

# Case Study 6:

## The Style that Confuses

### Background

Jon Neves has been an employee of New Visions hair salon for the past ten years. He began as a shampoo-and-condition employee at the age of 16 and worked his way up through the ranks. This past month, Jon was promoted to location manager and given the task of leading and motivating 25 part-time employees. Jon has graduated college with a diploma in aesthetics and hairstyling.

### Current Situation

Jon decided to hold a one-day training and team-building session for all employees. The day would consist of a series of workshops designed to build a sense of trust between employees. Most members of Jon's staff are between the ages of 23 and 35 and, considering this, he realized that the optional training day would also have to include fun activities such as games and an end-of-day party with music, food, and alcoholic beverages. Each employee who attended would receive two hours training pay and priority scheduling. The training and team-building workshops would run in two sessions in order to allow all employees an opportunity to attend. Jon decided the workshop day could run every quarter since some employees would not be able to attend the day or party because of work.

### The Problem

Jon drafted a memo to staff which was posted in the staff room and distributed in each employee's mail slot. The memo (see Exhibit A) detailed the day and its intention, as well as the philosophy behind the workshops. Jon spent a significant amount of time and money on the event including renting a ballroom at a local hotel, catering, and hiring a disc jockey. On the day of the event only three employees attended. Jon became frustrated with what he determined to be a lack of commitment to both him and to the salon and announced that the next training day would be mandatory (requiring permission from corporate head office and a budget for training wages).

## Exhibit A

To: All Staff  
From: Jon Neves  
Date: June 20, 2021  
Subject: Training and Bonding Seminar

It has come to my attention that our team lacks cohesion and the skills that will allow us to maximize our efficiency in the face of difficult economic times. I believe the best way we can address this issue is to hold a special training day designed to develop the interpersonal skills that will create a bond of trust between team members.

We are facing a major paradigm shift in the personal image industry. I believe we have to address the changes in customer expectations together in a synergistic fashion by coming together to reengineer the way we function as a team.

On Sunday, June 27, 2021, I will be holding a one-day training seminar that will include workshops on the skills we need to meet the new paradigm. The sessions will be offered in the morning as well as in the afternoon to allow for the majority of you to attend. Another training day will be held next quarter for those of you who work the entire day shift. The training sessions will be held at the Radisson on Main Street from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. and from 1:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m. The sessions will be followed by a get-together, complete with music and refreshments.

The sessions are optional, but I expect to see you all there. We need to start thinking outside the box to develop new ways to meet the challenges presented by today's economic climate.

## Activities and Discussion

1. Analyze how a lack of plain style and concise writing in the memo led to its ineffectiveness.
2. Identify phrases in the memo where the language is outdated and clichéd. How could stale language influence the effectiveness of the memo?
3. Do you find any ethical problems with the memo? Describe how the memo meets or lacks the criteria for an ethical communication.
4. Thinking in terms of style, tone, and ethics, how would this message play if it were delivered via social media (for example, a post on the company Facebook page)?
5. Revise the memo in terms of style and tone in a manner that would make it a more effective communication.