CASE STUDY 6-4

Minimizing Biases in Performance Evaluation at Expert Engineering, Inc.

Under various engineer titles, veteran engineer Demetri worked for Expert Engineering, Inc., for almost 15 years. The firm's performance evaluation history is both unique and long. He has recently been promoted to the position of Principal at the engineering firm. All principals are involved in evaluating engineers because the founders of the firm believed in multiple source evaluation and feedback to prevent favoritism and promote a merit-based culture. At the same time, the firm has a long history of using quality performance appraisal forms and review meetings to better ensure accurate performance evaluations. Several months ago, however, the firm initiated a big hiring initiative of a dozen new engineers, nine of whom turned out to be graduates from Purdue

University, which is the same university from which Demetri graduated. Indeed, Demetri was active in moving forward the hiring initiative. There is tension and discontent among the other principals, who fear that a time of unchecked favoritism, biased performance ratings, and unfair promotion decisions is on the rise.

1. Provide a detailed discussion of the intentional and unintentional rating distortion factors that may come into play in this situation.
2. Evaluate the kinds of training programs that could minimize the factors you have described. What do you recommend and why? ■

End Notes

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