

START OF SEASON

LEADERSHIP STYLE SETS A TONE

Ted Rogers Leadership Centre

You have just been promoted to be the manager of a rafting company that you have worked for over the last three summers. As a guide, the biggest problem you see is that many guides show up to start their work day at 9:30 rather than the 9 a.m. start time. When guides show up late, the work to prepare the rafts falls to two few people and it causes delays to the start of the day's activities. You decide that you are going to start the year off by addressing this issue. Your message is, "Lateness will not be tolerated and guides will be terminated for being more than 30 minutes late." You clearly communicate this work rule to all guides during their one-day training session, held a week before the summer season begins.

The night before the first day of opening, all the rafting captains have a big party on the beach. As you are expecting a large group of 200 students from Montreal to arrive at the site the next day, you remind all guides before the party that the start time the next day is 9 a.m. and everybody needs to be ready to launch the rafts on time. Ten guides are scheduled to start at 9 a.m. the next day.

At 9 a.m., nine guides appear, ready for the day. David, a veteran guide and one of the best, does not show until 9:32.

You have two options: 1) terminate David or, 2) reprimand David. What option should you choose? How do you justify your decision?

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The Twist

The guides get together and inform you that that all of them will be calling in sick the next day, just when another large group is coming in. The guides have been complaining that your leadership style is creating an unfriendly and hostile workplace. What do you do? What have you learned from this experience?

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