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What happened to the glass blower who inhaled worksheet answers

When Ken Deaver, CEO of Fairway Electric, promoted me to vice president of the nuclear division, I was on top of the world. Now, just a month later, it seems that the world is on me. I'm used to having a team to share problems, but now I'm on my own. At least Ken's door was always open to me. He has been my mentor ever since I started working in the fairway eight years ago and he is really responsible for my success here. I owe him a lot. But when I think back over the last few weeks, I have to wonder whether I should listen to him on this one. It started the morning I entered my office to find Jim Bauer, one of my old teammates, waiting for me. He apologized for having the wrong time, but said it was really important. I've been working with Jim for over four years. If he says it's important, it's important. What happened? I asked. Bob, he said, I was running against something I can't handle alone. I hate to throw this on you when you're just starting your new job, but that's what I have to take to my boss and it's you now. Of course, Jim. Whatever it is, you got my help. He took a couple of deep breaths before he continued. You know how cramped we are for the space downstairs. Well, yesterday I asked my secretary to clean all the files over five years old. Before she left for the day, she put old files on my desk so I could look through them. And I couldn't believe what I found. Jim pulled the red notebook out of his briefcase. I found this report, written 15 years ago by two engineers in the nuclear unit. This is a flaw in our design of the Radon II nuclear reactor. It wasn't a security risk, but it would delay construction and cost a lot to fix. The report said Fairway was going to redesign the design. But listen to this note from the head of the nuclear unit. Jim opened the notebook and read from a sheet fastened on the inside cover. Potential problems in Radon II's design are alarming. However, they do not pose a security risk. Therefore, it would be counterproductive to stop selling design. If there is a problem with fittings, they will appear as the plant is built, after which the necessary adjustments can be made. The need for modernization is not uncommon. Our experience shows that customers rarely complain about such additional costs. Jim closed his notebook and looked up. This note makes me sick, Bob. I can't believe Fairway would risk its reputation by selling plans they knew were wrong. These clients bought the projects thinking they were the best on the market. But Radon II took longer to build and cost a bunch more money, what Fairway told customers. That is, Maybe the reason utilities never complained is because they could pass the costs on to payers. But it's a real rip-off, and the best guys at Fairway knew about it. Jim threw a notepad on my desk and looked at me, his face flushed. Don't you think engineering should know about this? He said. I've never seen Jim like that. Of course I was very upset myself. This report was new to me too. But I had a lot of faith in Fairway, so I wasn't going to draw conclusions. I told Jim I'd pick up a few questions and get back to him by the end of the day. I went straight to Ken's office, remembering everything I could about the Radon II reactor. Jim was right that no one ever complained about the delays and costs of refitting. But I recalled one case when a utility company converted Radon II into a coal-fired power plant because of cost overruns. In this case, the utility paid for the conversion, and it did not go to the betting base. When I showed the report to Ken, he recognized him right away. How does Jim get hold of this? He asked. He discovered it by accident - cleaning up old files, I said. Ken's office suddenly turned out to be very capaken. I thought this report was dead and buried, he said. Have you read it? Enough to get the drift, I said. Then we were at the center of the energy crisis. Everyone was in a hurry to build nuclear power plants. We were under tremendous pressure to come up with a winning design, and Radon II was what we decided. After a few plants went on construction, some problems surfaced, so we put a couple of engineers on it. We wouldn't have any customers left. We decided that we would solve the problem as soon as we could, but at the same time we would sell the original design. It was basically very good. And it was safe. I can't believe we're risking our reputation like this. I know that's not how we usually work, but it shows you the pressure we've been under, Ken said. The whole division would go down. There was no other way. I didn't feel comfortable putting Ken on the defensive. I always trusted his judgment. Who was I to fry it about something that happened 15 years ago when I wasn't even around? However, I had to click on the point. So what am I going to tell Jim? I asked. No problem. It's ancient history. The engineers who wrote this report are long gone. Look at it this way, the fact that we commissioned the study the problem shows that we care about quality. Eventually we pulled out the bugs. Besides, it's never been a security issue. It was just a matter of some additional work during construction. But what about all the cost overruns? If Fairway hasn't swallowed them, someone else should have like utilities or their customers. Look, Bob, what's past is over. What would we get by bringing this to the open today? But I guarantee we have a lot to lose. Regulators and some shareholders would like to blame us for all exorbitant cost overruns. And anti-nuclear groups will have a field day. We have enough problems with obtaining licenses. We're going to lose a lot of business, you know. I'm talking about hundreds of jobs here, and the very survival of this company. Maybe we're not perfect, but we're the most conscientious, quality corporation I know. What am I going to do about this report? I asked. Deep-six of it. Like we should have done a long time ago. Tell Jim Bauer what I told you and explain why there is no reason to make a question about it at this late date. I nodded in agreement and headed back to my office. I found Jim waiting. He frowned when I reported Ken's reaction. So you're telling me to forget that I've ever seen a report? And I suppose that means you're going to forget I showed it to you. See, Ken has some good reasons for not wanting to make a question about it. I may or may not agree with him, but he runs the show. Hell, Bob! Jim screamed. If we go along with this, we are just as guilty as the people who sold these bad projects 15 years ago. Cool, cool. I know what you're saying, but Ken's a realist. In the end, no one was hurt, the cost was spread to many people and the problem was fixed. If it's exposed, it could really hurt us. No, I'm not going to cool down. Maybe it's similar to Ken's ancient history, but if we don't make a clean slate now, it could happen again. One of the reasons I took this job is because Fairway is a company I can respect. What should I think now? I see your point of view, I replied, but I also see Ken. And he's the boss. Maybe you should talk to him. If I can't reach you, I don't see how I'm going to get to him. So I think that's it. As it turned out, that was not the point. When Jim left my office, he didn't immediately return to work. First he went to the newspaper, and the story appeared two days later. Fairway Sold Defective Reactors-Report Warned Hazard Naturally, The Reporter Got It All Wrong and Blasted the problem out of proportion. He didn't even have a copy of the report. I suppose we didn't help the issues though. When a reporter called for comment, Ken asked him to call back a couple of hours later. Then Ken and I met with our relationship officer, Amy Toun, to discuss how to handle the situation. Amy thought we should be clean, admit we made a mistake, and highlight the fact that our record over the last five years has been excellent. But Ken felt that the less we said, the sooner it would explode. I went with him. When the reporter called, Ken replied: No comment. The article stated that an anonymous source still considers Fairway a reliable builder of nuclear power plants and that it is a good company with many qualified and highly principled employees. The source went to the newspaper because he felt it was his ethical duty to consumers who were forced to pay for Fairway's mistakes. But this part of the story was buried in the next last paragraph. Needless to say, the public outcry was intense. Antinuk activists have withdrawn from the yen, and politicians have delivered more holy speeches than you. After a couple of days, after hearing the phones ring off the hook, we realized that stonewalling was exacerbating our problems. So we made a clean chest of it. We produced a statement to the press stating that Fairway engineers actually discovered design flaws in 1973, but that the company fixed the problem within 14 months. Ken made himself available to answer questions, and he and Amy agreed to meet with community leaders. They even invited experts from the university to answer technical questions. The essence of this effort was to reassure the public that no flaws had been found since 1973 and that all Fairway projects were safe. Thanks to Amy and Ken, the controversy has finally been edged. I was proud of the way they handled things. I was also glad that Ken didn't fire Jim. At the height of the crisis, someone at headquarters suggested he get rid of the troublemaker, but Ken thought it would only make things worse. I didn't want to get Jim out of it either. I felt like he was still a valuable worker. I knew he was loyal to Fairway, and we're sure he needs his skills. We have endured these difficult weeks with only a few pending lawsuits, but an ugly incident like that never has a simple ending. It continues to unravel. Now we have another problem. It became known that Jim was a whistleblower, and now his life here is miserable. It feels like Jim can't be trusted. Last week, Lorraine Helman, another former teammate, came to talk to me about the problem. You know, it's not that anyone hates Jim for what he did,' she said. It's just that no one can understand why he did it. They could understand this if someone was injured or killed because of poor construction, but it wasn't. In their opinion, he risked his job for what happened a long time ago. Morale is pretty low in the trenches, she added. One guy told me what he used, be proud of where he worked. Now his neighbors razz it about Radon-gate and and Radon. No one wants to work with Jim, and it affects our products. I felt terrible about Jim. Unlike others, I understood why he did what he did and I respected his honesty. On the other hand, I wasn't surprised that his colleagues resented it. But the situation seemed to be getting worse, not better. Yesterday, Ken came to see me about the growing problems in Jim's department. He suggested that Jim might want to resign, and that we could give him a very generous package if he did. I knew where Ken was going. He didn't want to stir up trouble by shooting the informant, but he thought we could get around him by pushing Jim to leave alone. That would solve all our problems. Of course, Ken just wanted what was best for Fairway, but I resisted the idea. I argued that the problems were temporary, and threw in a few comments about Jim's outstanding performance. I decided I had to protect him. In the end, Jim did a noble thing, and it didn't seem right that he should get a shaft. But Ken persisted. He was worried about meeting goals and didn't think one person should be able to make everyone else look bad. He asked me to talk to Jim. Jim has been avoiding me since he showed me the report, and perhaps I avoided it too. Worst of all, it ruined our friendship. However, he agreed to meet me in my office. I tried to break the ice by reaching out and saying I missed him. But he ignored that gesture and muttered something about being busy. So I decided to go straight into I heard about the problems that you had with the team. This thing takes its toll -- on the fairway, your department, and you. I can handle it. Or maybe that's not your point of view. You're saying the company doesn't want me around anymore? Look, Jim, I said, I'm sorry it happened. I hate to see you and your family suffer so much. Maybe a move to another office would be the best thing to do. There are other units that could use your talents. You just don't get it, do you, Bob? I have done nothing wrong and I am the one who suffers. People accuse me of a report I didn't write and bad projects I didn't push on clients. And now I'm who you want to go out to. I thought the idea of firing me might happen to someone, but I can't believe you agreed to it. It's one I didn't expect. No one mentioned the shooting, I said. I understand why you're angry that your teammates are hard for you, but why bother me? I am one of the few who understands your position and I have tried to support you. Have you tried to support me? Let me rest! I didn't want to go into this, but now. You raised it, I'm going to lay it out for you. I did not ask to see this report. It fell into my hands. But as soon as it happened, I couldn't just pretend he wasn't there. What the company did was wrong - you know it, and I know it. If someone doesn't say something, Fairway can get off face again. But I certainly don't think you'd make me go for it alone. I didn't expect you to go to the papers, but I expected you to give Ken a strong know that the company would be clean on this. And otherwise, I expected you, as my supervisor, to take this off my shoulders, taking charge. You have more power than me, and you certainly have more influence with Ken. But you acted like it had nothing to do with you, like you were just a messenger. You threw Ken's answer on my lap and washed your hands off the whole thing. I never thought I'd say this, but it's starting to look like you care too much for your fancy new name and your close relationship with Ken. Well, I'm not leaving and I'm not going to leave! I don't know how long I've been sitting at my desk in a daze. After a while I tried to get back to work but I couldn't concentrate. All morning I kept going for what Jim said. How can I protect Jim and the company at the same time? Was Ken wrong? Had Jim really done a noble thing after all? What would you do? Richard B. Priory is Vice President of Design for Duke Power Company. His responsibilities include designing and licensing the company's generating capacity, as well as managing corporate research and development. He is also chairman of the Atomic Industrial Forum's Atomic Power Standards Group. Let Honesty Build Profits: Awareness that management sets the tone for how business is conducted across the company came too late to fairway. Knowing that corporate integrity is an immeasurable asset would save a company of nuclear-sized headaches. Who can calculate how much Ken's business ethic has cost his company over the years, as long-term integrity and success have been compromised for short-term reasons? One problem is how Fairway handled the opening design flaw. A supplier wishing to have a profitable and strong business association with customers would explain the problem, the solution and how the solution will be implemented. Ken had to contact his utility customers, illustrated the problem and solution, and assured them that Fairway would cover additional equipment and work. Had he believed that product quality and simple customer relationships lead to greater long-term profit-profits, which would savings from the kind of utilities and customers paying for recycling-ken would praise the engineers who problems and solutions. Then there's the nuclear issue. Public confidence in nuclear power is fragile, even on better days. And the industry, for the most part, is judged by perception, not reality. Explaining the problem of designing and solving utilities directly early on, especially since there were no safety issues, may well minimize damage on the fairway. As soon as we get to the exhumation of the report, the company's credibility will be damaged. The bag and ashes make up the dress of the day. Finally, there is the problem of people. When the report reappears, Fairway doesn't just miss the boat, it falls into the water. Management is virtually forcing the report to be made public in the worst way, and then allowing staffing problems to deteriorate to an unspecified level. Considering Jim as it was, the company lost the chance to find an ethical solution. Ken seemed interested mainly in defending himself. And Bob didn't know how to react to Jim, an employee to whom the situation was black or white. Here's the best script: Jim brings a report to Bob, who goes to Ken for a background, but not for a solution. Ken offers to re-home the report, but Bob prepares it for the possibility that Jim will not buy this solution. Bob comes back to Jim with all the history: who did what, when and why. Together they move on to the possible solutions and risks of each of them. Together, they decide that the best long-term solution is to reconstitute companies that have spent money to fix a design flaw, but to do so in a way that minimizes damage to existing employees. Bob worked hard to convince Ken that the report would be made public, and the only question was who would do it and how best to manage the beating. Bob begins communication work with his department to explain how employees' problems with management decisions are solved. Now, even if Jim is targeted by other employees as an instigator, the impact is diminished. Beth A. Lewis was involved in the whistleblower case as a work-related manager advising on the Corporation's Data Management Employees Advisory Resources program. She is currently a student at the MIT Sloan Fellows Program. Support Messenger Two common reactions to whistleblowers to respond to a message and ignore the messenger, or to avoid the message and, instead, shoot at the messenger. Any reaction can cause problems. In this case, both reactions occur. At first, Ken and Bob reacted to the opening of the engineering report without considering Jim. They discuss the seriousness of the report, but do not discuss the seriousness of Jim's concerns. Although Jim clearly told Bob that he thought the issue was very important and something I couldn't handle alone, Bob underestimated Jim's motivation when he passed Ken's directive to about it. Despite the seriousness or even veracity of the whistleblower report, managers must recognize a person's beliefs and motivation. The first objective should be to agree on a timely action plan without consensus on the outcome. Bob did this initially when he told Jim that he would ask some questions and get back to him by the end of the day. Bob, however, did not follow, asking Jim what he was willing to do or what he expected. Alternative channels of communication are very important in expository cases. Jim went to the newspaper because he didn't see another avenue in the fairway. In many such cases, the employee may be reluctant to even discuss the problem with his own manager. Feeling a personal risk, a whistleblower often wants to deal with someone who is removed from an immediate situation, is perceived as having authority, and can be contacted anonymously (at least until the trust is established). Telephone hotlines set up for employee assistance programs, corporate security, or ethical issues are an effective channel. Once a whistleblower has called a hotline number, alternative action courses should be available. Some employees may be willing to report openly; some may want anonymity. Some may be willing to go through the chain of control; others may want to deal with the legal department, security or human resources department. In addition, there should be an escalation plan - another channel for voicing concerns - in case the person is not satisfied with the original report. After Jim went to the newspaper, Ken and Bob continued to respond to the message and ignore the messenger. They dealt with external problems and avoided a growing internal problem. Whistleblowers see themselves as going out on a limb. The worst thing to do is cut them off. Even if the informant is anonymous, it is important to have follow-up messages, report what action is being taken, and get shut down. At the end of the case, the management and colleagues wanted to shoot the messenger. This was partly due to Bob's inability to cope with the workplace reaction. More importantly, the whole situation reflects a lack of a corporate position on ethical issues and a reluctance of management to take responsibility. When the CEO seems to be concerned only with short-term goals and avoiding problems, it is not surprising that Bob is left to ask who was wrong or right. It's time for Bob to support the messenger. Myron Peretz Glaser is Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Smith College. Penina Migdal Glaser is a professor of history and dean of Hampshire College. They are currently completing a disclosure study to be published by Basic Books. Don't give it to yours Ammunition Case depicts an employee so blinded by anger that he is willing to jeopardize as his own and his company's reputation. He's more of a caricature than a recognizable whistleblower. Jim's initial reaction to the discovery of the report, however, was typical of the 60 whistleblowers or, as we prefer to call them, the ethical resistance we have studied over the past five years. He believes that customer service is paramount. He worked for the superiors he trusted and believed in both their competence and their willingness to distinguish between appropriate and lawless conduct. Moreover, Jim was convinced that if he understood a significant problem, his superiors would correct it immediately. Like other ethical workers, he was deeply disturbed when responsible superiors, honest people, refused to act within what he saw as organizational norms. Instead of insisting on his fears within the company, Jim inexplicably interrupted an attempt to negotiate a simple solution and contacted the press. He forgot to ensure the accuracy of his allegations by withholding the very report that had so infuriated him, thereby further undermining his position. Of course, given his vociferousness, attempts at anonymity were doomed. Jim's path to public disclosure was highly unusual. More often than not, ethical resistance will follow the path within their organizations. They go up the chain of command and try to convince management to fix unethical or illegal decisions. Resistance also appeal to colleagues and appeal to others's sense of ethics and concern for the organization. When colleagues join a protest, they confirm the whistleblower's position and provide much-needed emotional support. While such an alliance cannot be successful, it helps to nullify the accusations of treason that inevitably arise when resistance extends beyond the company. Jim's reaction is atypical in another important way. None of the ethical resistance we studied was speaking against a 15-year-old or a 10-year-old or even a 5-year-old decision. In almost all cases, staff members protested internally and publicly spilled over only issues that directly affected their work. They acted only when they believed that their silence would make them complicit in the ongoing fraud and misrepresentation, and would harm reckless customers or voters. Ethical resistors were not looking for trouble. However, they have refused to turn their backs on rationalization that this is not their business or that nothing can be done in any way. Retribution against Jim was also unusual. While superiors want to avoid public condemnation, which may come from punishing an ethical worker, they are rarely so gentle as to coax one to resign when his loyalty and judgment have been convicted. Most often, whistleblowers in the industry are fired in a simplified manner. If they to the government, they are often isolated, transferred and then dismissed. Such actions are almost guaranteed when have no peer support and have not cultivated the constant attention of the media or legislators. Jim may have believed that he was on the side of the angels, but he gave his detractors enough ammunition to destroy his authority. He remained completely isolated. The odds against ethical resistance are so high that they should not give their opponents such an overwhelming advantage. Robert L. Dilenschneider is President and Chief Executive Officer of Public Relations firm Hill and Knowlton, Inc. His experience includes working with large corporations, regulators and consumer groups. He oversaw communications operations during the U.S. Steel/Marathon merger, the Kansas City Hyatt disaster, the three-mile-island crash and the Bendix/Martin-Marietta takeover. Consider only ethical public relations alternatives to the firm for clients that priests confessors; therefore, when customers weigh unethical or illegal alternatives, we urge them not to. We won't even discuss such a scenario. We hope that careful consideration and our advice will dissuade them from doing so. The court must prevail. If clients weigh the course of inappropriate actions but have not made any decision, then we must assume their innocence and maintain their trust. While the case is an interesting exercise, I can count on one hand the number of times something like this has happened in the last 20 years. We managed to persuade many clients about poorly conceived, unethical, and sometimes even illegal actions. Rarely will a client defiantly tell us that they are going to pursue an illegal course, despite our lawyer. If the case seems significant, we just tell the customer that we don't want a part of it. Obviously, this usually ends our relationship. Talks on the case would not take place between experienced business leaders. And the decision of the employee to go to the media seems to me an inexperienced, knee-jerk reaction. The problem had to be solved domestically and with appropriate state and federal regulators. At this stage, this would be the subject of a public eye for the media and any other interested person or organization. I think the executives at the level described in the case will know that, especially given their work history. A version of this article appeared in the January 1988 issue of Harvard Business Review. Reviews.

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