



Activity – Role Play: New Truck

Background

Your team is responsible for servicing office equipment in a major city and its suburbs. The team consists of five repair people and a team leader. Each team member drives a light truck which is assigned to him or her exclusively. Everyone takes pride in his or her truck's appearance and likes to keep it in good running order. For this reason, new trucks are particularly prized by team members.

Currently, team members and their trucks are as follows:

- George - 17 years seniority; has a two-year-old Ford
- Bill - 11 years seniority; has a five-year-old Dodge
- Joan - 10 years seniority; has a four-year-old Ford
- Charlie - 5 years seniority; has a three-year-old Ford
- Mary - 3 years seniority; has a five-year-old Chev

Chris Marshall, the team leader, does not require a truck. Joan and Charlie cover the suburbs, while the rest of the team do all of their driving within the city.

The Situation

Chris has called a team meeting regarding a new truck that has been purchased for the team.



Facilitator Notes:

An Exercise in Team Decision Making

- This role play simulation is conducted as a demonstration of a high Facilitative, low Directive style of team leadership. The part of Chris Marshall can be played by the trainer or by a volunteer who has facilitative skills.
- Introduce the activity and select role players. You may wish to divide the class into teams, with one member from each team playing a role. The team can discuss the role and assist and prepare the member who does the role play. Review the Background Section. Start the simulation and allow it to continue either to a team decision or for 25 minutes.
- Lead a discussion of the experience beginning with the participants, followed by observers. Possible items:
 - a. Describe Chris' style of team leadership, including examples of Directive and Facilitative behaviours.
 - b. What effect did Chris' actions have on each team member and the team as a whole?
 - c. What process did the team employ to reach a decision? How was this process determined?
 - d. How did Chris influence the process and the team decision?
 - e. How was conflict dealt with?
 - f. What Facilitative behaviours were observed on the part of team members (other than Chris)? What effect did they have?
 - g. Assess the situational and team factors involved in selecting a leadership style in this situation.



Role Descriptions for New Truck Activity

George

You have been with the company for 17 years, six more than the next most senior person. Your current truck is a two-year-old Ford.

When a new Chevrolet truck becomes available, you think you should get it because you have seniority and you don't like your present truck. Your own car is a Chevrolet, and you prefer a Chevrolet truck such as you drove before you got a Ford.

Your Objectives: To have the team recognize that:

- a) you dislike Fords and want a Chevrolet truck, and
- b) your seniority entitles you to some privileges in assigning equipment.

Bill

You have been with the company for 11 years, second only to George (17 years).

You currently drive a five-year-old Dodge truck. Only Mary's truck is as old as yours. You feel you deserve a new truck. Your present truck is old, and since the more senior person has a fairly new truck, you should get the next one. You have taken excellent care of your present Dodge and have kept it looking like new. A person deserves to be rewarded if they treat a company truck like their own.

Your Objectives: To have the rest of the team acknowledge that:

- a) your present truck is one of the two oldest in the crew;
- b) you are one of the most senior members of the crew;
- c) you have taken excellent care of your truck and deserve to be rewarded for that.

Joan

You have ten years seniority - third highest in the crew after George (17) and Bill (11).

You currently drive a four-year-old Ford truck.

You have to do more driving than most of the other people because you work in the suburbs. You have a fairly old truck and feel you should have a new one because you do so much driving.



Your Objectives: To have the rest of the team recognize your reasons for believing that you should have the new truck.

Charlie

You have been with the company for five years and you are currently driving a three-year-old Ford truck.

You and Joan do the most driving in the crew.

The heater in your present truck is inadequate. Since Mary backed into the door of your truck, it has never been repaired to fit right. The door lets in too much cold air, and you attribute your frequent colds to this. You want a warm truck since you have a good deal of driving to do. As long as it has good tires, brakes, and it's comfortable, you don't care about its make.

Your Objective: To get a truck that is in good working order, and is warm and comfortable to drive.

Mary

You are the junior member of the team with three years on the job.

Your current truck is a five-year-old Chevrolet, one of the two oldest in the crew (Bill's truck is also a five-year-old truck).

You have the poorest truck in the crew. It is five years old and, before you got it, it had been in a bad wreck. It has never been good, and you've put up with it for three years. It's about time you got a new truck to drive, and you feel the next one should be yours. You have a good accident record. The only accident you had was when you sprung the door of Charlie's truck when he opened it as you backed out of the garage. You hope the new truck is a Ford since you prefer to drive one.

Your Objective: To get a better truck than the one you have, preferably a Ford.



Chris Marshall - Supervisor of Repair Crew

You are the supervisor of a team of repair people. Each person on the team drives a small service truck to and from their various jobs. Every so often you get a new truck to exchange for an old one, and you have the problem of deciding to which of your crew you should give the new truck. Often there are hard feelings because each person seems to feel that he or she is entitled to the new truck, so you have a tough time being fair. As a matter of fact, it usually turns out that whatever you decide, most of the crew considers it wrong. You now have to face the issue again because a new truck has just been allocated to you for assignment. The new truck is a Chevrolet.

In order to handle this problem, you have decided to put the decision up to the team themselves. You will tell them about the new truck and will put the problem in terms of what would be the fairest way to assign the truck. Don't take a position yourself, because you want to do what the crew thinks is most fair.

Your Objective: To lead the group discussion to a consensus decision, without taking a position concerning who should receive the new truck.