

## **A ‘toxic’ dilemma or implied promotion: Case of the HVMS Inc., leadership**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Making ethical decisions continue to be a struggle for many individuals within the business sector. Numerous individuals and companies have had their goodwill eroded, and reputations permanently tarnished because they have chosen to make decisions that run counter to established and expected ethical norms. The drive to achieve personal and professional success, along with monetary rewards, have arguably led to amoral and immoral decision making. These poor decisions have ended careers and destroyed/tarnished once revered companies, such as Arthur Anderson, Enron, Monsanto, Purdue Pharma, and Mylan – makers of EpiPen. Examples of unethical behaviors such as those displayed by employees at Wells Fargo, who created fictitious accounts to meet performance goals, reflect the overemphasis on profits over ethics. Many students graduate steeped in student loan debt and a gazelle intent to climb the corporate ladder of success at all costs. Some students have a fervent belief that they will not be caught making amoral or immoral decisions. This case is presented as a real-to-life scenario that many students may face at one point or another in their careers. Students’ responses to the questions posed are instructive as to what curricular measures/changes business faculty need to make in preparing students as they navigate the opportunities and ethical pitfalls emanating from their choices.

Keywords: case study, dilemma, leadership, altruism, egoism, utilitarianism

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## INTRODUCTION

In this case, a dilemma is posed to students for them to use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to evaluate. In the world of business, there are always situations that require making a personal and or professional judgment. Such judgement often hinges on moral, ethical, and legal values. Many times, students and young business professionals are faced with challenges and the need to balance personal and professional values with climbing the corporate ladder at a fast pace. It is incumbent on business faculty to provide students with real-world scenarios and cases that stretched their thinking and require students to confront situations in a non-threatening learning environment. Therefore, using case studies is appropriate for student learning.

Using the case method when teaching in the business field, provide students with a compelling and real-to-life experience. According to The Case Center (2020), the “case method combines the power of storytelling with critical discussion, shared experiences, and rigorous academic practice and theory” (p.1). Hence, students have to be critical thinkers, which is in keeping with Bloom’s taxonomy levels of higher-order thinking as well as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Assurance of Learning Standard 9. Case studies offer the opportunity to challenge students’ values, attitudes as well as their most fundamental beliefs, assertions, and theories when placed in the situation presented in the case. Students have to interpret, create, justify, and defend their initial thinking about the given case—hence they are challenged to think differently in a cooperative learning environment. During discussions, students will be exposed to a diversity of opinions. Students will have to juxtaposition their views with new ideas, contradicting concepts, and even different perspectives that will emerge from their peers and instructors concerning the case (The Case Center, 2020).

All names, individual and corporate (i.e., High Value Materials & Services (HVMS), Jake Johnson, Margaret Hinds, Sharon Brown-Smith) are pseudonyms and do not reflect any likeness to any known corporate/individuals. These names are used as a measure to create an authentic and real-life case experience for students.

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

High Value Materials & Services (HVMS) Incorporated is a growing small business located in the mid-south of the United States. The company started as a family business a little over 50 years ago and has become one of the major producers of PVC plastic pipes and Styrofoam containers in the United States. Currently, HVMS has a workforce of 567 employees, and is divided into six functional units:

- Marketing and Sales
- Finance and Accounting
- Talent Management /Human Resources
- Customer Experience Management
- Manufacturing, Production, and Distribution
- Research and Development

The company’s leadership structure still reflects a flat organization, and as such, there is significant cross-functional and interpersonal communication among members of the HVMS

team. Because of the flat organizational structure, the working environment at HVMS provides employees with a high level of interpersonal communication, autonomy, and that has led to increased productivity and the embodiment of a highly motivated workforce. Even though the company has grown significantly from its humble beginnings as a small five-person family business, for the most part, HVMS still embodies a clan culture environment, more akin to a small “mom and pop” business. Subordinates still view leadership as “respected parental figures.” As such, the work environment is professional, but very easy going and embodies a high level of trust and respect for leadership by lower-level employees.

## THE CASE/SITUATION

Jake Johnson is the newly appointed Vice President (VP) in charge of the manufacturing, production, and distribution unit at HVMS. Jake has worked for the company for twenty-five years. Over the quarter of a century working at HVMS, Jake has moved from being a member of the PVC and Styrofoam production team, team lead, production supervisor, senior plant manager – distribution, to his current role as VP of the Manufacturing, Production and Distribution unit. Jake has been in the VP position for only six months, and even though he has been with HVMS for a long time, he is still insecure about his new position. Jake is especially vulnerable because he has no formal education credentials like his counterparts heading the other functional units. His functional area is the “bread and butter” of the HVMS business, and he feels under pressure to meet and exceed the lofty goals he has been set by his younger boss, Margaret Hinds, who has an Ivy League education and is eager to prove herself.

Sharon Brown-Smith has been a full-time employee at HVMS for 3 ½ years, as well as a student at AMC State University. During that time, she has completed her Bachelor of Science in Logistics with a double minor in Organizational Leadership and Finance. Sharon who graduated at the top of her class and who has a student loan debt of over \$100,000 is optimistic that based on her experience, new academic credentials, excellent work ethic and willingness to go the extra mile that she will be promoted to at least a team lead at HVMS. Sharon is typically the first person on her team to be at work and the last one to leave. Often, she has been commended by her direct supervisor as well as Jake, for her dedication to the mission of HVMS, “transforming the world through innovative and environmentally friendly products.”

Friday evening at around 7:00 PM, as is typical, Sharon was at work. All her teammates or, for that matter, all employees, except for a few members of the leadership team, had already left for the day. Sharon glimpsed Jake from the corner of her eye and slowed her pace so she would be able to chat a little with him. Sharon figured that if she wanted to get into management, she needed to have a good relationship with Jake. He was the VP in charge of her area of manufacturing, production, and distribution. Jake realized that Sharon had purposely slowed her walk to talk with him. Still, he was too preoccupied with a major issue that just cropped up, the breakdown of the processing unit that allowed HVMS to treat the effluent from its plant so that it is safe to be released into the environment.

Sharon saw that Jake seemed preoccupied and somewhat troubled. Still, she called out to him with the hope of generating small talk and making a subliminal impression that she was here working late, an indication she hoped would reflect her willingness to be part of the leadership team. Jake, recognizing that Sharon was trying to get his attention, decided to stop and briefly talk with Sharon. Jake commended Sharon for her work ethic and indicated to her that members

of the leadership team are very pleased with her dedication and willingness to go the extra mile on the job.

Jake told Sharon that a few members of the leadership team, including him, believe that she is ready to move into a management position. Jake also indicated that company leadership was at the final stages of deciding if HVMS will promote Sharon to the newly created manufacturing, production, and distribution senior manager position, or recruit from outside. Jake indicated to Sharon that if she is promoted into the post, she would be the first female senior manager at HVMS. Jake advised Sharon that if she is selected for the position, the announcement will be made in the next two weeks. Jake outlined to Sharon that if she is chosen for promotion, she will receive the following:

- Increase in base salary from \$38,000 to \$98,000 per year
- Housing or mortgage allowance of a maximum of \$300,000 paid annually in equal installments over five years
- Fully paid for and maintained company vehicle, up to a maximum value of \$90,000, and the ability to keep the vehicle for a nominal amount of \$5000 after three years or 36,000 miles of use.
- A new iPhone 11 Pro and bill paid up to a maximum of \$350 monthly with an option to upgrade every two years
- A performance bonus of up to 30% of base salary, contingent on established performance evaluation measures
- Employee stock option in HVMS at 35% below market price

Hearing all these benefits made Sharon's head spin with anticipation and excitement. Jake also shared with Sharon the issue with the processing unit and the impact, if not resolved, it would have on HVMS' operations, likely employee layoffs, and possible profitability. After sharing the information about the new management position and just before leaving to consult with the other members of the leadership team regarding the issue with the waste management processing unit, Jake once again commended Sharon on being such a dedicated employee and "definitely management material."

Jake then asked Sharon if she would be okay with driving home the truck that was temporarily used to store the untreated post-production waste that would typically be processed by the out of commission unit and returning the truck empty the next morning. Jake indicated to Sharon that if she is interested, the keys are in the truck parked outside the entrance of the main loading dock. Jake intimated to Sharon that getting rid of the "semi-toxic" waste that was temporarily stored in the truck would help in a significant way in reducing the severity of the downed processing plant issue and likely save HVMS from temporarily shutting down one of its primary production facilities. Jake also shared with Sharon that there are several lakes and woodlands along the route that she travels home.



## TEACHING NOTES

### Case Synopsis

- a) Name of the organization—High Value Materials & Services (HVMS) Incorporation
- b) Industry—Manufacturing
- c) The period of the case study—2 weeks
- d) Details of the protagonist—High-energy, ambitious and passionate female worker, desiring a promotion
- e) The challenge facing the protagonist—waiting to be promoted based on work ethic or taking the chance of promotion by making an unethical decision
- f) Sub-field—The case is designed to teach students in Business Communication; Marketing and Sales; Finance and Accounting; Talent Management /Human Resources; Customer Experience Management; Manufacturing, Production, and Distribution; Supply Chain Management, Research and Development sectors

### Target Audience

- Possible courses where the case can be used: Upper-level undergraduate and graduate classes in all areas of business
- Level of difficulty: Medium to High level of difficulty (based on undergraduate or graduate offering)
- Specific pre-requisites: Undergraduates – None; Graduates - students that have completed course offerings such as, principles of management, organizational behavior, business communication, managerial communication and leadership at the undergraduate level

### Standard Linkages (AACSB)

This case is in keeping with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Assurance of Learning Standards, in that it can be used to help satisfy the requirements for Standard 9, across the business curriculum, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Standard 9: Curriculum content is appropriate to general expectations for the degree program type and learning goals.

### AACSB Undergraduate Bachelor's Degree Programs

#### *General Skill Areas*

- Written and oral communication (able to communicate effectively orally and in writing)
- Ethical understanding and reasoning (able to identify ethical issues and address the problems in a socially responsible manner)
- Analytical thinking (able to analyze and frame problems)
- Interpersonal relations and teamwork (able to work effectively with others and in team environments)

- Diverse and multicultural work environments (able to work effectively in different situations)
- Reflective thinking (able to understand oneself in the context of society)
- Application of knowledge (able to translate knowledge of business into practice)
- Integration of real-world business experiences

### ***General Business Knowledge Areas***

- Economic, political, regulatory, legal, technological, and social contexts of organizations in a global society
- Social responsibility, including sustainability, diversity and ethical behavior and approaches to management
- Financial theories, analysis, reporting, and markets
- Systems and processes in organizations, including planning and design, production/operations, supply chains, marketing, and distribution
- Group and individual behaviors in organizations and society
- Other specified areas of study related to concentrations, majors, or emphasis areas

### **AACSB Graduate Master's Degree Program**

In addition to the general skill and knowledge areas, general business master's degree programs would normally include learning experiences in the following areas:

- Leading in organizational situations
- Managing in a diverse global context
- Thinking creatively
- Making sound decisions and exercising good judgment under uncertainty
- Integrating knowledge across fields

### **Learning objectives based on blooms' taxonomy and AACSB standard 9**

1. Students will list the four primary employees in the case (Remember—LOT)
2. Students will describe two ethical dilemmas that Sharon faces (Understand—LOT) – Standard 9
3. Students will interpret Jake's statement that "...few members of the leadership team, including he, believe that she is ready to move into a management position." (Apply—LOT) – Standard 9
4. Students will apply three ethical leadership theories to this case to better understand the concepts of ethics in leadership (Apply—HOT) – Standard 9
5. Students will compare and contrast the subordinate and insubordinate positions and players in the case on a "T" chart (Analyze—HOT) – Standard 9
6. Students will analyze the case in small groups (Analyze—HOT) – Standard 9
7. Students will defend both Sharon and Jake's decision in solving the problem for the business (Evaluate—HOT) – Standard 9
8. Students will formulate four effective solutions for HVMS to solve the problem of disposing of the "semi-toxic" waste (Create—HOT) – Standard 9

9. Students will discuss the role of ethical leadership in managerial decision making (Evaluate—HOT) – Standard 9
10. Students will develop possible options for both Jake and Sharon to address the “semi-toxic” waste issue and ethical dilemma HVMS(Create—HOT) – Standard 9

### Case questions and potential answers

The responses to the case questions are written from the perspective of a typical student and require the instructor to use the answers as a starting point for discussion of ethical dilemmas and options available to students when/if they are faced with similar situations.

1. Should Sharon accept Jake’s suggestion to get rid of the post-production waste? Why or why not?

Yes, Sharon should accept Jake’s implicit suggestion to get rid of the post-production waste because Jake implied that she would get the desired promotion.

This is the response that many students may provide. Ask students to justify their answers and use this as an opportunity to discuss ethical dilemmas. Discuss with students the context for analyzing ethical issues based on expressed behaviors such as behavior that is illegal but unethical, behavior that is illegal but ethical, behavior that is legal but unethical, and behavior that is both legal and ethical (Lehman & Dufrene, 2017).

No, Sharon should not accept Jake’s implicit suggestion to get rid of the post-production waste. This could be an ethical trap that Jake has set up to test her moral compass if she takes on the task of dumping the waste illegally in the lake. Jake would now wonder if Sharon has been doing other immoral or illegal stuff in the business. One should not sacrifice morality for a promotion. Discuss the consequences of ethical choices, utilizing examples from various corporate scandal (Wells Fargo, Monsanto, Enron, etc.)

2. If you are Sharon, how would you respond to Jake’s suggestion to “get rid” of the post-production waste?

The following is an example of the dialogue that Sharon should have with Jake after his proposal.

Jake, could you please clarify your suggestion regarding how to “get rid” of the post-production waste? Let me repeat what I heard to make sure that I understand what you are saying. You are asking me to drive the truck having the post-production waste home tonight. On my way home, I should “get rid” of the waste in any of the lakes along the way. Then I should return the truck tomorrow morning. After I get rid of the waste, I will be promoted with these conditions:

- Be the first female to be in that position
- Increase in base salary of \$60,000 per year
- Increased housing or mortgage allowance over five years

- Fully paid for and maintained company vehicle
- A new iPhone 11 Pro and bill paid with an option to upgrade every two years
- A performance bonus of up to 30% of base salary

I am glad I am hearing what you are saying. So, I am in! I will get rid of the waste based on the above contingencies. Conversely, Sharon should ask Jake to put his request in writing. The most appropriate response to Jake's request would be "No," but being aware that your answer may negatively impact your career in the company.

3. Is there a suggested quid pro quo by Jake, if Sharon does what he suggests? Explain!

Oh yes! Based on Jake's asking, there is an implied offer which is a quid pro quo.

QUID = Get rid of the waste in a lake of your choice

PRO QUO = To be promoted

Based on the case: "Jake told Sharon that a few members of the leadership team, including him, believe that she is ready to move into a management position and that they were at the final stages of deciding if HVMS will promote Sharon to the newly created manufacturing, production, and distribution senior manager position..."

4. Should Sharon's decision to accept Jake's offer be guided by her desire to be promoted into a management position that would realize her personal and professional aspirations?

No, Sharon has professional ambitions for promotion, but it should not be at the expense of her moral and ethical values. She needs to think about the safety of the community that supports the HVMS company. If the toxic waste is deposited in the lakes, who will be responsible for the health of the kids and community when these toxins leach into the soil and potentially get in the water table? Will the community end up being 'poisoned' like the people in Flint, MI? Sharon and HR at HVMS need to think through the safety needs of the community.

5. Is Jake testing Sharon's ethical principles? Explain!

Yes, Jake may be testing Sharon's ethical principles. The company wants to get rid of her, along with the "semi-toxic waste," and Jake is setting up a trap. So, if Sharon is willing to endanger the lives of the community by dumping the waste in a lake, then she is no longer a good fit for this business. This business in the past has espoused strong family and community values. Why didn't Jake drive the truck himself and get rid of the waste is a critical question that Sharon should ask herself as she contemplates Jake's offer.

No, Jake is not testing Sharon's ethical principles. Jake has no ethical principles. Jake is willing to sacrifice HVMS's family and community values for his benefit. Jake wants a "fall guy," and Sharon seems to be the weakest link and easily manipulated to do an unethical and illegal act for her benefit.



## 6. What are the ethical dilemmas presented in this case?

Ethical dilemmas include:

- a) Illegally dumping toxic waste in the lake for an implied promotion
- b) Seeking a quid pro quo
- c) Trust and Respect vs. Ethics
- d) Personal advancement vs. ethical conduct
- e) Fear of failure vs. amoral or immoral behavior
- f) Jake's willingness to exploit a female employee because she is vulnerable vs. keeping his newly appointed position – Self-interest vs. Interest of others

## 7. What ethical theory(s) would help to explain the issues presented in this case?

The ethical theories that would best explain this case are:

- a) Ethical egoism – My interest over everyone else
- b) Utilitarianism – The highest good for the highest numbers
- c) Altruism – Focus on the best interests of others

## 8. What are the legal implications?

The legal implications include:

- a) Jake implying a promotion to Sharon based on the completion of an unethical and illegal action
- b) Sharon dumps the waste and gets caught by the Sherriff
- c) Sharon becoming a whistleblower and gets fired or sidelined because of her action
- d) Sharon dumps the waste and does not get caught, but kids and the elderly are experience illnesses traced back to HVMS company – company sued for environmental crimes and/or bribery
- e) Other workers in the company file a lawsuit because Sharon was promoted not based on ability but favors, in their view

## 9. What are the ethical implications?

Ethical implications include:

- a) Jake loses face and respect in the company because this deal with Sharon was found out
- b) Sharon is seen as an immoral human being who is selfish, thinking only about her promotion
- c) HVMS is highlighted in the local paper as an unsafe company who seeks profit over the protection of the community
- d) Company's brand is tarnished leading to loss of customers and revenue

**Teaching methodologies applicable to the HVMS case**

- Inquiry-based instruction
- Graphic organizers
- Cooperative learning and discussions

## **Inquiry-Based Instruction**

When we think about inquiry-based instruction, we fully envision getting students involved in the learning process. This will lead to students having a much deeper understanding of the content. Having a deeper understanding of the material leads to the ability to apply concepts in new situations (Cox, 2019). According to Bloom, this is a higher order of thinking. For our students to be able to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they need to think for themselves, solve problems, be able to answer complex questions and to create (develop) solutions for societal issues (Lehman, Dufrene, 2017).

## **Graphic Organizers**

In the teaching-learning environment, graphic organizers are tools to help students brainstorm and organize their thoughts and ideas in a visual presentation. Therefore, graphic organizers help students organize information in a manner that is visual and easier for them to comprehend Cox (2019). Graphic organizers can be used in a variety of ways. In this case, the graphic organizer is used to breakdown the case and to compare and contrast leadership styles as it relates to objective #5. The most popular organizers are the Venn diagram, concept map, KWL (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learn) chart, and T Chart. In this case, students will complete a T-Chart.

## **Cooperative Learning and Discussions**

Cooperative learning allows students to work with others and see different points of view. In this case, cooperative learning groups are used for students to learn more effectively when working together rather than apart (Cox, 2019). Research has shown that collaborative learning is known to improve self-confidence in students. Students are exposed to and are required to use many skills throughout this strategy: communication, problem-solving skills, cognition, negotiation, and critical thinking (Lehman, Dufrene, 2017). All these skills are essential for learning success and to satisfy the accreditation standards.

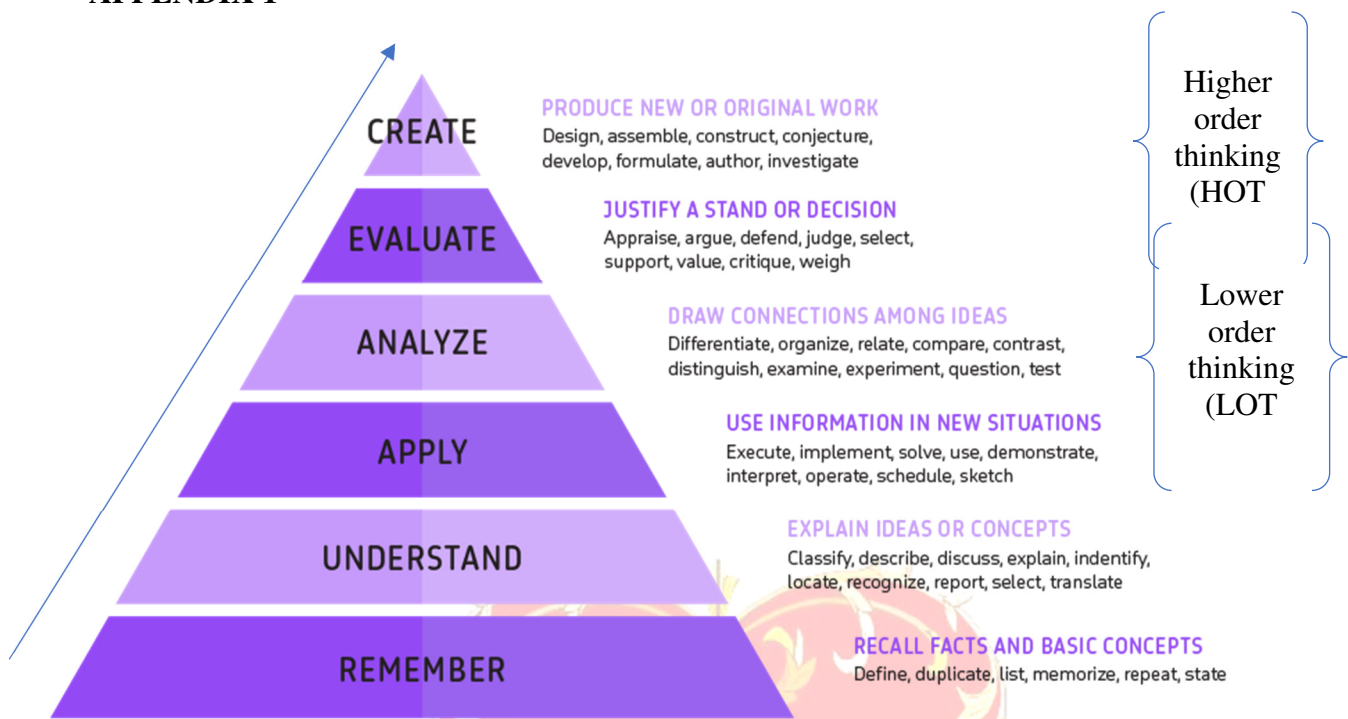
## **Suggested case assessment rubric**

The purpose of the rubric is to grade individual students' responses to case questions. Rubric adapted from Westfield State University Case Rubric (2018).

**SUPPORTING MATERIAL AND REFERENCES**

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APPENDIX 1



**FIGURE 1: Bloom’s Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives has six levels**

As seen in Figure 1, Bloom’s Taxonomy of behavioral objectives has six levels. The lowest level, remember, is at the base of the triangle. From the bottom up, the levels require a greater depth of understanding. The first three levels (remember, understand, and apply) are classified as lower-order thinking (LOT). The fourth through sixth levels are classified as higher-order thinking (HOT). Learners need to be able to recall basic facts and concepts before they can explain, use information in new situations, make connections, justify decisions, and finally produce new of original work (Lehman, Dufrene, 2017; Learning Tribes, 2019).



### APPENDIX 2 - TABLE 1: Teaching this Case in 90 Minutes: Using the Inductive Approach

Steps		Approximate Time (Mins)
1	Review the teleological theories of ethical leadership (egoism, altruism, and utilitarianisms)	6
2	Divide students in groups of 3	2
3	Distribute the case to each group members	1
4	Ask students to read independently, highlight, and note any significant issues or situations they think are critical to evaluating the case. Students can place a question mark in areas they have questions	5
5	Students will discuss the case in their small groups, and as a group, the scribe lists three questions generated in their small groups	10
6	As a whole group, each small group states the questions created. Questions are written down on a flip chart or, if done in an online environment, shared using Google Docs or on a virtual whiteboard. Questions can be open-ended, closed-ended and can be controversial	12
7	Overlapping questions will be consolidated	5
8	As a whole group, discuss the questions generated	12
9	Students are given the case questions to address in their small groups	12
10	Each group is assigned a flip chart and markers	1
11	Each group identifies a scribe who writes down the answers on the flip chart	5
12	An open discussion will follow answering the questions posed	12
13	Concluding remarks include reinforcing the learning objectives and revealing the diversity of thoughts to the questions posed	7
TOTAL		90 mins

Note: These teaching suggestions may be applied to an online asynchronous/synchronous classroom, utilizing breakout rooms, wikis (Google Docs) for small group discussions.

#### Objectives, possible activities, and assignments

Learning Objective # 1: Students will list the four primary employees in the case (Remember—LOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In small groups, students will list the critical players in the case, on a flip chart

Learning Objective # 2: Students will describe two ethical dilemmas that Sharon faces (Understand—LOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In small groups, students will describe two ethical dilemmas that Sharon faces in their small group discussion. These dilemmas will also be written on a flip chart

Learning Objective # 3: Students will read, discuss then interpret Jake’s statement to Sharon that “... a few members of the leadership team, including him, believe that she is ready to move into a management position.” (Apply—LOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: Students will be given 4 minutes to interpret Jake’s statement. No interpretation should be discounted in the discussion.

Learning Objective # 4: Students should apply ethical leadership theory to this case to better understand the concepts of ethics in leadership (Apply—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In their small groups, students will apply ethical leadership theory that is most applicable to the case. Students will suggest, then negotiate the theory that BEST fits the case. Each group will have one agreed-upon ethical theory.

Learning Objective # 5: Students will compare and contrast the subordinate and insubordinate positions and players in the case on a “T” cart (Analyze—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In their small groups, students will compare and contrast both the subordinate and insubordinate positions on a “T” Chart they will produce on the flip chart

Learning Objective # 6: Students will analyze the case in small groups (Analyze—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In small groups, analyze or pull the case apart

Learning Objective # 7: Students will defend both Sharon and Jake’s decision in solving the problem for the business (Evaluate—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: Each small group will be sub-divided into two smaller groups. Each sub-group will defend either Sharon or Jake’s decision to get rid of the waste product. Groups will report their defense to the class.

Learning Objective # 8: Students will formulate four effective solutions for HVMS to solve the problem of disposing of the “semi-toxic” waste (Create—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In small groups, students will formulate or create four effective solutions for solving the problem at HVMS. These solutions will be written on a flip chart

Learning Objective # 9: Students will Discuss the role of ethical leadership in managerial decision making (Evaluate—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In small groups, students will discuss the role of ethical leadership, noting implications for current and future company leadership. Ideas are used to develop concept maps to show the interrelations and formulate or create effective solutions for solving the ethical leadership issue at HVMS.

Learning Objective # 10: Students will Develop possible options for both Jake and Sharon to address the “semi-toxic” waste issue and ethical dilemma HVMS(Create—HOT) – Standard 9

Activity/assignment: In small groups, students will brainstorm ideas to develop possible options that may be used to assist individuals that face questionable ethical decisions/actions similar to Jake and Sharon.

**APPENDIX 3 - TABLE 2: Assessment Rubric**

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	Strong	Average	Weak	Unacceptable
Identification of Main Issues/ Problems	20 Points Identifies and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the main case issues/problems	15 Points Identifies and demonstrates an accomplished understanding of most of the case issues/problems.	8 Points Identifies and demonstrates an adequate understanding of some of the case issues/problems	0 Points No credit! Student's work does not reflect understanding of the main case issues/problems
Analysis and Evaluation of Issues/ Problems	25 Points Presents an insightful and thorough analysis of all identified case issues/problems	18 Points Presents a thorough analysis of most of the case issues/problems identified	6 Points Presents a superficial or incomplete analysis of some of the identified issues	0 Points Student's work does not reflect the fundamental analysis and evaluation of case issues/problems
Recommendations on Effective Solutions/ Strategies	20 Points Supports diagnosis and opinions with firm arguments and well-documented balanced evidence.	15 Points Supports diagnosis and opinions with limited reasoning and evidence; presents a somewhat one-sided argument.	8 Points Little or no action suggested and/or inappropriate solutions proposed to the issues in the case study.	0 Points No credit! Student's work does not reflect clear or effective recommendations solutions, or strategies.
Links to Course Readings and Additional Research	20 Points Makes powerful and appropriate connections between the issues/problems, readings, and documents supported with relevant research	15 Points Makes vague connections between the issues/problems, readings with limited research.	8 Points Makes little connections between the issues/problems, readings with incomplete research and documentation.	0 Points No credit! Student's work does not link to course readings or any additional research.
Writing Mechanics and Formatting Guidelines	15 Points Demonstrates clarity; formatting is appropriate, and writing is free of grammar and spelling errors.	10 Points Clear presentation of ideas; few grammatical or spelling errors, 1-5	5 Points Unfocused, rambling; contains multiple grammatical and spelling errors; more than 5.	0 Points No credit! Work does not reflect basic writing mechanics and formatting guidelines.