees have the chance to attend church and spend time with their families. The company’s basic philosophy was to hire ethically sound individuals based on their religious training and background. Most of their upper management graduated from Brigham Young University, the University of Portland, and Baylor University. All are active participants in their churches. All Sports participates in many fundraising events for churches across the United States.

The McBeths and subsequent managers did not develop any type of formal ethics program or even a code of ethics for their employees because they believed that they would be the role models for ethical behavior in the organization. In addition, because they were hiring people who had a strong religious orientation in their background, they should be able to apply these principles in the work environment. All Sports does no background checks during its hiring process and simply takes the word of new recruits about their strong religious values and beliefs in ethical conduct. Since it is well-known that the company wants to hire those with a strong religious background, it is possible that those interviewing for a job over-emphasize the true nature of their religious credentials. The company has a three strike policy. Employees given two written warnings can be subject to termination at the discretion of senior management.

Recently, the Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Taylor Bailey, has noticed a decline in performance, which prompted him to speak to some of the members of the sales force. This is

when it was brought to his attention that a personal relationship had been building between Jennifer Anderson, the Marketing Manager, and Sam Morris, the Director of Sales. Their co-workers believe that this could be one of the reasons for the decline in performance because it is building some tension within the office. Taylor has also given warnings to Skylar Thomas, a Sales Representative, for taking more time away from the office at lunch than necessary. A lot of tension has been building between these two in recent weeks. Colleagues of these two have mentioned this quarrel on Facebook.

The information technology department has been monitoring computer activities more closely at the request of management. They have noticed that there has been an increase in the time spent on social networking sites on company computers. However, since there are many employees who help maintain All Sports social networking sites, it is not clear whether the time spent on social networking sites are work-related. All Sports does not have software that is capable of detecting this type of activity.

A meeting has been called for the sales and marketing department. The meeting will be facilitated by Alex Jung, a Human Resource Representative. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the decline in performance, as well as to address any personal conflicts that could be hindering performance. The participants in the meeting will include Alex Jung, the HR Representative, Taylor Bailey, the VP of Sales and Marketing, Sam Morris, the Director of Sales, Jennifer Anderson, the Marketing Manager, and Skylar Thomas, a Sales Representative. During the meeting, all participants need to develop an action plan with short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations. Any and all issues need to be addressed from each participant's point of view in order to provide the best results.

## **Sam Morris, Director of Sales**

You are the director of sales and have been with All Sports for more than five years. You were hired based on your reputation for integrity and your sales experience in the industry. In your department, you bring in the greatest revenue. Recently, your sales have been declining due to a failure to be mindful and to stay focused on managing your sales force. You are becoming obsessed with social media and constantly monitor your stock portfolio. Because of the declining sales, you are faced with pressure from upper management to meet your numbers. Recently, you have become infatuated with Jennifer Anderson, the Marketing Manager. You went on one date with her, but Jennifer continues to refuse your advances for another date. The tension that is building in social contact with Jennifer is causing you to become obsessed with how to gain her affection. Because of the refusal, you decide to make a survey on Facebook, asking your friends, "Do you think Jennifer should go on a date with me?" News carries fast around the office, and your survey is the big talk around the office. Your sales representatives have been answering your survey during work hours. Fortunately, you have a great relationship with Taylor Bailey, the vice president of sales and marketing.

You have an upcoming performance evaluation with the human resource representative Alex Jung. In the back of your head, you are concerned with this meeting, but all you can think about is getting another date with Jennifer. You know that Jennifer has a reputation for dating co-workers around the office, and some see her as being promiscuous. You think that this increases your chances of getting her to go on another date with you.

A meeting has been called for the sales and marketing department to discuss performance and other issues that have taken place recently. The human resource representative will be facilitating the meeting.

## **Skylar Thomas, Sales Representative**

You are a sales representative for All Sports and have been with the company for about a year. You are the most recent addition to the sales force at All Sports. You attended a highly conservative Christian university for your bachelor's degree, and you have very strong views on social issues such as abortion, home schooling, and legalized drug use such as medical marijuana sold in Colorado. From previous experience, you have a tendency to get into arguments with co-workers about religious and social issues. Your responsibility as a sales representative is to bring in new customers. You have not made a sale the past month, and you have not been happy working with All Sports. This is causing you to slack a bit at work.

Recently, you got into a heated argument with the vice president of sales and marketing about the death penalty, gun control, and affirmative action. You have a different view on individual values. You don't like it when colleagues start talking to you about your conservative viewpoints. You are frustrated with your job and with Taylor Bailey, the vice president of sales and marketing. You feel that he is harassing you just because your views on religion are not directly in line with his. When you got home from work yesterday, you decided to go on Facebook and vent about the quarrel you had with Taylor about the freedom to bear arms. You also indicated your dissatisfaction with the company as a whole. You have already received one written and one verbal warning regarding your extended time away from the office during lunch.

During work time, you have been visiting social networking sites and saw the survey that the director of sales posted. You answered the survey and started to show your co-workers the survey. You were talking about it when the marketing manager overheard you and saw the survey on your computer. The marketing manager looked very upset, but did not say anything at the time, so you continued on with what you were doing.

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## **Jennifer Anderson, Marketing Manager**

You have been working in the corporate office of All Sports for the past five years. You are great at your job and have received various service awards. You are very interested in digital marketing and have encouraged your employees to use social networking sites to advertise for the company and network with potential clients. You enjoy work and have built up many friendships with people you work with.

You are divorced with two children and are burned out on marriage. You prefer casual relationships. You have gone on dates with around four co-workers in recent months, and even lived with one for a few months. You noticed that people have been treating you differently since finding out about your personal dating life. You recently received a written warning for a dress code violation. You were told that your blouses were too revealing.

You have worked with Sam Morris, the director of sales, for the past five years and have a lot of respect for him. A month ago he asked you to go on a date, and you accepted because initially you were very interested. After the first date you decided that it would be best not to pursue anything further out of fear of damaging your work environment. You told Sam that you did not want to pursue anything further, but Sam has been making advances at you, all of which you turned down. Sam is being very persistent to the point where it is affecting your ability to concentrate on work. He tends to become very aggressive when there are causal meetings outside the work environment. You have thought about bringing it up to your manager, but have not wanted to cause conflict. Until recently, you left the issue alone because you fear that if it is brought to attention, others that you work for will lose respect for you. However, after learning about the social networking survey he began sharing with the rest of the office, you decided to inform the human resource representative Alex Jung about Sam's behavior.

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## **Taylor Bailey, Vice President of Sales and Marketing**

You are the vice president of sales and marketing and have been with the company for twenty years. You received an online MBA from the University of Phoenix. You have enjoyed working for the company and consider the people you work with to be like your family. You are a very religious person, and you really like that the company is centered on religion, allowing everyone in the company to have Sundays off. You believe in an open work environment where anything can be discussed as long as it does not interfere with work or violates any laws. Moreover, you do not have a favorable view of social networks in the workplace because of their potential to be misused. As the vice president of sales and marketing, you are responsible for the sales and marketing departments. You are focused more on the sales department and have a great working relationship with the director of sales.

Recently, you have not been happy with the new hires. In your opinion, the new hires are not a good fit for the company because they have not been vetted appropriately for their religious principles, and you are concerned about their ethical standards. Although the owners do not want to promote a particular religious persuasion, you had a discussion with a sales representative and tried to convert him to your way of thinking. Later in the week, you were informed on Facebook that the sales representative made a discriminatory statement about you and your religious views on the social network. You had previously had a discussion involving religion with this representative, in which you left feeling a bit hostile. You felt that his Facebook posting was disrespectful, and you made a complaint to the human resource department. You want the sales representative fired for these actions.

A meeting has been called for the sales and marketing department to discuss performance and other issues that have taken place recently. The human resource representative will be facilitating the meeting.

## **Alex Jung, Human Resource Representative**

You are the human resource representative, and you have been with the company for two years now. Prior to working with All Sports, you were working in Salt Lake City as an assistant human resource representative. You took this job because you were more interested in the field of sports and the ethical conduct of the company. In addition, this job was a promotion from your previous job and you thought it would be challenging.

Your responsibility as a human resource representative is to assist in the hiring and termination of employees and investigate when employees are breaking company policies and procedures. In addition, you are the person that handles complaints and mediates situations.

In the last couple months, you have been getting complaints about employees violating company policies, and, recently, the IT department has notified you that there has been an increasing amount of employees using social networking sites during work hours. You feel it is appropriate to use social networking sites during work hours as long as certain formalities are followed.

However, a few incidents have emerged to suggest that employees might be using social media for questionable purposes. You have been notified by Taylor Bailey, the vice president of sales and marketing, that a sales representative, Skylar Thomas, vented on Facebook about his frustration with Taylor and his dissatisfaction with the company. In addition, Taylor has made a complaint about being discriminated against from Skylar and wants Skylar fired.

It has also been brought to your attention that Jennifer Anderson, the marketing manager has been dating colleagues. Recently, she has notified you that Sam Morris, the director of sales, has been using Facebook to talk about her and her personal life.

A meeting has been called for the sales and marketing department to discuss performance and other issues that have taken place recently. You will be facilitating the meeting.