

Background:

SMART Engineering has formed a cross-functional team to develop a groundbreaking electric car. The team comprises of engineers, designers, and marketing specialists with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The Challenge: (the case study to analysis)

My name is Dr Alice Parker and I work for SMART Engineering; I have been working here for 5 years now and I am an engineer. I was born and raised in Prague where I studied engineering. I moved to London to complete my Doctorate and decided to stay in the UK, where I met my wife. We still reside in the UK.

The engineering team at my work has 3 female and 4 male engineers. One of the female engineers is also my wife, who joined the company at the same time as me. This has caused discomfort in the team from the onset. People often stop talking when we enter the room or whisper when we pass them in the corridors.

I am a lead on a project that has been tasked with designing crucial components for the electric car. After two years of research, by the middle of November 2022, the deadline for completion, 20th December 2022, looked like it would be missed. There were many reasons for being behind schedule, but one key reason for the delays was that senior management had made promises that did not come to fruition, conveniently forgetting conversations that confirmed promised resources. The issue of a female running such an important project keeps surfacing in conversations, with my team seemingly unable to acknowledge my expertise. The gossip about me and why the project was about to miss the deadline continued behind my back.

Team conflict had become the norm during October and November as the deadline of 20th December got closer. The absence of trust, corroded by biased attitudes, stifled effective communication and relationship-building within the team. Seemingly needing answers, feeling the pressure of a possible missed deadline and the subsequent impact on the contract, additional costs, and the company's general reputation, management often came down to the shop floor and spoke with the team directly without my knowledge.

Our team leader is James Parker, and he chairs our team meetings. In the team meetings, we have noticed that the female engineers are constantly being overlooked. We are not asked to give opinions on any new products or ideas. I worked on a particular project for 3 months, but during the team meeting it was my male colleague who was asked about the progress of the project.

I felt invisible to the team. It is not the only example of the contributions of my female colleagues being attributed to our male counterparts. It happens all the time.

BMSK 4016 Developing Professional Practice (3000 Word Critical Review)

Once a male colleague asked me for a progress update on a different project so he could deliver it during the upcoming team meeting.

We think that our male colleagues feel bad about this but have never stood up for us. It is dividing the team into - "us and them" - and it is becoming more and more uncomfortable.

I am not comfortable sharing the details of my project with my colleagues for fear of someone else taking the credit for my work.

Additionally, there is a noticeable affinity bias, with team members gravitating towards those with similar backgrounds and experiences. My previous employment was that of a chief engineer on an offshore oil rig. Most of my colleagues come from other energy companies where they worked as engineers and designers for residential energy supply products. A couple of my male colleagues are marketing specialists who have always worked in marketing.

As I come from a different industry than others, I feel like my opinion is not wanted, although I can often see the problems before they arise.

In my opinion, this lack of inclusivity is causing the exclusion of valuable perspectives.

I feel like I have a lot to offer if they would just listen. Instead, I am constantly guarded in case someone takes my work and presents it as their own.

In the end, despite 30 years of successful designing and engineering in highly competitive and complex environments with excellent results, both in the UK and abroad, I feel I have no other option but to resign from my position. My wife, who would remain the only other female and gay engineer, decided she didn't want to stay either. We are both leaving the company at the end of this month.

For each construct, make sure you specifically consider;

What happened? *In the case study ...*

Why did it happen? *The reason why [] happened was*

Who was affected? *[] (and [] was/were affected ...*

How were they affected? *... by*

What are the consequences of their actions? *The consequences / outcome for [individual / group / company] was ...*

How would you do things differently *If I was [] I would have [] because ...*

Professional practice, with examples. *In my workplace I have experienced [] (with an example(s)). The way I dealt with it was. The outcome was ... OR what I wish I had done was [] this would have meant that [].*

Key Areas to Explore in the Report:

1. Self-Management:

- How do team members manage their emotions and reactions when faced with gender dynamics and affinity bias?

Explore individual strategies for maintaining focus on the project goals while addressing interpersonal challenges.

2. Personal Cognitive Bias

- Analyse the **personal cognitive biases** that may be influencing team members' perceptions and interactions. Discuss any cognitive biases that contribute to the overlooking of contributions or the preference for specific team members.

3 Personal Unconscious

- Analyse the **personal unconscious biases** that may be influencing team members' perceptions and interactions. Discuss any cognitive biases that contribute to the overlooking of contributions or the preference for specific team members.

Make sure you discuss the implications of allowing gender and affinity biases to persist on the project's success and the company's reputation.

4. Accountability:

- Assess whether team members demonstrate accountability for fostering an inclusive and diverse team culture.

5. Authentic Behaviour:

- Examine whether team members demonstrate authentic behaviour in acknowledging and addressing gender dynamics and affinity bias.

6. Interpersonal Relationships:

- Explore the impact of **gender** and **affinity** biases on **relationships** within the team.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of **communication and collaboration** in creating an inclusive environment where all team members feel valued.

7. Professional Integrity:

- Examine the concept of professional integrity within the context of the case study.

8. Development of own Professional Practice:

- Examine your own professional practice and identify areas for improvement

Plan own Professional Practice development **using a PDP. (Make sure it is SMART)**