



## Communicating Changes

### Overview

This situational dilemma was designed to explore the impact of the Values on decision-making at our company. The dilemmas presented in the cases were developed with our company culture and business situation in mind. This was done to closely simulate the types of challenges that associates throughout the company experience on the job.

### Instructions

The situational dilemma is intended to stimulate discussions about the Values in small group settings. Take 10 minutes to read the situation and answer the discussion questions. Spend the next 15 minutes analyzing and discussing situational dilemma as a group. Keep in mind that there isn't always a "right" answer to the dilemmas posed in the scenarios; the value generated by the situational dilemma is often in the richness of the discussion that takes place.

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### Doing the Right Thing

Helen, an associate who has been with the company for several years, is seen as a leader by her peers even though she has no direct reports. Associates respect Helen and particularly appreciate that she tends to keep them informed about events, trends and changes that occur within the organization. She recently heard rumors about a reorganization in her department. According to the rumor, some, but not all, associates could be redeployed to other parts of the company. And others may have to leave the organization since there will continue to be a reduced number of internal opportunities. Also, the final decision has not yet been made, but it is very likely to happen.

In the past, Helen has observed that most communication about major organizational changes has been handled fairly well. However, at this time she is concerned that the recent pace of change in the company has been so rapid, the overall number of changes so significant, and the size of the changes already under way could make it difficult for management to effectively communicate the purpose and plan to associates. She finds herself wondering, *"How will one more change impact my teammates' ability to focus?"* and worries that, if it's not handled really well, some of the best people will be tempted to seek work in other organizations with a more "stable" environment.

Helen thinks her manager will wait to the "last minute" to tell her and her team about this change if it's true. She thinks all associates should know about the reorganization as soon as possible so they can



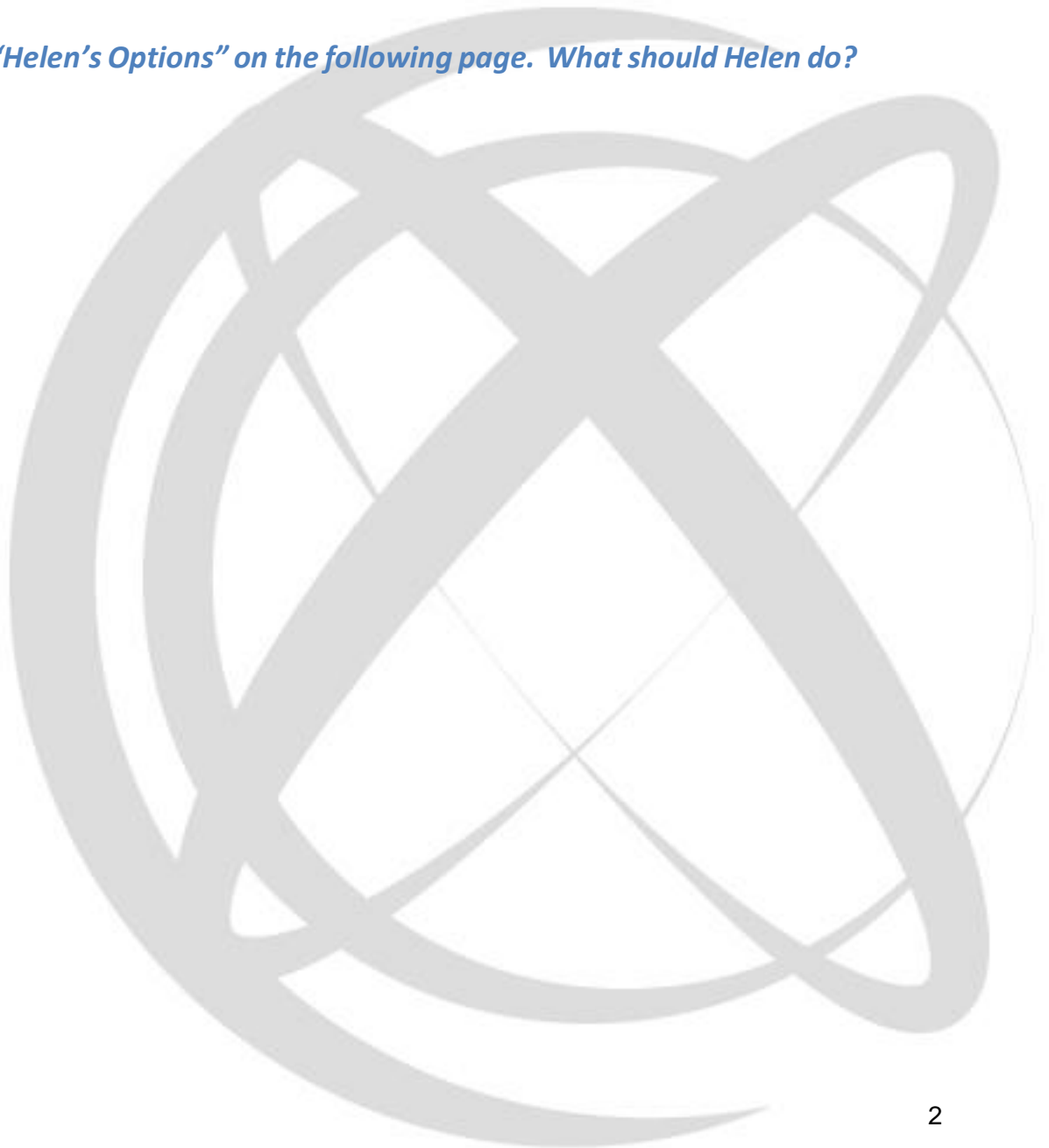
prepare for it. Helen wants to maintain her credibility with her peers and do the right thing, and she knows that associates are looking for answers. She also knows, however, that the rumor might not be true and repeating it might create a high level of unnecessary anxiety.

As a team, familiarize yourself with the Corporate Values, reviewing all the Behavioral Descriptors. Keep these in mind as you discuss the questions noted below.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- *What Values are addressed in the case scenario?*
- *In what ways could the Values be used to guide the decisions and situations presented in the case?*

***Review “Helen’s Options” on the following page. What should Helen do?***





## Helen's Options

**Time Limit: 10 minutes**

Which option should Helen take to be in the greatest alignment with the Values?

1. Schedule a meeting with her manager to discuss the situation. Ask directly if the rumor is true. Take whatever guidance her manager provides.
2. Meet with her manager to discuss the situation, and share what she has heard as well as her concerns about the possible impact on the team. Propose to her manager that the rumor be addressed with the team as openly and quickly as possible, suggest a few specific steps that could be taken, and offer to help the manager prepare for the dialogue.
3. During a weekly team meeting with her manager, don't speak up about the rumor. Other associates may not have heard about it, and bringing up the issue may put the manager "on the spot" to address it when not ready. She decides to try to catch her manager after the meeting and ask questions about the rumor.
4. Have an informal conversation with associates and provide them with the information she knows. Explain the scenarios that possibly could occur within the next few months. Explore the potential reorganization as well as other possibilities so that associates can begin to embrace the potential change.
5. Wait for her manager to address the situation, as a change management plan may already be in place. Any other action may cause a disruption in achieving business results.

**Agree on an option before proceeding.**



## Analysis and Discussion

Option 1 is inconsistent with our Values. To live our Values, Helen should consider the needs of her audience, the appropriate timing of her communication and what pieces of information she can share.

While Option 5 may be the preferred approach in some situations, overall it is **less likely** to allow associates to *embrace change*, plan for minimizing the impact on the business or determine how to continue to deliver value to customers during the transition.

Both Options 3 and 4 give associates a chance to *embrace change* and involve *communicating openly and honestly*. Option 3 is in greater alignment with the Values because it addresses the potential impact on the business and delivering value to customers.

By pursuing Option 2 Helen acts in an *empowered* manner and exercises a leadership role in which she *embraces change, collaborates with her manager, communicates directly*, communicates her understanding of the need to retain valued associates, shows strong *teamwork*, and encourages her manager to *consider the needs of individuals* on the team.

### Follow-Up Questions:

- *Based on your team's discussion, what Values are addressed in the case scenario? Identify the specific behaviors or actions that led you to your conclusions.*
- *What challenges have you faced, or are you currently facing, in living these Values?*
- *What can you do to more consistently live these Values on a day-to-day basis?*