Tactical Decision Game Generator

Introduction

A Tactical Decision Game (TDG) is a scenario, typically involving some form of conflict and urgency, in which the mental agility and thought processes of a mentee can be developed. It is usually administered by someone with skill in the area being brought up (for example, a Sergeant in the Army would instruct a Private in infantry tactics). It is a low cost, low time investment that yields significant improvements in the judgement and decisiveness of an employee over time, while also building trust and camaraderie.

How it Works

A somewhat vague scenario is given. This ambiguity is by design in order to allow the mentee the option of asking clarifying questions. This gives the mentor insight into where the mentee’s thought process is taking them. A time limit of typically one to two minutes is established for the mentee to determine their course of action and then brief their plan of action and their reasoning. During this time, the mentor should seek to criticize the plan and reasons given in order to generate additional conversation and “what if” scenarios. Throughout this process, the mentor should guide the mentee’s thoughts towards what he or she deems as the appropriate response or behavior, typically aligned with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) or best practices.

The mentor may add to the scenario (slightly) in order to guide the conversation. For example, in the first scenario below, the mentee may state that they’d ask for the keys. The mentor could play that out and say that he refuses, gets belligerent, and starts walking back towards the forklift. Now what?

Below are several scenarios to generate initial conversations, as well as to generate ideas for mentors to develop and implement their own TDG’s.

Drunk Forklift Operator Scenario

 You are an HR Manager at a backpack manufacturing company. Each day you take 20 minutes when you first arrive to walk through the different areas of the company to see how people are doing and address concerns. As you pass through the shipping area, you stop to speak with a senior forklift operator as he hops off his forklift and you sense a strong smell of alcohol on his breath.

 This man has been with the company for 9 years and has trained most of the current forklift operators. He’s a steady employee but is known to have a bit of a temper, though nothing severe. He’s never had any disciplinary or legal issues. There aren’t any other people in the shipping area yet. He’s obviously been operating the forklift for several minutes. What do you do?

Considerations:

1) Does your position in the company affect your decision to act in a certain way?

2) Should your physical stature influence your choices in this scenario?

3) Can you be certain that he is actually drunk, or is it possible that he simply has alcohol on his clothing from the previous day?

4) What are the possible ramifications of delaying action 5 minutes? 30 minutes? An hour?

5) What would you do if he gets aggressive? Why?

Sexual Harassment Charge Scenario

 You are a foreman on a construction job site. One of the female workers comes to you as you pull up to the site and says she needs to speak with you immediately. She states that another male employee has just made very explicit sexual comments to her directly, and even went so far as to reach for her shoulder as she attempted to walk away. She is clearly distraught. She’s been with your company for a few months, and has been a mediocre employee so far, with nothing outstanding in either performance or attitude.

 The male employee she pointed at is working with a group of other male employees. You recognize him as a good worker with a bit of an attitude problem. As you walk up to him, you notice that the other employees act normally, as does he. You ask him to step aside and talk in private for a moment. When you bring up what the female worker said, he emphatically denies it and calls another worker over who also denies the allegations. What do you do?

Considerations:

1) Does your position in the company affect your decision to act in a certain way?

2) Should you attempt to find out as much as you can right now, or delay until another time?

3) Do you have an obligation to interrogate, or should you pass this to another person or entity, such as HR or legal?

4) Should law enforcement be called?

5) What are the consequences of interrogating a woman who was potentially just sexually harassed?

6) What are the consequences of interrogating a potential suspect of sexual harassment?

7) What might happen if you delay questioning?

8) What might happen if you delay reporting to the appropriate channels by one hour? One Day?

Immoral Leader Scenario

 You are an employee in an office setting. You’ve worked at your current job for two years. You notice that your supervisor stays clocked in when they leave for lunch, but you are certain that they are supposed to clock out, as is everyone in accordance with company policy. When you overhear the manager ask them why they’ve been working so hard and missing their lunches, you hear your supervisor tell her that he’s just got too much to do to take a lunch break. She seems to accept this and even tells him how much she appreciates his hard work, though she encourages him to start taking lunch again. Your supervisor walks by, unaware that you just heard this conversation. What do you do?

Considerations:

1) Do you confront your supervisor? If so, is now the best time, or should it be delayed? Why or why not?

2) Should you speak with the manager without conversing with your supervisor first? What are the possible consequences of doing so?

3) What are the ramifications of delaying action? What are the ramifications of never acting upon this?

4) Should you seek to address this anonymously through the company’s reporting system, or speak directly about it? Why?