**Case Study 1: Communication Dilemma – Getting Credit**

Security Financial Corporation is a Fortune 500 company located in New York. It specializes in ﬁnancial analysis, stock and mutual funds, and investment banking operations. Claudia Pearson had worked her way up the corporate ladder to a position of Director of Sales Management Development, reporting directly to the Vice President of Human Resources. In this position, she was responsible for training all ﬁnancial sales advisors and sales managers. The job was demanding; typically, Claudia worked 65 to 70 hours a week and traveled to various Security Financial sales offices around the United States. She had graduated from Columbia University with a double major in English and economics. She had worked for Security Financial for 12 years, starting her career as a training manager. Eight staff members reported to Claudia, most of whom were training managers responsible for working with sales managers and ﬁnancial sales advisors.

Claudia worked closely with both the marketing director and the sales director because each had input into her programs. She met weekly with the sales director, Robert Norville, a man who had been in the ﬁnancial industry for 25 years. All of the eight regional sales man-agers reported to him. His main responsibilities were meeting the national sales force numbers and hiring and retaining sales advisors, who were vital to the business. She had less contact with Ken Peterson, the marketing director, but nevertheless he was an import-ant person for her to consult with before she designed any programs for the sales personnel. At age 35, Ken was about 15 years younger than Robert. Claudia often characterized Robert as “old school” – he had worked his way up in the business to a prominent senior job and Ken as “the young turk” – he had held several marketing jobs before joining Security Financial and was full of new ideas. Although Robert, Ken, and she were all peers, Claudia felt that Robert needed to feel like he was of a higher status than she was. When they met together, she allowed him to feel like he was in charge simply because she found that this was the best way to get along with him. She reminded herself that this wasn’t really an issue as long as he didn’t make her feel subordinate when others were around. She had tried to deal with him as an equal and it simply didn’t work as well as allowing him to feel like he was making all of the decisions. Her relationship with Ken was more collegial and equalitarian neither of them seemed particularly interested in ﬂexing their “authority muscles.”

Claudia and her team had been designing a new program that consisted of 12 courses to be delivered over a year; one course would be offered each month in every sales office. The project had been extremely time- consuming, involving many meetings to determine the content of the program and, once designed, deciding how to launch it with the sales force. This was the biggest training effort the company had ever undertaken, and Claudia was very proud of the result. Each training session had self- study sessions that were downloaded from the Internet, video clips, and classroom exercises. She met with Robert to review the schedule of training sessions and to discuss the roles her managers would play. She showed a draft of a letter that she intended to send out to all sales managers announcing the new program. A few days after her meeting with Robert, Claudia was going through her inbox of e- mails to ﬁnd a message that Robert had copied to her. To her amazement and fury, it was nearly the same letter she had drafted and shown to him two days before. The letter was written on Robert’s letterhead and signed by him. It announced the program and highlighted the 12 individual training sessions with a timetable for each office (see Appendix 7.1). Although it mentioned that Claudia’s team would be delivering the training, the letter seemed to insinuate that the effort was Robert’s. Claudia was livid and decided it was high time to confront him.

It was routine in the company that managers sent e- mails or memos out announcing only those activities that they had initiated. She thought that this had been a deliberate move on his part to take credit for something she had worked on for nearly a year or at the very least to look like somehow he had been supervising her efforts.

**The Confrontation**

Claudia decided to confront Robert the next day. She called his secretary to get on his calendar. He was free at 2 p.m. and would meet with her over a late lunch. Their conversation began cordially with small talk. Robert told her how excited he was to begin the training program and how much he appreciated her work on the project. This left an entrée for her to discuss the issue of the letter with him.

“Robert, I have to tell you that I was upset with the memo you wrote to the ﬁeld organization. As head of the training department, that memo should have come from me.” Claudia waited for him to respond.

“I thought it was important to get the news out right away. The sales organization has been waiting a long time for the program. I certainly didn’t mean any harm by it. Everyone knows that this is your program. I think you’re being a little sensitive.”

“Robert, it was important to me that the memo came from my office. In this company, when a manager is in charge of a program the news about it comes from that person. Besides you copied it to our CEO!”

“Calm down. I certainly didn’t mean to upset you. How is the pasta salad? I would have ordered it but I have to slim down. I’m afraid it’s lettuce salads for me for about the next month. I have to rush. I have another meeting at 2:30. Let’s talk after the ﬁrst program is rolled out to review the results.

”They ﬁnished their lunch in silence. Claudia left feeling angrier than ever.

**Appendix 7.1: Partial Organizational Chart for Security Financial Corporation \**

CEO

Security

Financial

**Appendix7.2 – Robert’s Email**

Dear Sales Managers and Financial Sales Advisors,

The day has ﬁnally come. We are ready to roll out the year long training program to all of you. It’s absolutely top notch and will move us closer to becoming the high performing sales organization that I know we can be. In the next few days, you will be shipped training manuals, DVD self- study guides, and videos which will all be used in the program. Your sales coordinators will make sure that each individual receives the appropriate materials before your ﬁrst training session.

We expect a signiﬁcant improvement in sales as a result of this program and I will be monitoring not only sales results by division, but will also be asking you to evaluate the program as we progress through it. A team member from the management development department will be coming to each sales office to deliver the training.

The schedule for the ﬁrst series is outlined below. We expect perfect attendance so mark your calendars now! We will be sending you the March schedule very soon. You won’t want to miss this opportunity to learn!

Divisions 1–4 Feb. 9

Divisions 5–8 Feb. 10

Divisions 9–12 Feb. 11

Divisions 13–16 Feb. 12

Divisions 17–20 Feb. 15

Best Regards,

Robert Norville

Director of Sales