**Week 4 Case Studies**

**Changing Jobs and Changing Loyalties: Q4**

**And**

**Two Who Made Waves for the Navy: Q1**

By Matthew Ferry

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**Changing Jobs and Changing Loyalties: Q4**

Question: What does loyalty to the company mean, and how important is it, morally? Under what circumstances, if any, do employees owe loyalty to their employers? When, if ever, do they owe loyalty to their coworkers?

By my definition loyalty to the company means doing the absolute best possible job that you can for your employer at all times, and always trying to portray your employer in the best light possible. This is because it is an easy step to assume that the more successful a company is, then the more successful its employees will be. This definition works from the top all the way down to the lowest employee.

Unfortunately, in today’s economy and society, somewhere down the chain employee loyalty is completely minimized and forgotten about, because they are expendable fodder for the company, to do with as they please. So long as the fodder is moderately loyal to the company, the company will tolerate them. As soon as that loyalty is no longer needed, well they were just fodder, and someone will replace them.

Then of course once you start getting somewhere up the ladder, loyalty suddenly becomes more important because now the employee has access to more sensitive information that the company is entrusting them with. Once you reach this point you have some security, however if the employee crosses what the employer believes is the loyalty line, they can easily find themselves in just as much jeopardy as the next person.

About the only circumstance that I can think of for an employee actually owing their employer loyalty, is when the employer has invested time and money into training the employee in ways that could potentially carry on far beyond the employee’s current employment. This would be items such as college degrees, or skill certifications that are issued by a recognized industry certification group. Of course, loyalty of this type should only be maintained so long as the company maintains the practice of paying for these certifications including renewals of current employees and obtaining them for new employees. As soon as the burden of paying for these certifications falls directly to the employee, then the employee no longer owes the company loyalty on this basis.

As for employee loyalty to their co-workers, I would have to say that that all depends upon the co-worker. In the past there have been co-workers that I have stood up for when the opportunity appropriately presented itself, and there have been employees that I shared no loyalty towards and wanted nothing to do with them. In the case of the first, and appropriately showing loyalty to co-workers, when my last employer first hired me, there was an “employee of the month”. Management chose the candidates for the employee of the month, however the actual winner was chosen by employee vote. As such, it could be seen as a popularity contest, but this gave the employees opportunities to support those that they felt deserved the award, especially since due to company size the nominees could easily be repeated. Aside from this instance, I cannot think of any other instance to show co-worker loyalty that would not also carry the risk of one’s own employment.

**Two Who Made Waves for the Navy: Q1**

Question: Do you think Storms and Ahearn qualify as Whistle-Blowers? What do you think their motives were?

For me, Storms qualifies as a whistle-blower, while I’m not so sure about Ahearn. While Ahearn put the Navy in the spot light, he didn’t necessarily bring to light a topic that wasn’t known. I say this because there have been how many countless other Navy sailors in the same position with the same duties as Ahearn over the years of the USA navy? The number is probably staggeringly high, and the fact that Ahearn is the only person to ever have said anything, just doesn’t seem logical for a “whistle-blower” type situation.

One also has to think of Ahearns decision process. His process wasn’t to take this issue up with the appropriate chain of command, and continue to take it up the chain of the command until appropriate action was taken, thereby making it a “whistle-blowing” incident for me. Instead, he chose the option of running away from the problem. First he tried to get transferred to a different position off ship, and when that didn’t work he went AWOL.

When he finally decided to turn himself in for going AWOL, then and only then did the issue receive any of attention, and while it did prompt the Navy to publicly change its policy in regards to plastic trash, in the end the only thing that was remembered was Ahearn went AWOL.

Because of this, I believe that Ahearn was motivated only by his self interests of no longer wanting to be in the Navy because he didn’t agree with that particular policy. His goal was not to change the policy, but change his situation so that he no longer had to deal with it.

Storms on the other hand I definitely see as a “whistle-blower”, this is because he was not motivated by his own self interests and trying to change his situation, but was motivated by trying to correct outlandish government spending and budget decisions that were costing the American tax payer a fortune in bad decisions.

Storms took the appropriate channels to make sure that the issue was brought to light, by going through the various auditing committees that were available to him, and he stuck by his decisions. Eventually after rocking the boat enough, the government and his employer tried unsuccessfully to persuade him to “shut up” about these issues.

By his not refusing to back down on the issues that he was presenting, they received appropriate attention, and even steps towards proper resolution.