

“THEIR” PEOPLE

COMPETING WITH RACIAL PREJUDICE

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Two years ago, you graduated from TRSM at Ryerson University in Toronto, with a B. Comm in Marketing Management. During your degree you worked at Synergy Marketing as a co-op student, which is when you first met Tanya Simard, a Haudenosaunee woman who recently graduated from Schulich with the same degree you were in the process of earning. Tanya had just been hired on full time and a year later, after you graduated, you were hired on in an equal position.

This year, the regional manager announced his retirement, which means that you and Tanya are now competing for a promotion to fill the role. Synergy has a reputation for promoting from within. Although you both recognize that you are in the competition, you have developed a good working relationship over the past few years and so you agree to support one another and wish each other luck.

To register your intent to apply for the promotion, you stop into the hiring manager, Suganda Sharma’s, office. You mention your conversation with Tanya and express your relief that despite the competition you are able to work well together. Suganda comments on how much effort you have put into your work and tells you that it will surely be a tough competition. She then shoots you a quick wink as you turn to head out of her office.

The day after the call for applications closes, you can hear Suganda talking on her phone while you are eating lunch. She is just outside the lunch room, but has not seen you sitting nearby. Not intentionally trying to listen in, you cannot help but overhear her: “Well, Tanya is a hard worker, but ‘their’ people aren’t really natural managers. She would never be taken seriously in the quarterly meetings with head office. Since we have another qualified candidate, I think we need to go in that direction.” You hear Suganda’s voice fade as she walks away, never knowing you were there.

Now confident that Suganda will choose you for the promotion, what do you do?

Keywords: racial discrimination, bystander, hiring process, corporate culture