When No Good Deed Goes Unpunished:
The Case of the Misprinted Phone Number

Diane Bandow
Troy University

Tish Matuszek
Troy University Montgomery

Michael Anderson
Troy University

Mark volunteered to help with the community arts festival, because he was supporting the not-for-profit organization as he had in the past. However, he did not know his good intentions as a volunteer would cost him his job as an assistant manager at a retail store. The retail store's phone number was printed in the festival advertising in error and ticket requests overloaded the phone lines, causing loss of business and annoying the store manager. As a result, Mark was seen as the cause of the problems and terminated. The Board of Directors did not respond to his request for an investigation, leaving Mark without a job and wondering what happened to cause such an unhappy experience when he had such good intentions.

Keywords: leadership, culture, ethical dilemma, human resources

CASE

Mark, the Volunteer

Mark is an employee of a small community drugstore and has volunteered for different assignments with nonprofit agencies. One of the assignments he thinks that he will enjoy the most is working as a member of the core committee which organizes and runs the yearly community festival for the neighborhood. Because of his experience with community events, Mark has been placed in charge of logistics coordination, planning, security, and public safety. While this appears to be an extensive workload, Mark has a great deal of previous experience and understands the tasks that need to be completed. Because the planning for the festival started a year in advance, he knows that as the festival grows closer there will be additional volunteers to assist him, so he will not be individually responsible for each one of these areas; for now, the workload is sufficient for one person.

The Community Festival

The community festival is a nonprofit organization that has a tax exempt status as well as a history of over 20 years. The organization and the event are run by a board of directors and a small, permanent staff composed of no more than five employees at any given time. The goal of the festival is to promote local

arts and crafts and to support local artists by providing a venue through which they can sell their work, advertise their work, and develop and expand their customer base. Because the festival has been held for many years, it is well-known in the area and typically attracts supporters of the arts and owners of small and independent art galleries as well as boutique and specialty stores owners who are in search of unique forms of art for clientele. As a result, the festival has established a reputation as a well-known venue for local art.

One of the unique aspects of this festival is that it has enjoyed growth and continuity within the community even though the community itself was part of a much larger metropolitan area in the southwestern United States. The identity of the festival has remained intact and is considered a part of the local community. Part of the mission of the community festival Board of Directors is to educate the community about art in addition to creating a venue for creative expression. During its growth, the festival's mission gradually expanded to include educational and other programs which run throughout the year. However, in recent times local artists who used to be yearly participants have drifted away and local funding used to support the festival is diminishing, because fewer and fewer local artists were participating. As a result, the Board of Directors focused on bringing in a nationally known talent and artists in various fields to attract more participants. Because local funding was lost, more funding now is being sought through grants. The focus of the festival is gradually changing from community artists to a broader scope and more national talent.

The Community Festival Organization

The nonprofit agency that was charged with running the community festival was made up of a Board of Directors consisting of 10 appointed positions, including three to five permanent staff members, one of whom is the supervisor. The supervisor works at many of the same jobs as the staff members to support the agency. The supervisor believes that everyone who works at the agency shares her love of the arts and uses a laissez-faire management style with the other staff members. The supervisor believes everyone hired at the non-profit understands the need to support the organization, and employees should not need specific instructions to do so; this is the general opinion also held by the Board. Because the permanent staff is so small, formal training for the supervisor and staff is not conducted, primarily because of the lack of funds for training. All funds are used for the festival and the programs, and the prevailing attitude is that employees can learn from each other.

Although the nonprofit agency has a mission to support local artists, the Board of Directors sees no need to take the time to develop specifics such as rules of conduct, expected behaviors, or guidelines. The supervisor follows this example, because she believes that it is important to use their time for the festival and the programs instead of the permanent staff, especially because the staff can be managed one-on-one if training needs are identified. The primary support for the agency initially came from individual donators and, later on, more grants which supported the annual event and the ongoing educational programs. The Board of Directors itself consists primarily of those who support the arts and the community. Some are serving as political appointees and none of the members has any experience in running a business. Volunteers have noted in the past how there are inconsistencies in the decisions coming from the Board of Directors, depending on personal interests and sometimes as favors for friends.

Volunteers and Staffing

Staffing is always a challenge for supervisor and the Board of Directors. Many who have the interest and the inclination to volunteer hold full-time jobs, and many of those jobs were outside of the community in the larger metropolitan area; therefore, they have little time to donate because of the time it takes to commute back and forth from their jobs. Nonetheless, there are always some volunteers available, but there is turnover from year to year depending on how much time individuals could contribute, whether or not they have taken a full-time job in another location, or whether they still remain in the community.

In the past, a member of the Board of Directors has acknowledged that staffing is a concern, because those who are truly interested are not available, and sometimes, when seeking volunteers, the organization has to "settle" for whoever shows up. One of the primary concerns is that some of the volunteers and the

permanent staff have exhibited more interest in being "in charge" than actually supporting the community festival. When individuals are more worried about who is in charge rather than what needs to be done, there has been an issue about what priorities could actually be accomplished and whether those were personal priorities or festival priorities. Nevertheless, volunteers are still needed, so all volunteers are accepted. Some volunteers have known each other for several years, because they have worked together through the festival organization, but there was always enough turnover to provide the need for new volunteers every year.

Internal Issues

Some volunteers have speculated openly over the last few years on the reasons why volunteers leave. The general consensus among the volunteers is that personality conflicts or authority conflicts with other volunteers, and even other staff members, drove people away. On some occasions staff members were also aware of political appointees by the Board of Directors. These appointees were perceived by the general staff and volunteers to be "untouchable" and their behavior beyond reproach. Poor interpersonal experiences and ineffective conversations between volunteers and staff members suggest that staff members are frequently ineffective in their interactions with volunteers.

Such incidents, when they occur, are shared widely and quickly among the volunteers through the organizational grapevine, a highly effective communication method for relaying personal dissatisfaction and personal events with the permanent staff and other volunteers. One example of a personal experience is a conversation where a permanent staff member told a volunteer "if you don't like the way I do things….then you can just leave. We can always get more volunteers". A witness to that conversation indicates that the permanent staff member has this same attitude with other volunteers and has repeated the same comment or similar comments to other individuals in the organization on various occasions. Permanent staff members have also developed a tendency to blame volunteers if something does not go as planned or if something unplanned occurs in a manner that causes problems. Volunteers have the perception that they are the 'scapegoats' for the staff and, by default, for the Board of Directors. This has precipitated a perception that staff members hold themselves in higher esteem and at a different level than the volunteers. Volunteers have become very sensitive to this and discuss it frequently.

External Issues

Local artists who have regularly participated in the festival provide anecdotal support about similar interactions with permanent staff. One of the artists indicates that he feels as if he is an "intruder" when trying to obtain information about dates and events for the upcoming festival. Others report a similar lack of responsiveness; more specifically, phone calls are not returned while other artists note a 'rude' tone of voice and curt treatment by staff members. A number of the artists who have participated in the past have now elected not to apply for a vendor position for the upcoming festival. The loss of local artists has also contributed to the community festival need to focus on nationally known talent to generate revenues and interest that have been forfeited through the loss of local artists.

Implementing the Community Festival

About six months before the community festival was scheduled, the Board of Directors proceeded with the normal activities required to facilitate the festival. Some of these activities included activating an 800 phone number to facilitate ticket ordering, publishing the brochure for the festival, and proceeding with efforts to advertise both inside the community and outside the community about the upcoming festival. The Board approved the brochures before they were printed and distributed, reviewed all information for accuracy and correctness, and then proceeded with the brochure printing.

The Brochure Incident

One day, Mark is at work in the drugstore where he serves as an assistant manager when the first call comes through to order tickets for the festival. Mark is quite surprised, because the drugstore has nothing to do with the festival. Mark advises the caller that this is the wrong number if the caller wishes to purchase tickets. That same day, many more calls come in with requests to purchase tickets for the festival. Mark is

puzzled by the number of phone calls, because he is certain that the phone number is incorrect. He can think of no reason why people are calling the 800 number of the drugstore and asking for festival tickets. He checks with a member of the Board of Directors the following day and discovers that the 800 number to order tickets that is printed in the festival brochure is actually the 800 number of his drugstore. The phone calls have been very disruptive to business in the drugstore.

After numerous complaints and pleas from the drugstore manager to adjust the 800-number, the Board of Directors discuss the problem and decide that the best interests of the festival are served taking over the 800 phone number at the drugstore and using it for the festival. This is completely unacceptable for the drugstore, because it has used this 800 number for many years. The 800 number is integral to the identity of the drugstore within the community. The drugstore refuses to give the number to the community festival agency, and the calls continue. Finally, the festival Board of Directors request a correction be printed in the brochure, and the correction to the 800-number is made on the front of the brochure. None of the corrections are made inside the brochure where the 800-number is listed multiple times. The Board of Directors considers the "brochure incident" resolved. The calls still continue at the drugstore.

Several days later, Mark calls in to check on the days he is scheduled to work in the coming week. At that time, he is informed by one of the drugstore employees that he has been removed from the schedule, and the rumors are that the store manager blames Mark for the phone number problem as well as the lost business that resulted from the phone lines being tied up by calls seeking tickets to the community festival. Mark is terminated, because the store manager blames him as being ultimately responsible for the incorrect phone number, the misdirected phone calls, and the resulting loss of business.

What Happened?
In an effort to "clear the air" and prove that he is not responsible, Mark approaches a member of the Board of Directors of the festival organization and explains that he lost his job over the misprinted phone number in the community festival brochure. The Director with whom he speaks apologizes for the problems and advises Mark to blame the store. The Director suggests that he, perhaps, consider filing a lawsuit against the store, because this is not an issue of the community festival organization or of the Board of Directors but, instead, between Mark and the drugstore. The Director also offers to write a letter of recommendation to Mark if he needs this to find another job. However, when Mark needs a letter of recommendation and approaches the Director several weeks later, the Director refuses to provide the letter. Mark is frustrated, because he believes he is not being treated fairly. He now writes a letter to the entire Board of Directors and explains what has happened and asks for an investigation. He never receives a response or any acknowledgment from the Board of Directors about his request for an investigation or about the letter addressed to the Board.

Mark is left wondering what to do next. Finding a job is imperative, because his rent is due soon. The Board of Directors is also left wondering what do next. Attendance was down for this year's festival, a major contributor to revenue for the year. Among themselves, they realize they have some serious problems.

TEACHING NOTES

This case is appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate students. Suggestions are provided later in the notes. The case can be used in the following courses: Leadership, Organizational Development and Change, Strategic Management, and Organizational Behavior. This case was written to allow students the opportunity to work through a real world problem. The teaching objectives provide multiple approaches to the many problems suffered by this organization. This work was written with the assumption that instructors will use an andragogical approach to teaching. In our classes, we have found a real student preference for an andragogical approach (i.e. using the student's life experience) to working with this case.

If students ask, this really happened to a drug store near you. The case has been blinded as fully as possible to prevent any harm to any of the people or organizations involved.

Teaching Objectives
- Identify the impact of substantive areas of organizational behavior in a realistic scenario
- Define how various leadership and motivational models may be used best to improve productivity and job satisfaction within organizations.
- Demonstrate how various leadership and motivational models may be used best to improve productivity and job satisfaction within organizations
- Demonstrate the importance of an ethical approach to business
- Provide an example of how various aspects of organizational life can create negative impacts internal and external to the organization
- Provide an opportunity for critical thinking as noted through multiple opportunities to incorporate theory and resolve problems
- Apply organizational-behavior strategies to management scenarios utilizing a systems approach
- Discuss methods for undertaking planned-change programs within organizations.
- Create realistic problem resolutions
- Create realistic action plans

Learning objectives for the case are divided based on Bloom's taxonomy (https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/). For any students learning new information, pedagogical objectives are appropriate; however, as students progress, andragogical objectives allow them to apply the basic concepts and develop problem-solving abilities.

Pedagogy definition found in Hall, K., Murphy, P. and Soler, J. (2008). Pedagogy and Practice: Culture and Identities. Sage: Los Angeles, California.
Andragogy definition found at
https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/11_%20TEAL_Adult_Learning_Theory.pdf

For students who are learning information for the first time, basic pedagogy as defined by Bloom's taxonomy is necessary to help them learn and understand the terms and concepts. Students can move into areas of andragogy when they advance into critical thinking as seen by the keywords such as construct, create, develop, etc. Moving students into higher level thinking (andragogy) is an expected progression as they develop skills and abilities, so all students should be moving into higher level thinking in this case as part of the analysis.

Learning Objectives
Pedagogy
- Identify the impact of substantive areas of organizational behavior in a realistic scenario (Case exercises: Internal analysis, External analysis, Application of OB concepts)
- Define how various leadership and motivational models may be used best to improve productivity and job satisfaction within organizations. (Case exercises: Internal Analysis & Application of OB concepts)
- Describe the importance of an ethical approach to business (Case Exercise, Internal analysis & Application of OB concepts)
- Explain critical thinking as noted through multiple opportunities to incorporate theory and resolve problems (Case Exercise, Internal analysis)
- Apply organizational-behavior strategies to management scenarios utilizing a systems approach (Case Exercise: Application of OB concepts)

Andragogy
- Construct methods for undertaking planned-change programs within organizations. (Case exercise: based on Internal Analysis)
- Create realistic problem resolutions (case exercise: based on internal analysis)

- Develop realistic action plans (Case exercise, based on Internal analysis & External analysis)
- Examine how various aspects of organizational life can create negative impacts internal and external to the organization (Case exercise: Based on analysis of application of OB concepts)
- Select various leadership and motivational models may be used best to improve productivity and job satisfaction within organizations (Case exercise, based on Internal Analysis and Application of OB Concepts)

Ethics

Students are often deeply interested in answering, "What is the right way?" and "What is the wrong way?" These questions create a segue for instructors to discuss the ethical dilemmas faced by organizational leaders and the importance of creating a framework of values to guide everyday business. When we studied this organization, we did not find any such framework, which likely contributed to their problems.

Ethics Discussion Questions

1. Identify the ethical issues in this case and provide examples. What type of ethical theory could you identify in this case? (e.g. utilitarian or human rights)
2. What could Mark have done, if anything, to avoid the ethical issues such as the problems caused by the printed phone number?
3. What additional remedies would have been appropriate to provide the correct phone number for those interested in purchasing festival tickets?
4. What can the organization do to improve a) how it functions and b) its relationship with volunteers and the community?
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of management actions to resolve ethical dilemmas, using each of the following effectiveness perspectives below:
   a. Stakeholder perspective
   b. Goal Setting perspective
   c. Systems perspective
6. Finally, give a statement about the effectiveness of management actions to resolve ethical dilemmas.

Analysis

While many students are told to perform a SWOT analysis to lay the groundwork for change, they are often not given a framework to guide their analysis. Below, the instructor will find tables that can be shared with students to provide structure for organizational analysis.

Internal Analysis

Internal analysis or audit is used to investigate factors that are unique to a single organization. Because these factors occur within the organization, the organization exercises considerable control over the impact of these factors. The internal analysis identifies strengths and problems/weaknesses which occur in a single organization rather than every organization within the industry. These factors are powerful indicators of effectiveness and efficiency throughout the organization's many departments/operations.

Internal analysis is often intuitive for students, in that they are quick to accurately identify core issues. As soon as they begin reading through the case, they can often highlight strengths as well as problems. Nonetheless, they require specific definitions to keep them focused,

Definition: Internal Strengths

An internal strength is an advantage that belongs to the organization being studied. Strengths are often the foundation for future actions.

Example: Coca Cola has spent millions of dollars protecting the color "Coke Red" as well as the trademarked C on products. As a consequence, Coca Cola products are easily recognizable throughout the world. Brand identity is a core strength for Coca Cola Company.

Definition: Internal Problems/Weaknesses

An internal problem is a disadvantage that belongs to the organization being studied. Internal problems often cause organizations to take action quickly to avoid further and larger problems.

Example: A local restaurant is trying to hire more servers as they reopen to full operations following the pandemic; however, pay for servers is still only $2.13 per hour plus tips. As a consequence, the restaurant is having a difficult time finding enough servers to support a return to full operations. Poor compensation is a problem for this restaurant.

Use the following table to help students organize the information derived from analysis. We suggest that students use short phrases in the table and give a provide a brief (2-3 sentence) explanation for each entry in the table to justify its inclusion. We also suggest that no cell be left blank. While some cells will have many entries, some cells will have scarce information. Critical thinking is required of the student to reason the problems that are not easily uncovered by simply reading through the case.

TABLE 1
INTERNAL ANALYSIS

FUNCTION	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES/PROBLEMS
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: Mission, vision, organizational goals.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
LEADERSHIP: Guidance, vision, facilitation.		
MANAGEMENT-DAILY OPERATIONS: Routines,		
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: Recruitment, selection, compensation, safety, development and training, performance management.		
MARKETING: Product, place, price, promotion, people.		
INFORMATION SYSTEMS: Data, people, hardware, software, telecommunications, input, processing, storage, feedback loops/control loops, output, cybersecurity.		
ACCOUNTING: Records, reporting, financial transactions, data.		
FINANCE: Planning, forecasting, find funding, allocate funds, budgets.		
RESEARCH: Investigate new products and services, markets, employee issues, operational problems.		

External Analysis

External analysis is the analysis of those factors that exist outside of the organization. Because they are outside the organization, they are not under the control of the organization. These factors exert a powerful impact on how every organization within an industry can work through daily problems. Opportunities and threats exist only in the external analysis.

Students are often confused about how to deal with external factors and likely confuse them with internal factors, so they require specific definitions to help them discern differences between internal and external factors.

Definition: External Opportunities

External opportunities are advantages which exist for every competitor in an industry. Example: Pandemics create an immediate and profitable need for personal protection equipment (PPE). Every competitor in the PPE manufacturing industry can increase production and profitability by providing a steady stream of PPE to health care and other essential customers.

Definition: External Threats

External threats are disadvantages which exist for every competitor in an industry. Example: Pandemics have disrupted supply chains making the production and delivery of key computer components for new automobiles unavailable. New automobile manufacturers worldwide cannot sell any automobiles that require the key computer components. As a consequence, car dealers have limited opportunities to sell new cars.

TABLE 2
EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

SECTOR	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
INDUSTRY: Competitors, industry size and competitiveness, related industries.		
RAW MATERIALS: Suppliers, manufacturers, real estate, services.		
HUMAN RESOURCES: Labor market, employment agencies, universities, training schools, unionization, employees in other companies.		
FINANCIAL RESOURCES: Stock markets, banks, savings and loans, private investors.		
MARKET: Customer, clients, potential users of products and services,		
TECHNOLOOGY: Techniques of production, science, computers, information technology, ecommerce.		
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: Recession, unemployment rate,		

inflation rate, rate of investment, economics, growth.		
GOVERNMENT: City, state, federal laws and regulations, taxes, services, court system, political process.		
SOCIOCULTURAL: Age, values, beliefs, education, religion, work ethic, consumer and green movements.		
INTERNATIONAL: Competition from and acquisition by foreign firms, entry into overseas markets, foreign customs, regulations, exchange rate.		

Adopted from Daft, R. L. (2021). *Organization Theory and Design (13th Ed.).* Cengage: Boston, MA

Application of Organizational Behavior Concepts

Organizational behavior (OB) is the study of behavior in organizations; people are the foundation of organizations and the driving factors behind culture, politics, regulations, rules, and all areas of the organization. Many different factors play a role in organizations and outcomes are not always as expected if leadership fails to consider all possible areas that can impact outcomes.

In the following table, focus on good Deed and consider the factors of organizational behavior as listed below. Provide an example of the strength and a problem in each area as appropriate. If you believe more than one is necessary, feel free to add as needed.

TABLE 3
ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

OB Factors	Example of a strength	Example of a problem
People-centered	1.	1.
Ethical	1.	1.
Diversity and cultural differences		
Organizational culture		
Socialization		
Mentoring		
Organizational values		
Employee job satisfaction		
Attitudes		
Counterproductive work behavior		
Social perception		
Attributions		
Motivation		
Job performance		
Feedback		
Rewards		

Positive reinforcement		
Group dynamics		
Team development		
Effective teams		
Decision-making		
Conflict and negotiation		
Communication		
Influence		
Power		
Politics		
Leadership		
Organizational design		
Organizational effectiveness		
Managing change		
stress		

At the Undergraduate Level

This OB exercise is intended for undergraduate, upper-level students to help them understand organizations as a system and to identify various areas that can have an impact on the behavior of individuals. The goal of this assignment is to provide a general introduction to systems theory through the application of concepts, the identification of various impacts, what can be considered a strength, and what can be considered a problem in each of the areas above. Instructors should feel free to add additional areas as appropriate. In person discussions or discussion board assignments are strongly recommended prior to any activities/assignments.

At the Graduate Level

Instructors may prefer to apply readings regarding systems theory and look at the internal, external, and organizational behavior exercises as an analysis exercise, and provide a writing assignment that integrates multiple, selected impacts or concepts to include literature that identifies solutions for the problems with recommendations based on literature support. A thorough discussion of the complexity of organizations as well as application and interaction of the various factors is recommended prior to any writing assignment or analysis assignment.

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