



Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture

Case Study: A Question About the Design

As part of the WTP Project's efforts to continue to build a strong Nuclear Safety and Quality Culture (NSQC), case studies have been developed for use in staff meetings. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to read the situation, and then lead their work group in discussion, using the questions provided to engage employees. The purpose is to enable all WTP employees to recognize and put into practice the NSQC focus areas and attributes.

It is important to note that not all possible options are included.

Situation

Lindsey is a senior engineer on the WTP Project, and she has been an engineer on the Hanford Site for more than 30 years. Today, Brian, a junior engineer in her work group, approaches Lindsey and respectfully questions what he feels might be a question about one of her designs. Lindsey disagrees that there is an issue.

Discussion Question: Options

1. What are Lindsey's options in this situation?
 - *Lindsey could respectfully listen to Brian's concern, but ignore it. She is far more experienced and knowledgeable than he is. (Negative)*
 - *Lindsey could tell Brian that the design is fine and not to worry about it. (Negative)*
 - *Lindsey could respectfully listen to Brian's concern, investigate the issue and follow-up with him regarding the outcome. (Positive)*

Lindsey's Decision

Lindsey feels a little defensive but chooses to listen to Brian. Knowing that she feels defensive, she takes extra care to be respectful in the process, being mindful of her body language and tone of voice.

After hearing him out, she works with her supervisor and a few additional senior engineers to investigate the issue. She then follows up with Brian regarding the outcome and thanks him for raising the issue.



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Discussion Questions: Contributing to a Strong NSQC

1. In making this decision, what NSQC focus areas and attributes have Lindsey employed?

Lindsey has employed the teamwork and mutual respect attribute, which is part of employee engagement. She is also fostering a questioning attitude, which is part of organizational learning.

2. How do Lindsey's actions contribute to a strong NSQC? How do Brian's?

Lindsey is treating Brian with respect, even though she initially feels defensive. She makes sure that she fosters Brian's questioning attitude by listening to his concern, following up and thanking him for raising his concern.

Brian exercised a questioning attitude, and he communicated with Lindsey respectfully and directly when he identified the issue. However, even if Brian had not been respectful, Lindsey is still responsible for fostering his questioning attitude.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. What might be some negative outcomes associated with the other options?
2. What are some other ways we can demonstrate teamwork and mutual respect on the WTP Project?

More Information

For more information about the NSQC focus areas and attributes, including how you can demonstrate it on the WTP Project, see <http://wtp.becweb.ibehtel.com/Wtp/PROJECT/NSQC/topics.asp>.