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Customers do not call to chat! They call when they experience a problem!



SAMPLE CHAPTER

CHAPTER THREE: Politics

*Only when the tide goes out do you discover
who's been swimming naked.*

Warren Buffett

Abbey thought she was being held back because of an incident that took place with Martin several years earlier. In a room filled with his peers and superiors Martin touted his knowledge about how a system integration would work with a new product.

Abbey corrected him and that was the turning point in their relationship. She went from his star player to an outsider. Undoubtedly, Abbey had an advocate above his level or, I believe, she would have been gone shortly after that incident. That was the day Martin began speaking harshly to her, marginalizing her contributions, and emotionally demoting her. Even though she had been called upon to fix the problems that few others could resolve Abbey was never considered for awards - with gifts and perks for being highly skilled and valuable to her team and the organization - like many of her less talented peers. Martin excluded Abbey from important meetings and highlighted the work of less talented engineers every chance he got. Yet, despite his treatment of

her, Abbey wanted his respect and stayed on an unending quest to make him acknowledge her as the best in his organization.

Abbey was honest about her frustrations. She had been fixing problems that were passed from engineer to engineer without a resolution. Some of her peers were inadequate at taking the required steps to learn new products in their portfolios and many of their calls landed in Abbey's queue. Some of her peers worked harder to find ways to pass calls on to Abbey than to look for answers to questions they would doubtless encounter again. In other instances, some engineers tried to interrupt her to get answers to questions on products they had already been supporting.

By the time many of our customers reached Abbey they had been through one or two other engineers without a fix. Consequently, they were frustrated with the support they received and biased against Abbey before she could ask the first question. In other cases, customers would not disclose what they had done that may have contributed to the problem. Abbey was especially intolerant of those who tried to misdirect her attention by chit chatting about non-related issues while she tried to get to the crux of their problems.

It was clear to me Abbey was a dedicated employee. It was also clear that she was reaching out for help as much as she was reacting to the failure of her peers to adequately do their jobs and

management to address these problems and acknowledge her good work. She confided she was angry because management never acknowledged that she did most the work, was never late, had not taken a day off in years, or that she was the one who resolved the lion's share of the most difficult problems. I could only assure her that I would work to make things better. At that point I was not sure if anything I could do would make a difference. There was nothing Martin didn't already know about Abbey and nothing I could say or do to change his attitude toward her – she embarrassed him all those years ago and he was going to make her pay for that mistake as long as he could!