



Scenario: The Joy of Giving

Group Size: 4-15

This scenario may contain explicit language and references to harmful situations which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, services are available through the [CAF Member Assistance Program \(CFMAP\)](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).

The unit leadership starts to plan a departure lunch and find a meaningful departure gift for Colonel (Col) Jones, who will be posted out in a month. Captain (Capt) Smith is appointed by Paul Leblanc, her section head, as the lead for selecting, sourcing and purchasing the gift for Col Jones. Capt Smith was a little nervous about this unexpected task. Paul is a hands-off section head and has made it clear that he doesn't like to be copied on emails or disturbed in his office, which makes Capt Smith uncomfortable.

After considerable thought and brainstorming with peers, three options are identified. The first is a gift card for a night in a luxury downtown hotel. There will be no cost to anyone since someone in the unit won it as a prize but is willing to gift it since they won't have the time to use it themselves. The second is a framed print by a prominent war artist that will cost approximately \$500. The third option is two tickets to a hockey game.

Considering Paul's dislike for internal communications, Capt Smith reaches out to the other section heads to conduct a poll to determine which gift option is preferred by everyone in the unit. The gift card for a night at a local hotel wins by a landslide. The framed print comes in second and the hockey tickets option doesn't receive any votes at all.

Two weeks later, Paul requests a project update. Capt Smith advised him of the various options and the poll responses. Paul advised Capt Smith that, in his view, the hotel gift card was not befitting of the rank of Colonel, and he does not support this decision. He says the framed print is expensive but would be more appropriate. The meeting ends and no instructions were given on the purchase of the framed print.

There isn't much time before the luncheon. In haste, and at her own expense, she purchases the framed print. The donation envelope passes around the unit, but the money raised only covers half of what she spent. Capt Smith, who hasn't received any money from Paul for the gift, is now out \$250.00 from her own pocket. Concerned, she speaks to her immediate supervisor, Major Philpott, who gives her \$100 from his own pocket to help offset the cost. One week later, during the departure luncheon, Paul presents the Colonel with the departure gift.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Loyalty, Integrity, Excellence, Courage
Cultural Themes:	Service, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Not Specific
GBA Plus Themes:	Income
Audience:	Defence Team

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle to “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in this setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of loyalty, integrity, excellence, and courage in this setting.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What would you do in this situation? What are the considerations?
 - Allow open discussion from the group.
 - Ethical concerns: Loyalty, that should be reciprocal between commanding officers and subordinates, could have alleviated Capt Smith’s difficulties in assuming an excessive portion of the cost for the gift and seems to be lacking in this situation.
 - Personal factors: While trying to fulfill her duty to uphold the military custom of honouring a departing officer, Capt Smith has been placed in a difficult position bearing an undue portion of the cost for the gift.
2. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation?
 - If Capt Smith tries to take steps to recover the excessive personal costs incurred by her and Major Philpott, there may be negative repercussions depending how Paul reacts to the situation.
 - Consider if departing gifts for commanding officers/leadership may be one of those traditions that needs to be revisited as it fosters elitism and since the same practice is rarely bestowed upon junior team members. Is it fair that junior members are expected to pay out of pocket when someone senior to them gets posted out?
 - How is Paul at odds with integrity, courage, and excellence? Is he demonstrating unethical leadership? Why or why not?
3. What would you do if you were Capt Smith? How do you think the situation was handled by Paul?
 - Allow for open discussion.
 - If the audience is mixed Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) member and Department of National Defence (DND) employees, discuss how different CAF and DND cultures, including sub-cultures, perceive this scenario.
4. What are some potential courses of action that could be taken in this scenario?
 - Option 1: Capt Smith could accept the financial loss and consider it a lesson learned.
 - Option 2: As Capt Smith’s supervisor, Major Philpott could discuss the situation with Paul and seek support in obtaining a fair outcome for all concerned.
 - Option 3: Paul could realize his mistake and steps up without prompting to alleviate the financial shortfall for Capt Smith and Major Philpott since the choosing of the more expensive gift was his decision.