**Part 1 Critical Incidents**

**Critical Incident 1-1**

**The Opportunity of a Lifetime?**

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Evaluate the offer made to Randy Harber. Do you agree that this is the opportunity of a lifetime? Why or why not?

Students’ answers will vary. The new project poses a great opportunity for Randy Harber, but it may also have loopholes. There might be problems (language, culture, living conditions, and policies) associated with this project that Randy may not be able to handle. Students can make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of being posted to a job abroad. Family issues may also be considered.

1. What factors should Harber consider, and how should Harber evaluate his career options?

Students’ answers will vary. However, some students may suggest that Harber should consider how his family would feel about shifting to a whole new place. He should weigh the pros and cons of moving. He should also try to figure out a way in which he could stay and still manage to get a promotion. If he is going to take up the offer, he should be prepared for the project and should also be able to manage his family.

1. If you were Randy Harber, what would you do and why? (Before you answer these questions, you may want to check some Web sites to get information on Liberia’s history, economy, business and governmental practices, policies, culture, language, and living conditions.)

Students’ answers will vary. Students should look up various Web sites and make a list of things that an employee should be prepared for before taking up a job in Liberia. All countries do not have the same culture, practices, policies, languages, and so on. The employee should be able to meet all the expectations the job demands and should also be familiar with the rules and regulations of Liberia.

**Critical Incident 1-2**

**Government Brings Reality Close to Home**

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What external forces could impact the future of Franklin Hinton’s fast food business?

Students’ answers may vary. External forces such as media reports influencing fast food employees, pressure created from competitors, and employees wanting to join labor unions may affect Hinton’s fast food business. Also, students at the local university seemed always to be willing to join any type of social or political protest, which may cause unwanted negative publicity and a potential for losing business.

1. Franklin needs a plan for future success. Define planning as it relates to his business.

How will an effective plan help him and his employees be more effective in providing quality service to customers?

Students’ answers will vary. Franklin needs to strategically plan for crisis management. An effective plan will help keep things cordial between Franklin and his employees, and if the employees are content, then the service provided to the customers will be of good quality. Franklin must conduct a market research and also find out how other franchises are dealing with this kind of a problem. He should monitor the external environment for forces that are beyond the control of the business that could affect its long-term performance. He could involve his employees in the process of finding a practical and feasible system to follow. He could also research other ways to increase the business’s revenues.

1. Regardless of the situation, employees must understand fully the mission and vision of the company. What do you suggest that Franklin might do to help his employees be the best they can be?

Students’ answers will vary. Effective strategic planning usually begins with the development of a mission statement that reflects the philosophy and purpose of the organization as defined by its top leadership. The vision statement should reflect the firm’s core values, priorities, and goals, which can be translated into concrete plans and actions. Franklin should have regular meetings with his employees, communicate with them about the issue, and ask them for their point of view. He should develop and initiate strategic initiatives that support the company’s mission and objectives. He should be able to clarify all their doubts and thus maintain the trust and rapport he initially had with them.

1. In your opinion, if the minimum wage in your state is increased to $10, $12, or $15 an hour, what impact will it have on the fast food industry? Will an increase in the minimum wage have an impact on customer service or quality of product? Discuss.

Students’ answers will vary. If the minimum wage in the state has been increased, fast food industries will have to double the wages. This would create an increase in the menu prices, which would result in financial disaster. And if the wages are not met, employees may quit the company, and this would lead to a disproportionate staff and work ratio. A change in the minimum wage would lead to an increase in the supervisory salaries. Also, if the minimum wage is not met, the employees may not provide good-quality customer service, and there may be a decrease in the quality of the product offered.

1. What should Franklin do to prepare for the possibility of a union attempt to organize his employees?

Students’ answers will vary. Franklin should plan in advance before crisis strikes. Unions are usually formed because the management fails to respond to employees’ needs effectively. Franklin must cater to his employees’ needs and sort issues out among employees from the very beginning to avoid later confusion. He should monitor employee behavior and be sensitive while communicating with them.

1. If you were Franklin, how would you deal with the uncertainties that could impact the future success of his business and employees?

Students’ answers will vary. Planning for the unthinkable (crisis management) is important. The external environment should be constantly monitored for forces that can impact the future success of a business and employees. Regular meetings and the implementation of policies, strategies, and procedures to ensure that the business provides its best performance is of key priority. Dealing with day-to-day issues that could be a hurdle to the business’s success will help maintain a balance when uncertainties arise. Analyzing problems and developing the best alternatives can help deal with issues more easily.

**Food For Thought Question**

1. One of the toughest jobs for supervisors is how to handle worker complaints, particularly when it deals with compensation. In Chapter 14, we discuss resolving complaints. After reading the ideas in Chapter 14, what suggestions do you have for Franklin regarding how he might deal with workers’ complaints about their challenging jobs and minimal pay?

Students’ answers will vary. Franklin should develop and use a complaint procedure—a management-designed series of steps for handling employee complaints that usually provides for a number of appeals before a final decision. He should also research the trends in other companies for resolving complaints. Some companies have offered their employees assistance in processing complaints by providing a neutral person or a counselor to serve as an intermediary. Buoyed by several recent court decisions, some large companies have instituted mandatory complaint-resolution procedures whose final step is private arbitration. The importance of the supervisor’s handling of employee complaints at the first step cannot be overemphasized. Open and frank communication between all parties is usually the key element in amicable resolution of a problem. Some major guidelines for supervisors to resolve complaints include the following: make time available, listen patiently and with an open mind, distinguish facts from opinions, determine the real issue, check and consult, avoid setting precedents, exercise self-control, minimize delays in reaching a decision, explain decisions clearly and sensitively, keep records and documents, and do not fear a challenge.