



**CASE
STUDY**

4

A MANAGER AT WORK

¹Mohd Fuaad Said and ²Khairul Akmaliah Adham

¹*Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor*

²*Faculty of Economics and Muamalat, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Nilai, N. Sembilan*

1. The Day Begins

On Thursday, October 8th 2015, Adam arrived at his office at about seven in the morning. It was still dark outside when he unlocked the office's main door. Nobody else was around. The place was quiet and still. He entered his room and switched on the light. His room, even though the largest among the five rooms designated for managers in the office, was strangely felt claustrophobic to him. It was crowded with boxes of his personal belonging unpacked. They were stacked up to the windows, blocking the sun from shining into the room. He just moved into this room a week ago. The piles of reports on his table were still there as he left them yesterday. Adam, the new Regional Manager at Asiannet Broadband Sdn. Bhd., stared at these heaps of reports for a while and then decided to make a cup of coffee for himself before doing some readings on them. This was becoming his daily ritual for the past few days. He found caffeine helped to increase his attention and morale before the day started. While perusing the reports and sipping his coffee at the same time, he noticed one of these reports was stamped with a big red word 'URGENT' on its cover-page and the due date for its reply was written as yesterday. Adam quickly reached out to it and started to go through its pages.

It was eight-thirty and others began to arrive individually or in small groups. Usually, the regional office of Asiannet Broadband Sdn. Bhd. opened its business at nine. The office started to show signs of activities as some people began making small talks with each other, while others having their morning meals at the office pantry or preparing themselves for the day ahead. Even though his door was wide open, the cacophony and bustles outside his room failed to attract Adam's attention. He was in his own deep thought concerning the details of the management meeting that was scheduled at ten that day. He read the last meeting's minutes thoroughly and jotted some details on a piece of paper.

He was about to finish reading and setting the minute aside and reaching for another when he was interrupted by a knock on the door. He looked up and saw Hassan at the door. He waved him in. Hassan, his most senior engineer in charge of the network team, gave a tired smile, walked into the room and sat on the empty chair in front of his desk. Hassan began making his daily briefing slowly, as if waiting for his superior to brace himself for the bad news. He normally came in the afternoon but today he was earlier than usual...

¹ fuaad@upm.edu.my
² khairulakmaliahadham@gmail.com



“Boss, yesterday you mentioned that we need to install twenty more towers in Klang Valley area by next year. Could you tell us what is our target? When it is supposed to be carried out? and who is supposed to do that?[pause]. Everyone is still in the dark about this new project, including the contractors. So should we have a meeting on this? Furthermore, we also have some problems in getting an approval from Kajang Municipal Council on one tower in Bangi. Those council people said we completed the wrong paperwork and ask us to fill the forms again. My unit has done that. I will get my assistant to pass the documents to you to sign, but we need to send them out by today.”

Throughout the briefing, Adam was quiet and listening. He was trying to digest the information provided by Hassan. Finally, he responded:

“Hassan, could you get Lisa, my PA, to arrange us a meeting with the contractors so that we would be able to gain their opinions on the new project. Maybe we’ll have this meeting next week [pause]. In the meantime, just pass the approval documents to me at the management meeting. I will sign them there and hopefully they could be sent to the Council by hand today. Furthermore Hassan, we will have a briefing on the new project tomorrow, at the meeting room at 10 am. Could you inform the rest of the team on this and update me on everything by 3 pm?”

After about 15 minutes into the session, John, the Head of Administration and Human Resource Department unexpectedly joined them. After greeting both men, he took his seat next to Hassan. He was supposed to attend the management meeting together with Adam at ten, but the expression on John’s face indicated something serious had happened and that need Adam’s attention urgently. Once Hassan ended his briefing and left, the HR Manager took his turn informing his regional manager what was on his mind....

“Mr. Adam, last night the shift supervisor told me Megat nearly had a fist fight with another employee over some petty matters at the warehouse [pause]. Nothing serious, just some shouting. Others managed to calm things down between them before things get ugly. The problem is Megat [pause] and this is his second time behaving threateningly toward another worker. The other guy already made a police report on this but we managed to get him to retract it. Megat had been given a written warning before about these kinds of behavior. Now he is at it again [pause]. Should we ask him to leave the company quietly because now HR thinks he could be a potential problem in the future”.

After a short pause, John continued.

“Mr. Adam, maybe it would be good if you could talk to him about this [pause]. You know him personally [pause] he was once your team member and you used to be his direct supervisor. I know he has great respect for you. Other than his anger management issue, he is a good worker and he has been with the company for quite some time now. Hopefully he will listen to you this time around [pause] or else we have to let him go”.

Adam tried hard to pay attention and wrote down some important details. While John continued with his update, Susan from Marketing and Customer Service Department barged in and interrupted them with pressing news:



“Mr Adam, some NGO people with several villagers are outside of our office right now [pause] doing some street demo. They want to submit some memos or some sort of formal complaint to you about our transmission tower installation. They said that the towers have become a health hazard to people living in the villages near them. I am not sure who give them that idea [pause] I told them I could accept their memo on your behalf, but they insist on seeing you personally and won’t leave until they do [pause]. I also saw a few news reporters and a TV station crew outside too.”

It was not even ten o’clock yet, but Adam began to feel dismayed with the continuous disruptions. He had been facing similar interruptions from the first day he became the new Regional Manager and started wondering how long he would be able to continue working on this ad hoc basis.

2. My Hands Are Full

Adam recalled the day he joined Asiannet Broadband Sdn. Bhd. in 2000. He began his career there as a trainee network engineer, working as a member of a network team that was responsible for installing, operating and maintaining wireless telecommunication networks in the Klang Valley region. After working in that position for two years, he worked his way up to become a junior network engineer, and six years later, Adam was given a position in the company as a senior network engineer, with the responsibility of leading his old network team. By early 2015, he had been with the company for almost fifteen years, and was well-regarded by his superiors, peers and subordinates as a very competent engineer, and his technical knowledge on broadband and wireless transmissions was considered equal to none in the company. A week ago, on the 1st of October 2015, he was promoted to become the company’s new Regional Manager, as the previous one had resigned. In this new position, Adam would be responsible not only to the company’s broadband network service operation, but also the whole functional aspects of his company.

His employer, Asiannet Broadband Sdn. Bhd was a broadband service provider with 80 employees. The company had four departments: 1) Marketing and Customer Service, 2) Finance and Account, 3) Network Operation, and 4) Admin and Human Resource. It was a subsidiary of a multinational broadband service provider, with the company’s head office in Singapore, while the company itself is located in Cyberjaya, about 30 km from the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. The company owned and operated **City-to-City (C2C)** broadband networks. In 2006, Asiannet Broadband Sdn. Bhd was awarded the Network Service Provider (NSP) license from the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). With the NSP license, it could offer its high bandwidth international network connectivity service to businesses and internet service providers in Malaysia.

After the impromptu meeting with the NGO representatives in front of the company’s premise, Adam went back to his room with the memos in hand, felt exhausted and a little annoyed. Looking at his watch, it was now eleven o’clock. After having his second cup of coffee and a quick sandwich, he went straight to the company’s meeting room, and attended the management meeting one hour late. His tardiness was noticeable by others in the meeting, but his superior, the CEO of Asiannet Broadband Sdn. Bhd, who was acting as the chairperson, accepted his apology with empathy and a few encouraging words.



3. I Will Think About It Tomorrow...

By now it was seven in the evening. It was getting dark outside. The office was quiet again as everybody else had gone home. Adam closed his door, put the new memos, minutes and reports that he had received that day on his table. He later put them on top of the pile of reports stacked in front of him. He sat on his chair and start sipping his last cup of coffee for the day. Reminiscing the tasks done by him that day, Adam was able to read half of the reports he planned to do for that day, completed two reports of his own, replied to nearly all e-mails sent to him, attended the management meeting, met with Hassan, John and Susan earlier that day, and later met Hassan again that day on the new project, counseled Megat on his behavior and finally handled complaints from the NGO representatives. However, he felt a lot more tasks were needed to be done that day, but, by then, he was really exhausted by the day's work.

Then a polite knock on his door derailed his train of thought. Adam walked to his door and opened it wide. The company security guard was standing in front of him with a gentle smile, kindly inquiring if Adam would still need to be at the office at this late time of night. He was indecisive, but after noticing the sympathetic look on the elderly man's face, he finally relented and decided it was time to go home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study is financially supported by a UPM FRGS grant #FRGS/2/2014/SS05/UPM/02/8.

REFERENCES

- BuddeComm (2011). *Malaysia - Telecoms, Mobile, Broadband and Forecasts*. Retrieved from <http://www.budde.com.au/Research/Malaysia-Telecoms-Mobile-Broadband-and-Forecasts.html>.
- Leow, Y. M. (2010, August 19). 4G wireless broadband for all. *Star Special*, pp. 3-4.
- Risen, R. (2009, October 15). Challenge heats up for WiMAX. *The Star Online*. Retrieved from <http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/10/15/business/4908776&sec=business>