Individual Experience Project

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An interesting interpersonal interaction that happened to me during the course of this course occurred when I was assisting a friend of mine in dealing with a difficult situation at work. My friend is a “field service representative” for a large medical testing device company. He is part of the customer support team, specifically the clinical diagnostic division. He travels to hospitals and labs nationwide to install new machines and perform preventative maintenance and repair work. Communication with management to schedule visits and procure supplies, engagement with hospital staff and lab technicians and participation in online training sessions are integral facets of a typical day. The machines he mainly works on take blood samples, mix them with chemicals and run a diagnostic panel. The results will show if the patient tests positive or negative for diabetes, cancer, etc. The calibration of these machines is very delicate and must be handled with care by the engineer and the staff. Given the constant evolution of instrumentation, continuous learning is pivotal. A broken machine would mean a halt of all lab testing and results.

A recent scenario unfolded wherein newly onboarded staff at a customer site caused damage by improperly utilizing the machinery, requiring multiple visits by my friend and a secondary engineer. The conflict stemmed from inadequate familiarity with delicate equipment, especially blood testing machines that demand meticulous calibration for accurate analysis. An erroneous diagnosis carries severe consequences, posing liabilities for the company and patient welfare.

Navigating the delicate task of informing customers about their role in an issue proves challenging. Striking a balance between understanding and prevention is crucial. Root-Cause Analysis highlighted insufficient training for the new staff, resulting in instrument damage requiring repeated engineer interventions.

I worked with my friend to develop a solution to communicate these issues to the lab using concepts learned in this class, such as redefining leadership roles, engaging management in

leadership awareness, and implementing comprehensive training to forestall similar incidents. Improving the lab staff's confidence and self-esteem was critical to resolving this situation.

The resolution strategy involved hands-on retraining sessions for staff, focusing on optimal machine practices to minimize maintenance needs and downtime. Timely result delivery warrants ongoing staff training. In cases where multiple staff members require training, engaging an official trainer boosts their confidence and enhances workplace performance.

Post-training, staff exhibited confidence and proficiency in correctly operating the machines, bolstering their qualifications for routine instrument handling.

Interpersonal skills honed through education and professional experience play a role in issue identification, root-cause resolution, and fostering constructive dialogue. Managing client and peer expectations while upholding ethical and professional standards remains crucial in conflict management, steering towards collective goals while adhering to industry requirements.

This work will inoculate the lab against legal liabilities for the company, the lab, and the staff. This could cause severe reputation damage.