You are the Regional President, Asia, for Delta Beverages, a large US-based firm headquartered in Boston. Delta is one of the world’s leaders in the beverage industry (bottled water, carbonated beverages, teas, juice beverages and sports drinks).  After having been with Delta for 10 years, you are now responsible for all of the firms’ operations in Asia, including the major markets of China, India, Korea, and Japan. Along with the rest of Delta’s regional leadership team, you live in the Boston-area and travel extensively to the subsidiaries you lead. In the two years since accepting this position, you have logged many frequent-flier miles and, on most days, greatly enjoy the challenges of leading the company’s fastest growing global region.

One of the greatest challenges you have in your role is selecting your direct reports, the Country Managers leading each of the country-level markets within your unit. Delta’s Country Managers are hands-on leaders who effectively direct all areas of the subsidiary’s operations including: supply chain, logistics, inventory, quality control, government, and customer service. Country Managers need to operate with cultural agility, having a deep understanding of the company’s culture, values, and standards of quality, safety, and ethics. At the same time, Country Managers need to, at times, adapt to the client demands and unique challenges inherent in each of their local markets.

For large markets, such as India, Delta has traditionally promoted Country Managers from within -- leaders who have experience in the Boston-based headquarters and who have experience running smaller and less challenging markets. Currently, most of your country managers are international assignees, with the exception of a few who are running smaller markets.

You understand, firsthand, what it takes to do this role well. Prior to this role, you had three international assignments all as Country Managers. Your spouse, two children, and you lived for 3 years in the UK, 2 years in Bulgaria, and, most recently, 2 years China. You recall both joys and challenges of living and working in each of your host countries. It takes a special person – and a special family – to thrive in this type of work environment.

Today you need to make one of these critical staffing decisions. Shortly, you are scheduled for a distance communication meeting with the Vice President of Human Resources for International Operations, Al Uccello and other members of your leadership team who are traveling. The meeting is to select someone for the position of Country Manager, India. The job will be not far from New Delhi in the state of Haryana. This position became available a few years ahead of schedule when immediate concerns about government relations and quality control forced you to assign your strongest country leader, Canadian Xiao Zhang, the current country manager for India, to China – effective immediately.

The meeting today is important. India is among the largest and most important markets in your unit. You know that selecting the best country manager for India is critical.