
Trials and Tribulations of A Territory Manager

K.V. Rao was being pulled in different directions. It had been a hectic weekend. His brother had come down from Bangalore with the family, and he had spent Saturday and Sunday entertaining them. Monday had brought him down to reality with his work staring him in the face.

The Currents

There were so many things to look at that it was difficult for him to begin making sense of it all. He recalled the day he joined the multinational Pharmaceutical Company, OXY Limited twenty years ago as a Sales Officer in the state of Karnataka. He was a hard worker and had worked the territory of North Canara for many years. All the major doctors in the state were on first name basis with him and had looked at him with respect and credibility. He was a fine example of how the officers of OXY Limited should behave. During his 15 years as a Sales Officer, his performance was average and he met the targets and goals many a time. Of course, there had been some bad years during the recession period, but these were tough times that had taught him a lesson or two. All through his years as a Sales Officer, he was assured of support from his Territory Managers and from the Head Office. There were many occasions on which they had supported him in his efforts. All in all, he felt satisfied that he had had a fairly steady stint during these 15 years.

The Background

Four years ago, Rao had been promoted to the position of Territory Manager with a posting at Dharwad. This was a territory not unknown to him and he did his best to learn all about it. His performance ratings as a Territory Manager had ranged from above average to average. In his last appraisal meeting with his Regional Business Manager, Mangesh Raja and the All India Sales Manager, Roopesh Kumar, he had received feedback that he was seen as a valuable and steady employee of OXY Limited. His areas for improvement had been identified as “leading and influencing people”. There were a few incidents that were pointed out by Mangesh when the Sales Officers had approached him for some small issues which could have been sorted out at the Territory Manager’s level itself. There was one incident in particular of one of his Sales Officers, P. Ravi Kumar, who had approached the Regional Business Manager with a complaint that Rao did not give adequate recognition to him in acknowledging his achievements in team meetings. His complaint was that Rao was playing favorites and giving more importance to the achievements of Yousuf Shaikh and K. Krishnamoorthy. There was also one incident of daily reports of Sales Officer Nagraj Shetty who was an absent minded kind of a person. Despite several reminders from Mangesh, Rao had not been able to get Nagraj to turn around and start giving his daily reports on time.

In one more incident during the last one year, there was a problem with the freshly recruited Sales Officer Krishna Raju who was having some adjustment problems.

As he sat at his desk on Monday morning, he knew it was time for reflection and review of the entire situation. As he took stock of the situation, he reviewed all the Sales Officers in his territory.

The Team

There was **K. Krishnamoorthy**, who had worked in OXY Limited as a Sales officer for the last twelve years. He had been transferred from Trivandrum to Dharwad about one year ago. Krishnamoorthy was an above average performer, sober and serious kind of a person. He had taken more time than necessary to adjust to his territory but was a willing learner. However, he was not the kind of person to whom Rao could have delegated important matters. Basically, Krishnamoorthy was an adaptor who attempted hard to fit in and adapt to different situations and tried to adjust to the different people with whom he came in touch with. Krishnamoorthy was the kind of person who would do as he was told but not be outgoing enough to take initiative himself.

P. Ravi Kumar had been recruited 4 years ago in this territory itself. He was an extremely extroverted kind of a person, who loved the limelight and was constantly talking about himself. He usually said what was on his mind even though it may be somewhat undiplomatic. Very exuberant, he was the life of the party and always visible at all team meetings, and never missed an opportunity to crack a joke. He did not believe in a much disciplined way of life and found it very compulsive to keep on sending in daily reports. He was an excellent performer and he knew it. He was spontaneous and enthusiastic about everyday matters. There were occasions when he had questioned the validity of some of the policies especially with regard to the control and regulation of Daily Allowances for Sales Officers. He had a special way with the customers and found it easy to meet and exceed his targets. He had never seen a fortnight when he would not meet his goal. As he once said, his motto in life was “winning is not the only thing in life, it is everything”.

Shankar Menon was the workhorse of the team. He was really committed and would spend hours of time in the field waiting for doctors, and for an opportunity to sell some more. He would work laboriously at perfecting his daily reports and making sure he had crossed all the “t’s” and dotted all the “i’s”. He would take each and every small task seriously and would spend hours planning things out before getting into action. He was cautious and wanted everything to be perfect the first time around. His team mates often told him that he “overdelivered” on quality, but that did not change him. He would continue to work and rework the same report each time till it was perfect. At heart, Shankar was an idealist and a dogmatic person of principles. As far as performance was concerned, he was above average in his meeting of targets. A family man, he was known to be well accepted in the team for his sheer hard work and knowledge. However, according to Rao, he did not show leadership potential as he just had to do everything all the

time. For Rao, it required a lot of patience to work with Shankar as he kept finding fault even in the Territory Manager's (Rao's) reports and detailing.

Raja Deshpande was the most colorful flamboyant and passionate character in the team. His hair was always slicked back and his clothes were always in "Govinda" style. He had worked as a Sales Officer for 15 years and loved each day of his work. He was not ambitious at all. In fact, he had been heard to remark once that a Territory Manager's job is too difficult as they have to manage Sales Officers, and he would rather be a 'free bird'. With his sunny disposition, he was much loved in the team as he was always full of life and planning some outing or the other. As far as achievements are concerned, he was an average performer who just about managed to meet his targets. Some of the difficult sectors did find him lagging in his commitment, but he would make up in the 'easy' sectors. He was one person who would always find the easy way out of any difficult situation. In the past, Rao had mentioned to him that he needed to get a little serious about life and that he was too frivolous, but this had made no difference to him as he felt that he needed to have a 'positive outlook' in life. When Rao had taken over this district, he was warned by the outgoing Territory Manager to watch out for Raja as there were rumors that he had some links with the FMRAI office bearers in the area.

Yousuf Shaikh was a mature, solid, steady, assertive person who believed in discipline and orderliness. He had an eye for detail and always met the deadlines. Each morning he would spend one minute planning his day, as he had learnt in a training programme titled "One Minute Manager" held at the Head Office last year. He was well mannered and up to date on news and current events. He was articulate and liked to make speeches. Sometimes this put Ravi Kumar off as he felt that Yousuf was hogging all the limelight and crowding out others in the team. Yousuf had spent 7 years in this territory and there were rarely any complaints against him. The earlier Territory Manager had thought highly of him and mentioned to Rao that he would go high in the organization. As far as performance is concerned, his ratings varied from good to excellent. Rao himself did not have much to complain about Yousuf as he always met his commitments.

Krishna Raju was one of the two fresh Sales Officers recruited in the territory almost six months ago. Like most newcomers, he was still in the process of learning about the job and the way in which OXY Limited did business. He was articulate and well mannered, and that is what he was recruited for. He projected all the good qualities that Sales Officers of OXY Limited were supposed to have. However, like most Sales Officers, he was having some difficulty in the adjustment process and had been assigned to work with Ravi Kumar. However, there were some difficulties in the partnership that developed between the two of them. Raju had some problems in learning the exact product literature and this would upset Ravi, who did not have the patience to deal with him. The problem was on both sides and it was coming to a point where Raju was just trying too hard to fit in. Rao felt that Raju's six monthly review was coming up and he was clearly not shaping up. He wondered if a change of location and working with a different person would really help or not.

Nagraj Shetty was the other Sales Officer who had joined with Raju. He was academically bright with some previous experience of working as a Medical Representative for two years with another locally known pharmaceutical company. His references seemed to be good and he had been hired because he had impressed the interview panel with his knowledge and expertise. He was assigned to work with Yousuf Shaikh in the field. So far, in the Sales Officers training programme, he had made average numbers with some of the product knowledge questions and seemed to be one among the others, neither outstanding, nor failing. Once in the field, he did have some trouble coping up with the pressures of the job. Sometimes, he would make commitments to Rao on the phone and not remember he had done so. Noticing that he was a little forgetful, Rao had mentioned to him that he should make a list of things to be done each day and spend some time planning and organizing himself, but he was not sure to what extent this advice was being followed. In the monthly cycle meetings, Shetty would sometimes appear to lack confidence if his presentations were questioned. Like Raju, his six monthly performance review was also due.

Back to the Present

As Rao reviewed the situation and took stock, he found himself coming back to the present with a thud. The future seemed to him, to provide many challenges that charged him up and energized him. Nothing excited him more than problems to be sorted out. When he could see his involvement in effecting a solution, he would feel a great sense of achievement.

The Cycle Meeting

He looked at his work desk to review the tasks to be done. At OXY Limited, there was a system of monthly cycle meetings which the Territory Manager had with his Sales Officers to review the operations for the last month. Sometimes the RBM would join in this meeting, but today he had to take it on his own for the scheduled cycle meeting.

After the usual good morning and hello, he settled down to doing business as usual. “Let’s take stock of the last two months performance of our company in the territory. Congratulations to Ravi for having exceeded his targets for the last one month and having met his targets for the previous month. Shankar and Yousuf have also shown commendable performance by achieving the targets which were quite stiff. I feel that we should all work together to follow the fine example set by the three of them, as our territory doing well for the last quarter due to the good efforts of these Sales Officers.” Let us give them a clap, gentlemen.”

Ravi gets up from his seat and takes a bow. Apparently he is thrilled at being acknowledged for his performance. He had a stroke of luck with a couple of doctors in the region who had been converted to prescribing the vitamins and cough syrup of OXY Limited over some of the smaller companies. He recalled having waited for over two hours to meet with one of the doctors to hand over some of the promotional literature. He had also worked hard with some of the retailers in the field to make sure they used some of the POP material in their windows. Also, by a stroke of luck there was a problem with the supplies of the competitor’s product, and this added to his winning streak. In addition, there were some antibiotic preparations that had done well due to an

outbreak of viral fever in the region. As a result, targets were exceeded in the area for both these Popular products. Ravi basked in the limelight and took a sidelong glance at Yousuf, who had an uncommunicative expression on his face.

As the applause went around, Yousuf felt that his achievements were well received by the Territory Manager. It was really good when all targets had been met. He had effortlessly made presentations to several doctors who saw merit in prescribing OXY's products as they had more research and clinical trials as compared to the competitors. Also, Yousuf had impressed upon the doctors that the new manufacturing units of OXY Limited for antibiotics had improved the quality standards of the product. The new packaging was also user friendly and the patients had a great deal of assurance that they were dealing with a company of repute.

Shanker had really slogged in his territory. Hours of labour and effort had produced results. Endless rehearsals had gone into preparing for doctors detailing. In the last cycle meeting, Rao had got Yousuf to make a presentation of how he detailed doctors in his area. He had made copious notes of Yousuf's presentation and had worked to include some of the points from there in his own presentations to the doctors. This effort had paid off and some of the doctors in the area had switched to prescribing the OXY brand of antibiotic.

Rao then moved on to reviewing the performance of Krishnamoorthy. Last month the sales of antibiotic preparation in his area had fallen below expectations. The special schemes and promotional literature that were well used by Yousuf, Ravi and Shankar seemed to have not worked in his area. Rao spent some time with him explaining exactly how to do the doctors detailing for all the products. "Try and learn from Yousuf. You remember his presentation made in the last cycle meeting – make that your model and try to emulate it. I will accompany you next week for a couple of days and visit the doctors with you to personally demonstrate the products to them. Lets also tie in some visits to some of the big chemists in the area to see what we can do to work out some special displays for our products."

Ravi chipped in "You know what I did with one of the chemists who had this large window outside his shop. I got him to paste the back of the window with the posters for our vitamin preparation. I compensated him for his efforts by giving him some extra gift items that had come for our cough syrup. I also offered to pay for painting the signboard of his shop afresh so that it would look good. All in all, we benefited by the display and he benefited by having a newly painted board and some gifts to go with it." Ravi was obviously trying to downplay the successful presentation made by Yousuf in the last cycle meeting. Rao was a little irritated with this but decided to ignore him and quickly changed the topic back to Krishnamoorthy.

He gave elaborate instructions to Krishnamoorthy to prepare his presentations to doctors, and how to deal with the retailers. He also guided him in reading some of the product literature so that he had more knowledge base to talk to the doctors.

“Now let’s take up Raja’s area. I see the numbers indicate your area has done well in the Popular products (cough syrup and vitamins) but not too well in the pharmaceutical and antibiotic preparations.” Rao knew that Raja had a tendency to seek the easy way out of all situations. The Popular products had done well because of the outbreak of viral fever in the area due to season change. And the OXY brands were top of the mind recall for most of this state. The patients would go to the chemist for these without even consulting a doctor. Raja had spent some time in organizing the promotions for these products and had not paid enough attention to the antibiotics. Also, this month, some of the daily reports had not come in on time from him. He had also been on leave for six days this month attending a cousin’s wedding in Bangalore.

True to character, Raja made a joke and got everybody laughing. “Well, I am happy that there are many sick people in our area and they all want OXY cough syrup. I hope this virus continues to spread so that I can keep on selling.” It was difficult for Rao to get him back on track.

“But Raja, you know that the strength of OXY comes more from our antibiotic than from the Popular products. We cannot afford to let our sales slide in this area. It is important to understand the business strategy of the company. If we allow the competition to grab the market share, we will be nowhere. What are your plans for reviving the slack in this product?”

“Well sir, the last month, I had problems with supplies of antibiotic. There were many doctors who prescribed our brand, but when the patients went to the chemists, they were told that it was out of stock. Once the doctors came to know this, some of them started to prescribe the competitors products. I had communicated our requirement to the Distribution department, but there was some problem in the delivery.” Rao knew this was not entirely true. Raja’s forecast for antibiotics was way off the mark. Distribution department had dispatched as per his forecast, but demand had gone up, and that was the reason for non availability of the OXY brand. He made a note to spend some time in reworking the forecasts for his area for the next quarter.

“Okay, I will work with you in your territory for five or six days. Lets see how we can revive some of the sales in this area.” Said Rao and working through with him, finalized the dates for this trip. He made a mental note to review each and every visit of Raja in the last few weeks and see where he had gone wrong. Though Rao had spent a lot of his time with Raja in his area, things just did not seem to improve.

Rao then went on to request both the new Sales Officer trainees, Raju and Nagraj to make the presentations that they had been planning for the last couple of weeks. These presentations were crucial to their six monthly appraisals and they knew it. They had both worked hard at their presentations. Raju had been assigned to work with Ravi Kumar, and Nagraj was working with Yousuf. During the presentations, both of them saw a lot of corrections in their knowledge and approach to the doctors from the other Sales Officers and also from Rao. They were both learning and everybody knew it. In the case of Krishna Raju, there was a great deal of grilling done and he bore it well. He was receptive to suggestions from all and seemed to absorb learnings from the others. All in all, it indicated that though he had made progress, but he still

had a long way to go. In the case of Nagraj, the grilling was initially tough, but seeing that he could not keep up with it, the other Sales Officers reduced the pressure on him out of consideration. He needed to be toughened up a little more.

Then it was the crucial time for planning for the next month's performance. Rao was himself under pressure from the Head Office for expanding OXY's market share in Karnataka state. The state had a long history of good brand recognition amongst the doctors and the patients alike. By nature the population of this state was relatively steadier and did not switch brands easily. Doctors liked to stay with prescribing the same medicines that they had been for many years together. Patients too would recognize the name of the company and would buy based on trust.

However, in recent times, OXY had seen some erosion in market share in the Northern states and was looking at making South India as its stronghold. States like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were good cash cows for the company and it wanted to increase its market share here. Roopesh Kumar, the All India Sales Manager, had been supporting a lot of the marketing and promotion activity in Karnataka and wanted to see more results than were coming in. This situation found Rao pushing more and more sales in the territory. This year alone, there had been almost 10% increase in volume terms that had been expected from Karnataka, with the Dharwar territory being given almost 12% increase.

Rao gave a briefing to his Sales Officers about the plans for Karnataka region. At the end of his presentation, Ravi was very enthusiastic. He said "Sir, I think we can make it happen. Why, in my territory alone, I think there is a lot of potential to grow more. If we have more promotional schemes and incentives, we can work harder and achieve this increase. I feel we should all put our shoulders to the task and work more in the markets. Why, in my area alone, there are so many doctors who will definitely change their prescription patterns if we were to put more sales pressure and give them some more complimentary items."

Yousuf, on the other hand was more pragmatic. "I think we should look at the numbers, Sir. What are some of the products in which we can do more. I feel in the specialized product areas, there is only so much we can improve. After all, such specialized products, etc. are linked to the incidence of specialized diseases and the incidence of these is not really rising. If we look at Popular products and antibiotics, then we do have a scope to sell a lot more than we are currently doing." With this statement, he went on to examine trends for the last two years for the various products and continued with his analysis. Rao was impressed with his analysis and found himself agreeing with him.

Through all this discussion, Shankar seemed to go more with Yousuf's approach. He was keen on the numbers and confident of the analysis done by Yousuf. In fact, in many of his statements, he was able to add a great deal of value to the analysis being done. Krishnamoorthy was somewhat silent and seemed to be waiting for the rest of the group to make the decision about the targets. Raja Deshpande was enthusiastic as usual and made a few wisecracks about the 'stretch' goals.

All in all Ravi wanted to push more for achievement in the territory, but Yousuf made it clear that he thought that Ravi was talking through his hat. It was obvious that Yousuf thought that Ravi wanted to project himself as a high flyer and wanted to show off. He thought that most of Ravi's suggestions were impractical and unrealistic.

In the end, an overall increase of about 10% was agreed to by all. Ravi was not very happy with this as he felt that the district could stretch to about 15% easily. His enthusiasm seemed to be somewhat dampened by the whole numbers discussion. Targets were then allocated for each Sales Officer based on their own confidence in the markets. Ravi, as usual took on targets that were very ambitious, Yousuf and Shankar took on a relatively lower increase, and Krishnamoorthy agreed to a small increase. Raja Deshpande was keen to take on a larger increase and wholeheartedly promised to deliver. As the trainees were not really expected to deliver for the first year of their working with OXY Limited, they were given small targets just to get them going on track. Raju and Nagraj's targets were tied in with those of Ravi and Yousuf respectively.

The same dynamics got played out when Rao started planning the special launch of the new product in the antibiotic range. Ravi and Raja were really enthusiastic and ready to exceed the targets had plenty of ideas on how things should be done. Yousuf and Shankar were ready to achieve what was expected and went into details of planning and scheduling all the activities regarding presentations and demos to the doctors and chemists, etc. Krishnamoorthy, Raju and Nagraj tagged along with whatever was decided and did not want to upset the apple cart. Rao was quite happy with the outcomes, although he was not sure of whether Ravi was really buying into the process.

He adjourned the meeting with mixed feelings. He was satisfied at having made a good and accurate review of the performance of all concerned and at having the next month planned out well. On the other hand, he was unhappy at the way the teamwork was being affected by what he thought was Ravi's maverick instincts. He knew that he could handle Raja as others did not take him too seriously, but Ravi was clearly trying to project himself as the blue eyed boy of the pack. However, according to Rao, he lacked depth and made too many sweeping statements, was far too casual in his approach and did not give room to others to speak their opinions. Absorbed in his thoughts, he asked Raju and Nagraj to stay on for further discussions when everybody had gone. He remembered that he still had to fill in their six-monthly performance reviews.

Finally, there was the matter of a request for sponsorship of a Rotary Club camp that had come through Raja. Rao felt that there were too many promises of sponsorships being made by Raja to the doctors that he visited. He felt that Raja found it difficult to refuse their demands. He pointed out that this was the third occasion in the last six months that such a request had come from his area. He asked Raja to try and hold out this time and not give in to the demand. Raja did not seem too happy with that, because some promises had been made by him to the doctor and now

he would find it hard to tell him that the sponsorship had not been sanctioned by the management.

Before leaving, there were the usual casual conversations. Rao decided to take up some of the smaller unresolved issues with the individual Sales Officers.

“Goodbye Raja, see you then, in the field. By the way, you had asked for four days of leave for your cousin’s wedding, but I noted that you were away for six days. I don’t recall seeing your leave application for the additional two days. What are you planning to do about it?”

Raja was on the defensive “Well sir, you know how it is when the whole family is together for an occasion like a wedding. They were all pressuring me to stay on for the whole time. I found it difficult to say ‘No’ to them. I will certainly give in my leave application to you tomorrow itself. Goodbye and all the best.”

“Okay Krishnamoorthy. Hope you are fully recovered from the viral fever you were going through. Is everything all right at home?”

“Shanker, keep up the good work and see you soon!”

“Yousuf, Thanks for all the support and everything.”

“Ravi, take care and be serious sometimes. Can you give some special attention to Raju? I feel he needs to be mentored a little more, and given more space and time to catch up with the high-paced job of a Sales Officer. He is just a newcomer and needs some patience and proper guidance.”

“Sir, I have to chase my own targets and sometimes do not have the time to detail Raju, much as I would like to. As you know, I am the only one that is exceeding expectations.”

“Well, if you feel strongly that you do not have the time for Raju, do you think it would be better if he worked with some other Sales Officer for the next few months?”

Ravi did not seem to like the idea too much. “No sir, I can do a good job of training him at my end.”

“Okay, lets see how we work this out.”

All the others departed and it was now time for Rao to deal with the two trainee Sales Officers. It is well known that in the first year of working as trainees, the Sales Officers were not really expected to produce results, but were still in the learning process. The induction into the OXY culture was crucial in the process of integration into the functioning of the company. The

purpose of the six-monthly review was to examine the integration process and identify problems and warning signs, if any. He called them in one by one. First it was the turn of Krishna Raju.

“Hello Raju. How are things going with you? It’s a good sign that you have survived the first six months in this job. I know it is not easy being a Sales Officer and these first few months are really crucial to you. Ravi tells me that you have been spending a lot of time studying the product literature and getting to know the territory. I must commend you on the effort you are putting into your own learning. It’s a good sign that you are involving yourself and making the effort.”

“Thank you, sir. I feel that there is so much for me to learn, as I am a total fresher. I don’t think I am cut out for a desk job and what I like the best is working in the field. I get to meet a lot of new people and see a lot of places. I am enjoying it so far. Although I wish I had more time to spend in studying the product literature. I did mention to Ravi that I could take in somewhat fewer visits so that I get more time on this, but he feels that nothing teaches better than working in the field. I know this is my area for improvement, but I do not get any time.”

Rao was somewhat concerned. Product knowledge was an important aspect of the job as the Sales Officers were dealing with highly qualified doctors who sometimes knew more than them about the product. The trainees had been put through initial induction training where they were tested on product knowledge and he knew that Raju had just about managed to get through this training. It was Ravi’s responsibility to make sure that all gaps in knowledge were plugged. Rao suspected that Ravi was not giving enough room to Raju for doing this, as he was himself more of a ‘leg work’ type of person. He promised to speak with Ravi about this. Also, he offered to write to the Head Office to get some training assistance for Raju.

With Nagraj Shetty, it was a different cup of tea. Nagraj had had some prior experience before coming to OXY and had impressed the people in the Head Office with his expertise and knowledge of how to handle doctors. Initially, Rao saw him as a high flyer, and had therefore put him to work with Yousuf who, in his opinion, was more mature and steady. However, Yousuf had reported that Nagraj did have a tendency to be somewhat unreliable in the filing of daily reports and also sometimes did not hold on to his commitments.

“So Nagraj? How are things with you? I am told that you had impressed the people at the Head Office with your knowledge of how things ought to be done. Your background in chemistry seems to be working to your advantage. Compared to other Sales Officers, you seem to be doing fairly well.”

“Yes Sir. Thanks for noting these details. I am somewhat worried about my health though. Travelling through the summer months did take its toll on my health and I have lost a lot of weight. Also, while on tour, we have no option but to eat at small dhabas and sometimes these are not very healthy. The water is also not of certain quality and I keep on getting a lot of acidity. My stomach has yet to settle in to this kind of a lifestyle.”

“Well, take care of yourself then. It could be that you are carrying some gastric infection, and this needs to be cleared up. Why don’t you show yourself to a doctor and get it out of your system”

“Sir, my parents are also anxious that I get married soon. There is some pressure from them to see some prospective brides. I feel I ought to wait till I get confirmed, but they do not understand the kind of commitments I have to make while on probation. I think I have to settle in first and then I will be ready for taking on such a responsibility.”

“I agree with you on this account and hope that you will manage on that front. Do let me know what I can do to make things better for you. But how are you faring otherwise. I see from your daily reports that your numbers are average; you are meeting most of the targets. But there is a tendency to skip the details. It is important to have presence of mind when dealing with doctors. I am told that there were three occasions in the last month when you came late for appointments with the doctors and on one occasion you actually forgot that you had made a commitment. Punctuality is important, you know.”

“I know sir. But on so many occasions we have to wait for more than an hour to meet with the doctors because they are busy attending their patients. I just thought that it would not really matter if I came in late as they always have a line of patients anyway.”

“Yes, I know. I have been a Sales Officer myself and there were many times that I thought I needed to complete 7 or 8 visits for the day and gave some overlapping timings to adjust to their requirements. Later I would always find myself unable to stick to the committed time. I learnt it the hard way, that it is perhaps okay for the doctors to keep us waiting, but it is never okay for us to keep the doctors waiting. I hope this will not repeat itself.”

Nagraj promised to take action to make sure that this will not happen again, and the meeting closed on a positive note.

Meeting with RBM

Several days later, in a meeting with Mangesh, the RBM based at Bangalore, Rao mentioned the two Sales Officer Trainees. Rao recommends that Raju be put to work in the field with Yousuf as Yousuf seems to be more mature and will have the patience needed to mentor Raju.

Mangesh replied, “I recall the last months cycle meeting which I had attended. Ravi gave the impression of being a really dynamic person. I recall, on Divali also, he had made it a point to call me up to wish me and the family. I think Ravi is a good role model for Raju. If we have more people like Ravi in our team we would be reach much higher targets than we currently do. Youruf is a good and excellent Sales Officer, and I see him working his way to becoming a District Manager some day, but it is Ravi who is the really outstanding one. I think Raju should

continue to work with Ravi. I have also heard some unconfirmed news that Ravi has applied for the post of District Manager in the Open Job Posting system of OXY Limited. ”

Rao reasoned with Mangesh, “Sir, I feel that Ravi is not a good teamplayer. He is overambitious and does not go along with the team. Also, his acceptability as a leader is slightly in question. There are times when he has been abrasive and has rubbed people the wrong way. Sir, I think he does not have patience with Raju, and in the bargain, Raju’s learning process is suffering. With Yousuf, we always have a strong and steady person, who is respected by all. Also, Yousuf has more seniority. And this is in line with company policy.”

“Sir, I also felt that Nagraj can be asked to work with Shankar so that he can get a feel of another area and Raju can be assigned to work with Yousuf. This will be in the best interests of both of them.” said Rao.

“But why upset things. Nagraj seems to be doing fine under Yousuf and I see no reason to make the change. Let us continue with things the way they are and take stock next month.”

Let us stop the story here and answer some of the questions below:

Questions

1. Describe and analyse the interpersonal dynamics of the team under Rao?
2. Do you think that Rao was correct in recommending assigning of Raju to work with Yousuf instead of with Ravi? What would he have done differently to get Mangesh to support his ideas.
3. From the analysis of this case study, what do you think, are the qualities of a high flying Sales Officer? Do you think that Yousuf makes a better Sales Officer than Ravi or is it the other way around?