

Developments In Business Simulation & Experiential Exercises, Volume 17, 1990

PROGRESSIVE CASES

Gary G. Whitney, University of San Diego

ABSTRACT

Participant's get quickly involved as they defend their responses and argue their points in progressive cases. The quantitative data makes progressive cases more provocative static cases. Participants get emotionally hooked and committed in the discussion. Progressive cases gather systematic data to draw comparisons among all participants. The leader posts the results so participants can compare their own managerial action with that of the rest of the group. Progressive cases collect systematic data for research purposes.

What is a progressive case?

Progressive cases describe a business situation in segments as it unfolds. Each segment adds new information from where the previous one ended. Each increment of information changes the demand for a managerial response. Normally the segments are chronological with each segment adding pressure to take a certain action.

In the attached case the subject is Tom Lawler. In each segment of he violates the company's standards of behavior. Students must decide how to discipline Tom after reading a segment and record their decision on a response sheet. The decision may be to take no action but the this forces participants to consciously decide to take no action rather than passively selecting no action by default. Participants are not allowed to read the next segment until they complete the decision form.

Example

In the progressive case attached, Tom Lawler makes increasingly severe transgressions of the company standards. The participant's task is to decide on appropriate action at each segment.

Participants write their responses on the form provided. The teacher introduces the necessity of documentation of disciplinary action, progressive discipline, and potential wrongful discharge suits.

TOM LAWLER

Instructions

This case describes a series of incidents in the work performance of Tom Lawler. You will take the role of the manager responsible for Tom Lawler and prepare a response at the end of each incident. The roles are on a following page.

Your Role

You have worked at Leisure Inn for 7 years. You started as a reservation clerk and have worked as a cashier, front desk clerk and night shift leader before your promotion to Manager of Front Desk Operations. Reporting to you are shift leaders for front desk clerks, reservations, and bell services.

There is no union at Leisure Inn. All employees are required to read the company rules and policies about their job in their first week of employment.

Tom Lawler's Background

Tom started April 15 in anticipation of a busy summer. The front desk was understaffed and Tom was available to start immediately. He was willing to work the night shift (11:00 pm to 7:00 am).

Tom's application included the following information:

- 23 years old.
- High school graduate, average grades.
- Taxi driver past 3 years.
- Part time cook in a fast-food franchise for 2 years.

The following segments describe Tom's activities beginning in July.

JULY 15

Yesterday the night shift Bell Captain told you that he heard from one of his bellboys that a guest made a remark about his abrupt treatment at the front desk when he checked in. The bellboy thought that Tom was the responsible clerk but was not certain. Milly, the night shift leader, knew nothing of the incident.

Stop. Complete a response sheet before reading ahead.

AUGUST 8

Milly was upset with Tom at the end of the night shift (when you arrived for work) because four guests with guaranteed reservations were turned away.

The hotel was overbooked. It often is during August because there will be come "no-shows." He did not check for guaranteed late arrivals (prepaid rooms for arrivals after 6:00 p.m.). Four guests arrived from the airport at 2:00 a.m. after flying from Japan and had no rooms. They were extremely angry, especially since they had reserved and paid for the rooms two months earlier.

Milly mollified them by finding rooms at a competing hotel, hiring a taxi to drive them there, refunding their money, and giving them a free meat ticket for future use.

Stop. Complete a response sheet before reading ahead.

SEPTEMBER 25

Milly reported that Tom left work an hour early last night with her permission but that he signed his time card claiming credit for the full shift.

Stop. Complete a response sheet before reading ahead.

DECEMBER 2

Last night Tom did not show up for work. He did not call to let anyone know that he would be absent.

Stop. Complete a response sheet before reading ahead.

DECEMBER 20

After your observation on the 16th you decided to make unannounced observations of the evening and night shift crews. You walked by the desk slightly after midnight in time to hear the following exchange:

"What do you mean, you don't have my room ready? I reserved it, I paid for it, and I want it!"

"I'm tired. I've been on a plane for 6 hours. It's late. I want to go to sleep!"

Tom rejoined quickly. "Tough bananas, buddy. Sit down and relax."

"Don't talk to me like that. I want to see your boss."

Releasing his pent up emotions, Tom said, "I'll talk however I want bigmouth. You don't like it, find yourself another hotel at 12:20 am."

Stop. Complete a response sheet before reading ahead.

Note: This is an abbreviated version of the case. The complete version with teaching notes can be obtained from the author at (619) 260-4859.