Case study for assessment 2

When DGL International, a manufacturer of refinery equipment, brought John Terrill to manage its services division, company executives informed him of the urgent situation. Technical services, with 20 engineers, was the highest-paid, best-educated and least productive division in the company. The instructions to Terrill: turn it around. Terrill called a meeting of the engineers. He showed great concern for their personal welfare and asked point blank: 'What's the problem? Why can't we produce? Why does this division have such turnover?' Without hesitation, employees launched a hail of complaints, 'I was hired as an engineer, not a pencil pusher', and 'We spend over half our time writing asinine reports in triplicate for top management, and no one reads the reports'.

After a two-hour discussion, Terrill concluded he had to get top management off the engineers' backs. He promised the engineers, 'My job is to stay out of your way so you can do your work, and I'll try to keep top management off your backs, too'. He called for the day's reports and issued an order effective immediately that the originals be turned in daily to his office rather than mailed to headquarters. For three weeks, technical reports piled up on his desk. By month's end, the stack was nearly a metre high. During that time no one called for the reports. When other managers entered his office and saw the stack, they usually asked, 'What's all this?' Terrill answered: 'Technical reports'. No one asked to read them.

Finally, at month's end, a secretary from finance called and asked for the monthly travel and expense report, Terrill responded, 'Meet me in the president's office tomorrow morning'. The next morning the engineers cheered as Terrill walked through the department pushing a cart loaded with the enormous stack of reports. They knew the showdown had come.

Terrill entered the CEO's office and placed the stack of reports on his desk. The CEO and the other senior executives looked bewildered. 'This', Terrill announced 'is the reason for the lack of productivity in the technical services division. These are the reports you people require every month. The fact that they sat on my desk all month shows that no one reads this material. I suggest that the engineers' time could be used in a more productive manner'.

The CEO and the senior executives admit that there has been a process error. However, they are not entirely convinced on how Terrill attempted to resolve it. The company brings in you as an organisational leadership consultant to assess the current issues and provide a report with recommendations to resolve matters related to leadership and team development. Refer to the assessment instruction document for detailed instruction.