

# Case Study 9: Is Anyone Listening?

## Background

Maria Marquez has recently been promoted to manager of brand strategy for SoftLight, an aesthetics company specializing in diffused-light spray foundations and powders. The company markets seven different foundations and powders for varying skin types and shades. Maria is responsible for the overall brand strategy for both the company and the individual product sub-brands.

## Current Situation

Maria Marquez has decided to perform a brand audit of each of the products with the goal of creating a brand strategy document that outlines plans for the overall corporate brand, as well as each product. Maria has delegated the task of collecting the necessary market data from each product to her manager of corporate brand strategy, Aisha Wells. Aisha has drafted a request memo that has been delivered to the head of each product team asking for the relevant sales and market data.

## The Problem

Aisha Wells distributed the memo on March 1 and immediately received a confirmation of delivery, as well as a promise to forward the request to the appropriate managers, from the product team directors. As of April 1, Aisha has received no information from the teams and the deadline for the strategy report is fast approaching. Exhibit A presents the memo drafted by Aisha requesting the sales and market data, while Exhibit B contains the response from one team leader.

### Exhibit A

To: Product Team Directors  
From: Aisha Wells  
Date: March 1, 2021  
Subject: Market Data

As a company, we have been facing a large amount of competition from other cosmetic companies, especially those that have been in the market for longer than we have. We must develop a strategy to strengthen and protect our corporate image, as well as our product sub-brands. Our team has been mandated to develop this strategy in cooperation with you and your team.

I have been charged with collecting monthly and quarterly sales figures, the breakdown of sales through distribution channels (retail, online, etc.). I need to collect this material as quickly as possible and your cooperation is appreciated.

We need to know the sales levels in all distribution channels, as well as the breakdown of marketing budget allocated for each media.

I appreciate your help and please let me know if you require any further information.

### **Exhibit B**

To: Aisha Wells  
From: Clinton Hefer  
Date: March 2, 2021  
Subject: Market Data

Hi Aisha, I have received your memo describing your project. I will pass it on to my team. Good Luck!

Clinton

### **Activities and Discussion**

1. Is Aisha's memo a request? Why or why not.
2. How should Aisha have interpreted Clinton's response to her initial memo? Are there signs in the email that point toward the problems with Aisha's request?
3. Analyze how Maria initiated the project—are there actions she could have taken to help Aisha?
4. Are there any formal issues with Aisha's memo that may have improved its chance of success as a request?
5. Re-write Aisha's memo to be an effective request—you may add information.