**Case 1-10 Better Boston Beans**

Better Boston Beans is a coffee shop located in the Faneuil Hall Marketplace near the waterfront and Government Center in Boston. It specializes in exotic blends of coffee, including Sumatra Dark Roast Black, India Mysore “Gold Nuggets,” and Guatemala Antigua. It also serves a number of blended coffees, including Reggae Blend, Jamaican Blue Mountain Blend, and Marrakesh Blend. For those with more pedestrian tastes, the shop serves French Vanilla, Hazelnut, and Hawaiian Macadamia Nut varieties. The coffee of the day varies, but the most popular is Colombia Supremo. The coffee shop also serves a variety of cold-blended coffees.

Cyndie Rosen has worked for Better Boston Beans for six months. She took the job right out of college because she wasn’t sure whether she wanted to go to graduate school before beginning a career in financial services. Cyndie hoped that by taking a year off before starting her career or going on to graduate school, she would experience “the real world” and find out firsthand what it is like to work a 40-hour week. (She did not have a full-time job during her college years because her parents paid for the tuition and books.)

Because Cyndie is the “new kid on the block,” she is often asked to work the late shift, from 4 p.m. to midnight. She works with one other person, Jeffrey Levy, who is the assistant shift supervisor. Jeffrey has been with Boston Beans for three years but recently was demoted from shift supervisor. Jeffrey reports to Sarah Hoffman, the new shift supervisor. Sarah reports to David Cohen, the owner of the store.

For the past two weeks, Jeffrey has been leaving before 11 p.m., after most of the stores in the Marketplace close, and he has asked Cyndie to close up by herself. Cyndie feels that this is wrong and it is starting to concern her, but she hasn’t spoken to Jeffrey or anyone else. Basically, she is afraid to lose her job. Her parents have told her that financially she is on her own. They were disappointed that Cyndie did not go to graduate school or interview for a professional position after graduating from college.

Something happened that is stressing Cyndie out and she doesn’t know what to do about it. At 11 p.m. one night, 10 Japanese tourists came into the store for coffee. Cyndie was alone and had to rush around and make five different cold-blended drinks and five different hot-blended coffees. While she was working, one of the Japanese tourists, who spoke English very well, approached her and said that he was shocked that such a famous American coffee shop would only have one worker in the store at any time during the workday. Cyndie didn’t want to ignore the man’s comments, so she answered that her coworker had to go home early because he was sick. That seemed to satisfy the tourist.

It took Cyndie almost 20 minutes to make all the drinks and also field two phone calls that came in during that time. After she closed for the night, she reflected on the experience. Cyndie realized that it could get worse before it gets better because Jeffrey was now making it a habit to leave work early.

At this point, Cyndie realizes that she either has to approach Jeffrey about her concerns or speak to Sarah. She feels much more comfortable talking to Sarah because, in Cyndie’s own words, “Levy gives me the creeps.”

**Questions**

1. **Do you think it was right for Cyndie to tell the Japanese tourist that “her coworker had to go home early because he was sick?”**

The Japanese tourist asked a question that he had no expectation or right to know. However, the question is whether Cyndie should have lied to cover for her co-worker? Cyndie should consider in the future that the customers of the coffee shop should not be informed that she is working alone on the night shift. It may encourage some of those customers to rob the store. Cyndie should have smiled and replied in a vague sense that her co-worker was off the floor at present. She has no ethical obligation to explain to them the inner-workings of the entity.

1. **Cyndie decided to speak with Jeffrey. From an ethical perspective, do you think Cyndie made the right decision as opposed to speaking directly with either Sarah Hoffman or David Cohen? Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?**

This case causes students to consider the loyalty to a co-worker versus loyalty to the employer; telling versus tattling.

Cyndie has a right to expect co-workers to do their fair share and not have to cover for them. Jeffrey has a right to be warned of complaints against him and a chance to reform. Sarah has a right to know what is happening on the late shift.

The core values in this case are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness and caring. These values are particularly important in dealing with Jeffrey leaving work early. Will Cyndie be helping Jeffrey more by hiding his absenteeism or by turning him into the manager?

From an ethical perspective, Cyndie is giving Jeffrey a chance to reform his ways before she goes to Sarah. As the more senior person, Jeffrey should be shouldering more of the responsibility for the shift. Leaving so much for Cyndie to cope with is a disservice to her and may cause her to look for another job. Cyndie is empathetic and caring, although she has to consider her caring obligation for the entity and responsibility to Sarah and David.

Cyndie could go directly to Sarah or the owner with her concerns. The delay in going to one of them is a potential delay in getting the problem permanently solved. This is a personnel matter; the manager and the owner should have been more proactive in placing a new hire with an employee who has shown that he cannot handle responsibility.

Cyndie and the store owner need to consider the risk of having a single employee close the store each night. Have the students consider why the store had two employees at night in the first place. Beyond the safety issue to the worker and the potential of theft by a robber, the reason is internal control. It is easier for a worker working alone to embezzle money from the store.

1. **During their discussion, Jeffrey tells Cyndie that he has an alcohol problem. Lately, it’s gotten to him really bad. That’s why he’s left early—to get a drink and calm his nerves. Jeffrey also explains that this is the real reason he was demoted. He had been warned that if one more incident occurred, David would fire him. He pleaded with Cyndie to work with him through these hard times. How would you react to Jeffrey’s request if you were Cyndie? Would your answer change if Jeffrey was a close personal friend instead of someone who gave you the creeps? Why or why not?**

Jeffrey is appealing to Cyndie based on co-worker loyalty to overlook his lapse. If she does nothing, a valid question is whether she is enabling his bad behavior. Sometimes the difficult decision is the one that best helps a person in need. Is this a situation where an intervention is called for in the best interests of everyone?

Ask students if they have been placed in a similar situation at work. This request is complicated by the fact that Jeffrey is asking for Cyndie not only for her loyalty but to become a co-dependent in his alcoholism. Cyndie and the store owner need to consider the risk of having a single employee close the store each night.

1. **Assume that Cyndie keeps quiet. The following week, another incident occurs. Cyndie gets into a shouting match with a customer who became tired of waiting for his coffee after 10 minutes. Cyndie felt terrible about it, apologized to the customer after serving his coffee, and left work that night wondering if it was time to apply to graduate school. The customer was so irate that he contacted David and expressed his displeasure about both the service and Cyndie’s attitude. David asks to meet with Jeffrey, Sarah, and Cyndie the next day. What are Cyndie’s ethical responsibilities at this point?**

The managers should talk to Cyndie about the complaint and the situation. Sarah should ask what is going on with the evening shift. Cyndie should be honest with them about the challenges of being alone on the night shift. At this point the matter has gone beyond just Cyndie’s and Jeffrey’s work relationship and Cyndie should understand that her ultimate responsibility is to David, Sarah and the coffee shop. The managers should listen to Cyndie and address remedies to the situation, and then see if the situation improves. At the same time, Jeffrey should be talked to and an agreement reached with respect to his role going forward. Sarah should consider randomly visiting the shop during the night shift to observe for herself the situation.