

CASE SCENARIOS: CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Office Politics

John has been working for the partner lawyer of the firm. Lately, he has been hearing from other partners in the firm that his supervisor has been lacking on the job. More specifically, he hears that his supervisor is lazy, late on assignments, and takes 3 hour lunches. John finds himself doing work that is beyond the scope of his internship and was told by an office mate that he was doing his supervisor's work. John is upset and feels a little disillusion. Coincidentally, that same day, his supervisor asks for a personal evaluation from John on his internship experience and workload.

Office Gossip

You have been interning over four weeks in the agency. The first couple of weeks you found yourself lured by the hospitality and the warm welcome by all employees. You were invited out to dinner numerous times and even joined a couple of people for a late snack and a few beers. Over the course of time as you continue to socialize with these individuals, you begin to hear rumors that your fellow administrative assistant is romantically involved with your supervisor. Furthermore, the following day, you notice that they leave together for lunch and that they don't return until late in the afternoon. People are laughing and asking you if you know anything about this relationship. What do you say? To further complicate things, you are approached by human resources and asked if you have seen anything suspicious for office relationships are not acceptable under office policy.

Professional Etiquette

As an intern starting at the agency, you first found yourself excited to wear nice clothes and "dress up." In fact, you went out of your way to have extra sets of pants/nice shirts or nice dresses to impress the office. Weeks later, you find an office staff glancing at you when you pass by him and smiling a little different than the first couple of weeks. Today, you wore an extra nice dress – low cut dress. You find the young man staring at you and he invites you to lunch. Over the past couple of weeks, you have developed a good working relationship with the entire office. You don't want to have him on your bad side and he is very well respected and highly looked upon by his peers. You feel uncomfortable and somewhat guilty.

Questions:

What are the main issues encountered by the interns in each scenario?

What would you do in each case?

What are some recommendations you would provide the intern?

Case Scenario 4: Sexual Harassment

--shortened and adapted form of a scenario presented by Stuart Biegel, UCLA, at a conference in March of 1997 (<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/giftfire/harassment.html>)

Lori Johnson, an employee, filed the following complaints with the Board of Directors due to hostile environment sexual harassment. She has threatened to file a lawsuit.

James, a fellow co-worker, had created a screen saver on his cubicle computer that displayed a reproduction of Rene Magritte's 1948 painting *Delusion of Grandeur*. The surrealist painting depicted an ocean scene and sky, but also included separated segments of a nude female torso on the left side of the canvas. Lori had to walk by this computer everyday on the way to her cubicle, and could not help but view the painting whenever James was not actually working there. When Lori asked James to change his screen, he laughed at her. Weeks later, James began wearing a t-shirt around the office with the expression "just do me" printed on it. When Lori indicated to him that she found it inappropriate, he started wearing it several times a week. After asking James why he would repeatedly wear the shirt, he winked at Lori and called her a "prude."

1. *Is this sexual harassment?*
2. *What constitutes as sexual harassment?*
3. *Why?*
4. *If you were Lori, what would you do?*