

# Human Resource Management

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** The contestant will be given a human resource management scenario. The scenario may deal with office situations, workplace issues, legal matters, etc. The contestant will be provided 20 minutes to develop the presentation. Notes will be made on the 3 note cards provided by the event proctor. Only the Human Resources Manual, along with the note cards provided for note taking, may be used in the preparation and presentation rooms. The contestant will speak before a panel of judges and a timekeeper. The speech will be no less than 3 minutes and no more than 5 minutes.

**SUGGESTIONS:** For each case study, SUMMARIZE the facts of the case in your own words, figure out a detailed SOLUTION to the situation, and be ready to PRESENT the solution to the judges. You should use the “Human Resource Manual” to research your solution and provide specific justification for your suggestions (“...according to the HR Manual, the employee is not allowed to ...”).

## 25 Cases from Previous Years

1. John Smith is an accountant within Professional Business Associates finance department. He has been working with the organization for 4 years and has had average to above average performance reviews and has never had an occasion where it was necessary to coach him regarding unacceptable behavior. As a result of the organization’s decision to automate the accounts payable functions, John’s position is no longer required. In your meeting with him regarding his termination, John makes the comment —You can’t fire me. I have a good track record and good performance. You have no justification therefore you can’t terminate my employment. Is John’s position correct and what options do you have in handling the situation.
2. Monica Sadler is a clerk in the Professional Business Associate’s purchasing department. She is dating a sales rep from a company that is competing for PBA’s printing business. During one of their nights out on the town, the sales rep asked Monica about the bids PBA had received from some of the other printing companies. She answered him freely and provided him with information regarding the bids, terms of the contracts and other confidential information. As a result, her date revised his bid before submitting it to PPA. When he was subsequently awarded the contract, Monica freely offered the information that she had provided him information that helped with his bid. What are your options in discussing Monica’s actions?
3. As Human Resource Manager, you have become aware that your coworker Alice is “borrowing” funds from petty cash when she is short before payday. She has explained to you that she always pays it back. Is this appropriate? Why or why not? What should be done about this situation?
4. You are employed as the Manager of the Accounting Department at Central Manufacturing, Inc. Recently, one of your employees has been coming to work inappropriately dressed. Explain how you would handle the situation with the employee to help him/her “dress for success” in the workplace. Also, discuss what steps should be taken so that this situation is not repeated with other new employees.
5. One of your department managers has been reading research that shows that worker productivity rises when employees are able to determine their own hours and even work from home when they want. He wants to try this in his department. What factors would you take into account when making your decision on his request?
6. One of the employees is preparing to apply for the vacant position as Administrative Assistant to the Marketing Department Manager for which he feels the most qualified due to seniority. On the day before the interviews are scheduled, while in the bathroom stall, he overhears two of the committee members say “We really need to hire a Hispanic.” The employee comes to you, the Human Resources Manager, for advice? How would you handle this situation? What advice would you give?
7. Joanne is a new employee within PBA, having been hired about one year ago. Joanne works in the warehouse area and is responsible for storing, retrieving and distributing computer parts. Joanne’s

job involves operating heavy equipment and significant physical activities. In addition to working in the warehouse, Joanne also works throughout the PBA offices. Recently, Joanne was distributing computer parts in another department. The manager of that area asked Joanne to prop open a fire door so the supervisor would not have to have someone stand and open the door as Joanne went in and out of the area. Joanne did as requested and propped open the door and completed her deliveries. During that time, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of PBA walked by the door. When he noted the door was propped open, he stopped Joanne and asked her why she was directly violating a company policy. Although Joanne explained that she was instructed to keep the door open, the COO told Joanne that under no circumstances should an employee violate a safety policy. The COO then reported Joanne's violation to Joanne's manager Steve. Steve followed-up on the safety policy and met with Joanne. Steve indicated that he was disappointed that Joanne had violated the safety policy. Joanne again explained that she had been instructed to prop the fire door open and that she should not be disciplined because of following instructions. Steve told her that safety was a high priority within PBA and gave Joanne a one-day suspension. Joanne has now come to your office and insisted that she wants to meet with you before the suspension occurs. As the Vice President of Human Resources, what actions would you take to address this issue?

8. Jim is a 20 year employee with PBA and has consistently been a productive employee. His performance reviews have consistently been above average. As the Vice President of Human Resources, you recently reviewed his employment file to verify his employment history because he has been recommended for a promotion. In your review, you discovered that Jim indicated in his application that he was a college graduate. The position Jim is being promoted into requires a college degree as a minimum qualification. In your follow-up with the university that Jim indicated he graduated from, the university indicated that Jim was 5 credit hours short of graduation and does not have a degree. What actions would you take to address this issue?
9. Jane is a new employee of Professional Business Associates, having started with the company about two months ago. Jane was just told by her supervisor that she was being terminated and that she need not return to work tomorrow. What can the employee do? What steps should the supervisor and the company have followed for her termination?
10. Prior to this tour of duty, he was employed by Professional Business Associates for over three years. What steps does David need to take in order to return to his position at Professional Business Associates? Use the guidelines in the Human Resource Manual to formulate your response.
11. Lauren was recently hired at Professional Business Associates. Her best friend, Natalie, has been employed by Professional Business Associates for the past three years. Lauren and Natalie now work in the Marketing Department with their work spaces adjacent to each other. Coworkers have been overhearing them use work time to gossip about personal and professional issues, as well as, individuals. Some of the gossip could be deemed threatening and dishonest toward others within the organization. As a coworker who has witnessed this behavior, what is the process you would take to address this situation following the guidelines in the Human Resource Manual?
12. Patrick is a member of the Payroll Department at Professional Business Associates. Payroll is prepared the 25th of every month. It is vital for all department members to be present at that time, not allowing for any paid time off the 3 days prior to the 25th. Within the last year, Patrick has violated this policy twice. After winning a local radio station concert give-away, Patrick attends the concert despite not having written approval violating the Payroll Department's operation for a third time. What steps need to be taken to address Patrick's violations?
13. Jennifer, an employee of Professional Business Associates, prides herself on being current in fashion trends. In order to meet company dress code and appear professional in front of her manager, Jennifer ensures she arrives at work and attends staff meetings in full professional attire. However, when she's in the shared work space she often removes her blazer to be more comfortable. When doing so her tattoo, which is located in a provocative location, is revealed. Jennifer is quick to put her blazer back on when her manager checks in. At the desk next to Jennifer sits Bobb, who has developed a friendly relationship with Jennifer. He often teases Jennifer about her next tattoo and where its location will be. Adjacent to Bobb is Larry. Larry is aware of Jennifer's lack of following the dress code at all times and is concerned with Bobb and

Jennifer's working relationship and conversation topics. What steps should Larry take to ensure workplace policies are being followed and office professionalism is maintained?

14. As the Human Resources Department Manager at Professional Business Associates, you have become aware that Roger, a veteran employee with 16 years of experience, has been illegally downloading music on the company computer during company time. Using the Human Resources Manual draft a proposal of how you would handle this situation.
15. Michael and Trisha are employees of Professional Business Associates and both work in the Financial Services Department. Michael and Trisha had a meeting scheduled in the conference room to discuss a new technology being implemented. During the meeting, Michael discloses to Trisha that another employee in their department has been harassing one of their coworkers. Michael is positive that the harassment has been taking place for quite some time. The harasser, however, is also one of Michael's very good friends. He asks Trisha to please not share this information outside of this meeting. Utilizing the Human Resources Manual as a guide, describe what the best actions are for Trisha to take.
16. David, an employee in the Finance Department, has recently completed a 12-month tour of duty and returned to civilian status. Prior to this tour of duty, he was employed by Professional Business Associates for over three years. What steps does David need to take in order to return to his position at Professional Business Associates? Use the guidelines in the Human Resource Manual to formulate your response.
17. During a meeting with Roger Meyer, Manager of the Marketing Department for Digital Solutions, Roger casually mentioned he had just finished a performance review of one of his employees and verbally offered the employee a 15% pay raise due to 1) extra hours and responsibilities the employee assumed after a recent department restructure; and 2) the employee's formal request for a raise to help offset costs associated with undisclosed personal legal fees. Roger wasn't aware of the recently approved Board policy regarding employee pay increases which specifically states, "An employee must receive a minimum 2% cost-of-living pay increase and a maximum 10% performance pay increase annually." As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
18. Digital Solutions is a medium-sized technology firm that develops and sells software, hardware, and services. The company has a formal dress code policy that requires employees to dress in a manner that projects a professional image. Sean, a Digital Media Specialist in the Marketing Department, frequently disregards the dress code policy by wearing casual attire, such as jeans, t-shirts, a baseball cap, and sneakers. When he wears t-shirts, the tattoos on his upper arms are clearly visible. Sean's non-compliance with the dress code has been noticed by customers, colleagues, and management. Several employees have raised concerns about the inconsistent enforcement of the dress code policy, which has led to discontent and a perceived lack of fairness. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
19. Cody's new boss at Digital Solutions has started a new teambuilding initiative that includes optional social time after hours. Cody, who is normally socially awkward, attends these events as a way to force himself to interact and develop a better relationship with his coworkers. Because of his obvious shyness, one of Cody's more outgoing coworkers nicknamed him "the mouse." Cody doesn't like this since he is working hard to overcome, but everyone at the office has begun referring to him by his new nickname. Cody just stops responding in hopes that they will stop, but instead, they just say it louder and more often. This causes Cody to withdraw and stop attending the after-hours gatherings. Cody no longer feels comfortable in his workplace and is not able to perform his job with confidence. He decides to leave the company but doesn't feel comfortable giving a reason when he submits his notice to the human resources department. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
20. Anita has worked as an administrative assistant for over 15 years. She is what some would describe as set in her ways. Comments such as "you'll get used to her" are frequently thrown around the office. The company has recently lost some employees due to retirement, so several new employees have been brought on staff. One of the new hires has made a report to the human

resources department that she believes some of the items on Anita's desk would be offensive to customers. For example, one sign that is meant to be a joke says, "Everyone brings joy to this office. Some when they enter and some when they leave." This could potentially lead to a loss of business or at least a loss of trust and good will. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?

21. Bobby is a project manager and supervises a team of 15 people. It is nearing the end of the last workday before the Christmas break, and he overhears a heated discussion by two employees arguing about packing supplies. As Bobby investigates, he notices that the office supply cabinet has been conspicuously depleted of essential packing materials including tape, scissors, labels, and bubble wrap. It appears that the office packing tape dispensers are also missing. Unsure of how to proceed, Bobby contacts the Human Resources Manager for assistance. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
22. You are a Human Resources Manager supervising 20 people. Your team works in close quarters with little physical separation between workstations. Elsa is one of your best performers, yet you have received complaints that she tends to sprinkle conversations with rather crude and vulgar references with both fellow employees and customers. This is not a team of saints, but some have complained that Elsa is crossing the line. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
23. As the Human Resources Manager you recently received an anonymous letter advising that two employees of the company are actively using and abusing drugs. An accusation is made that the abuse is happening at the workplace during their lunch and scheduled break times which sometimes results in returning late to their job duties. There are 17 employees at this particular company location. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
24. You have been contacted by a current employee with information that a new employee in the Software Development Department has a felony in his background (5 years ago for identity theft; served 2 years in federal prison). You notice that the felony was not revealed on the new employee's application. As the Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?
25. Brent Carson is employed by Professional Business Associates as the senior employee in the Information Technology department. He has been secretly trying to find out if the new IT employee with a college degree is getting paid more than he is. Holly, who works as a receptionist in the Human Resources Department, is a friendly and outgoing person who enjoys chatting with the employees. Brent casually asks Holly "hypothetically" how much he would get paid if he was a new hire with a college degree. Based on Holly's answer, Brent realizes that the new IT employee earns significantly more than he does and tells several other employees how much the new guy makes. As a Human Resources Manager, how would you handle this situation?