Case #3

# Case Abstract

Truss Right is a fictional company that has recently hired a new employee (the student) as Plant Coordinator. The manager is looking to promote an employee to the Quality Control position that would demand a significant raise. Students working through this case are asked to write a brief memo to the Plant Manager that will help inform the decision for the hire.

**Keywords:** Memo, Ethics, Audience, Data, and Professionalism.

# Teaching Goals

The goal of this case is to teach students how to write an ethical memo for a specific audience within a specific context.

# Learning Objective

Students will learn to:

* Analyze audience, context, and data
* Consider ethics in professional communication
* Write a memo in a professional environment

# Possible Deliverables

* Brief Memo
* Audio recording of report
* Video recording of report

# Outcomes

This case places students in a situation that will help them understand how ethics can play an important role in professional communication. They should be able to analyze data provided and evaluate the context and audience for their memo.

# Case Overview

Truss Right is a roof truss manufacturer in the Midwest that has been leading the industry since 1999. A small operation in Middletown, Iowa, this company has seen significant changes since the economic downturn in 2008 but has rebounded in recent years. You’ve been hired recently as the Plant Coordinator, a position that puts you as the mediator between employees and management. There is an opening for the Quality Control manager that two current employees are in contention for.

The Plant Manager, John Harding, has asked for you to write a brief report that will help inform his decision between the two job candidates. Mr. Harding has yearly evaluation numbers for each employee along with current salaries and job titles, but he doesn’t spend enough time in the production shop to judge their work habits and is too busy to analyze the data from the evaluation numbers. You spoke with the Plant Supervisor, Jason Roberts, and he has given you some personal notes on each employee, detailing their work history and some biographical information.

## Your Task

Write a brief memo to Mr. Harding that gives the best candidate for the job opening. Analyze the data from the evaluations and the input from the supervisor about each employee (see video) to help write your report. Consider how you might ethically incorporate what you have learned about these employees.

# Supervisor’s Personal Notes

## Patrick

**Job Title: Salary : Age: Experience:**

Table Leader $14.95/hr 34 9 years

**Work Profile:**

Patrick’s background is a little troubled with felony charges and no high school diploma, but his younger, troubled years are in the past and has shown nothing but great maturity. If anything, Patrick has used his past to help mentor new employees with struggling backgrounds.

Since he started at Truss Right, Patrick has moved to table leader faster than any other employee. He can work in any position on the truss production lines but excels in his current position that is one of the most important in the plant. He is the supervisor’s go-to guy for hard deadlines and never fails to complete them. His production percentage is always highest in the shop and builds the vast majority of the high dollar trusses, such as large span trusses for Ag buildings.

His attendance is excellent, never missing a day, always arriving on time, and while he stays late only occasionally, he works some weekends. Steady performance, building experience and knowledge, quick skill acquisition, and reliability have been Patrick’s greatest assets to Truss Right.

**Personal Biography:**

Patrick is married with a 13 year-old daughter that he coaches softball for. He has dedicated a lot of his time and life to raising his only child and spends a lot of his weekends in the summer at softball tournaments. Patrick has been offered positions at other companies during his time at Truss Right, but he has been biding his time here hoping for a solid raise and promotion.

## Robbie

**Job Title: Salary : Age: Experience:**

Saw Operator $14.25/hr 48 11 years

**Work Profile:**

Robbie currently works in the cutting room as a sawyer for the newest automated cut-off saw. The automated saw cost $500 thousand to purchase new, so it was imperative for Truss Right to pick the right person to manage by far the biggest purchase the company has made to date. Robbie’s ability to learn new technology, attention to details, and high regard for proper treatment of equipment made him the only candidate.

Robbie is a very versatile worker that is able to move into most jobs in the shop and can even fill in outside in the yard as a forklift operator. When he is at work he keeps a consistent pace everyday but is not necessarily the fastest; however, he never needs told what to do or how to do it. The quality of his work is one of the best and keeps pace with the younger employees.

Robbie’s attendance is above average, missing days once every few months but only after going through the proper channels using vacation and sick days for excusable absences. He is early everyday, returns to his station directly after breaks, and maintains a clean workspace, which is especially important maintaining the saw. Daily production output along with minimal errors, downtime, and cleanliness are Robbie’s greatest assets to Truss Right.

**Personal Biography:**

Robbie is a single father of a 14 year-old girl. He has struggled to recover debt from numerous knee operations that he has undergone as well as managing medical expenses for his daughter’s diabetes. Truss Right has been able to keep him afloat, but Robbie has confessed to several employees that he is considering other employment if he continues to be passed for promotion.