THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

A. M. E. C. E. A

MAIN EXAMINATION

AUGUST - DECEMBER 2016 TRIMESTER

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT

MBA PROGRAMME

CMH 619: CASES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Date: DECEMBER 2016	Duration: 3 Hours
INSTRUCTIONS: Answer Question ONE and ANY OTHER TWO Questions	

CASE 1

REWARDING POOR PERFORMANCE

When the problems performance is somebody's boss, what should an organization do? Poor leaders not only fail to accomplish their own goals but also can demoralize everyone who reports to them. Respondents to an informal outline boss complained that as a result of having a difficult boss, exhaustion, depression, disinterest, thought of exit, thought of appealing to higher authority, feeling of in accomplishment and other problems. So how did the respondents' organizations manage this performance problem? Surprisingly, the majority said their manager was rewarded. Over 60 percent of the respondents said their employer either failed to intervene or actually gave the boss a promotion.

Perhaps management in these situations did see that the boss was not leading the group effectively. Decision makers may have preferred to move the boss out of the way – even if that move involved a promotion. Other organizations feel that this is not the best approach. Hence, they would have had such a boss, retrained, refreshed, appraised and led accordingly by his/her superiors on how to change, demoted, disengaged or in the worst laid off. Others view that a boss is always right, and the performance of the boss is the performance of the supervisors. This was a reflection of the others in the organization.

REQUIRED

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Q1. a) What are the consequences of a boss's poor performance to employees.
(7 marks)

b) What do you think would be options of dealing with a poor performing boss? Support your suggestion with explanation. **(11 marks)**

c) As a Human Resource manager how would you solve such a poor performance during recruitment, selection, placement and orientation of staff? **(12 marks)**

CASE 2

THOU SHALL NOT THREATEN

A meatpacking company and a steel fabrication company recently ran foul of the Labour Relations, Relations Act, requirement that employers may not interfere with union organizing by threatening or coercing employees. According to the court documents, the problem at the meat packer started when a manager saw a newspaper photo of the employee at a union rally. The manager commented to him that his presence at the rally meant he would not get a promotion. Although the manager later explained that he had intended his remark as a joke, the Industrial Court failed to see the humor and required the company to post a notice saying it would not interfere with or coerce employees who are exercising their right to organize.

At the steel company the only two members of a facility's maintenance department got involved in a unionization effort. The shop foreman asked one of the maintenance workers if he thought the employees were trying to organize---. When the employee said yes, the foreman said he would make the employee a manager so that he couldn't be involved. He required the employee to write up disciplinary reports on two of his co-workers – a supervisory task. Later, that day the maintenance worker was fired. Again the industrial court held that those actions amounted to unlawful coercion.

Required

Q2. a) Identify the Human Resource mistakes presented in the case, and explain how a Human Resource Professional can help supervisors avoid such mistakes. **(10 marks)**

b) What rights does the Labour Relations Act grant employees in regard to the right to associate? **(5 marks)**

c) Do you agree that a comment meant as a joke can feel intimidating to an employee? Support your response. **(5 marks)**

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CASE 3
HOW TO HEAL A SICK OFFICE

Ever since cubicles sprouted up in office building 40 years ago, inhabitants have been under assault. Chemicals in carpet glue, cleaning supplies, and printer cartridges can cause head ages, dizziness, rashes, nausea, and respiratory irritation. This could be solved by pumping in lots of fresh air, but the windows in most modern office buildings are sealed shut. Then there's the space allocation. A typical office worker gets about 40 square feet-less than a third as much as in the 1970s; Dozens of studies have documented the toll all this takes on body and mind. How are we ever going to blossom from globally networked, branded superstars while trapped in shrinking cubicle farms bathes in local fumes?

The fix may be simpler than you think. Healing sick offices is generally a matter of replacing synthetic materials with natural alternatives, improving the flow of fresh air, and letting some natural light shine in. Healthy options-including clever techniques for pumping sun-light deep into a building's recesses-are proliferating. And while it's hard right now to know which microscopic evils may be lurking to your cubicle, the next decade will bring cheap consumer tests for airborne toxins and pathogens. Scientists are also working on newfangled materials to mix into coatings that can sack toxins out of the air.

But don't wait for these magic developments. Managers who start cleaning and brightening up their employees' workplaces right away can expect to be rewarded with lower costs, fewer incidences of illness and absenteeism, higher productivity, and the recruitment of better-qualified staff. A 2003 study of call centres found that workers with window views processed calls 6 to 12 percent faster, performed up to 25 percent better on manual acuity tests, and reported up fewer health problems than their peers in conventionally lit spaces.

Businesses that do right for cubicle dwellers may also find that they're doing good for the environment. That will bring benefits down the road. Letting in more natural light cuts a company's energy consumption, and that matters to all conscious job seekers. In a study by office goods supplier Corporate Express, 64 percent of workers –from the mail room to the executive suite-said their decision to work for a company is guided by part by its green practices

Here are some of the things that sap health and morale in the work space, and ways to make them better.
- Lighting
  Problem: Compared with natural light, fluorescent tubes can drain productivity.
  Fix: Skylights from Ciralight and others use mirrors to track the sun and deliver more rays. Pairing them with sensors that dim overhead fixtures can cut lighting bills up to 75 percent.

- Cleaning agents

Problem: A big office building may release tons of toxic chemicals from cleaners into the workplace each year.

Fix: Several companies are rolling out new lines of plant-based cleaners for carpets, glass, and other surfaces.

- Carpets and Fabrics
  Problem:
  Rugs harbor molds and fungi, and glues that anchor them to the floor emit fumes/

  Fix: To replace glue, Interface devised TacTiles, hand sized adhesive squares that connect tiles to one another, but not directly to the floor. It also makes a natural agent from phosphoric acid and coconut oil to stop molds.

- Furniture
  Problem: Formaldehyde is a common ingredient to processed woods used in office furniture.
  Fix: Green desks and dividers from Steel case, Knoll, and others are made from sunflower husks, wheat straw and nontoxic wood products.

- Electronics
  Problem: Some laser printers and copiers emit ozone, volatile organic compounds, and ultra-fine toner specks that can damage lung tissue.
  Fix: Move office equipment into well ventilated areas away from desks.

  Required
  Q3. a)   Identify the causes of poor health and morale in the work place and ways of making them better.   **(10 marks)**

  b)   What health problems can office rooms and equipment cause to employees and what advantages do organizations get when they heals their sick-officers?   **(10 marks)**

CASE 4

AN AWKWARD GOOD-BYE
Meeting the standards of justice when terminating an employee is difficult, since managers are as uncomfortable as anyone else when they have to deliver bad news. As a result, some organizations handle separation in ways that employees find infuriating.

When an electronics retailer cut 400 jobs, it notified the laid-off workers by sending them an e-mail message saying their position had been eliminated. Workers were told to meet with their manager that morning to discuss their severance pay. In another instance4, a salesperson in Kisumu received a text from her employer saying she was no longer needed.

Other managers don't even deliver the bad news themselves. They hire a contractor. A consulting firm that provides Human Resource services in Nairobi recently assigned one of its people to meet with 20 software engineers whose positions were being moved to Lagos. On behalf of the client, she told them about their severance pay and escorted them from the building. While conducting on emotive exercise, ethical princi9ples should prevail. In Outcome Fairness Ethical Principle, the affected staff should have a feeling that a judgment that the consequences given to the employees are just. In the Procedural Justice Principle, consistent procedures, avoidance of bias, accurate information, representation of all interests and adherence to ethical standards should prevail. In the interactional justice principle, there should be explanation of decision, respectful treatment, consideration and apathy.

Required

Q4. a) How do the examples in the case meet or fail to meet the principles of justice.
(10 marks)

b) How could the companies and managers better fulfill the principles of justice?
(5 marks)

c) As a Human Resource practitioner how would you advise on the best practice of separating staff through retrenchment. **(5 marks)**

END