
Case Study:

Larry, a high school kid looking for a summer job, was hired as a cook at a nearby restaurant. Larry had no experience working in kitchens, but the supervisor who hired him, explained that it wasn't necessary, because they would train him. On Larry's first day, he was paired with a Senior Line Cook by the name of Tyler. Tyler wasn't especially thrilled with the idea of having to train a new guy on the busiest night of the week, and expressed his concerns to the manager. "You're our most senior employee, so that makes you the most qualified person to do the training." A frustrated Tyler didn't say much after that – and aside from giving Larry a nod of acknowledgement, his only words to him were "watch, and stay out of my way." By the time the main dinner rush hit, the entire kitchen line was bustling with activity and Tyler was doing his best to call orders, time out bills, and cook all at the same time. As more and more orders came in, the stress level in the kitchen had increased dramatically. It was at this point Tyler turned to Larry and shouted, "I need you to run to the fridge and get me more hamburger meat!" Afraid to ask any questions, Larry quickly turned to look for the fridge, and as instructed, "ran" through the kitchen line to get more meat. A cook, unaware that Larry was coming through, turned to put up a dish, and collided with Larry. He never heard him coming.

1. Identify and list all the things that went wrong on Larry's first day.
2. When selecting an employee to do training, why seniority factor is important?
3. If an employee is good at their job, does that automatically make them a good trainer, and why?
4. As a group, come up with 5 top character traits you would look for in a qualified trainer.
5. Do you think it is an example of effective communication? Justify your answer?
6. What is the KEY message your group has learned from this case study?

Answers:

1. Answer: paired with the wrong person, placed in the busiest work station, scheduled on the busiest night so the trainer had no time to teach, no safety briefing, was not told about communication in the kitchen, Larry was given the instruction to run, so he did.

2 Answer: Often seniority will be your starting point as they are the ones that usually have the most knowledge to share, but this alone should not determine your decision. A trainer should be an employee with experience, but they should also “want to share that experience,” and know how to communicate it. Not all senior employees are open to that idea.

3 Answer: Not necessarily, there are many workers who are good at what they do but they don't possess the proper communication skills to deliver the proper training.

4 Answer: Communication skills, experience, engaging, creative, knowledgeable, patient, and fun

5 Answer: Many factors, such as who will train, the best shift to train, business levels, the trainee's past work experience, age, should all be considered when organizing a training plan.