

CASE INCIDENT

Courier Cats

To stay competitive, many organizations have to regularly upgrade their computer technology. This was certainly the case for Courier Cats, a small but profitable courier firm. To improve the delivery and tracking of parcels, the company decided to invest in a new software program. It was expected that the new software would not only allow the company to expand its business, but would also improve the quality of service. Because the new software was much more complex and sophisticated than what the company had been using, employees attended a one-day training program to learn how to use the new system. However, six months after the system was implemented, most employees

were still using the old system. Some employees refused to use the new software, while others did not think they would ever be able to learn how to use it.

1. Why do you think that the employees did not use the new software?
2. What are some of the implications that stem from operant learning theory and social cognitive theory for increasing the probability that the employees will use the new software? What do you recommend for improving the use of the new software?

CASE STUDY

Club Chaos

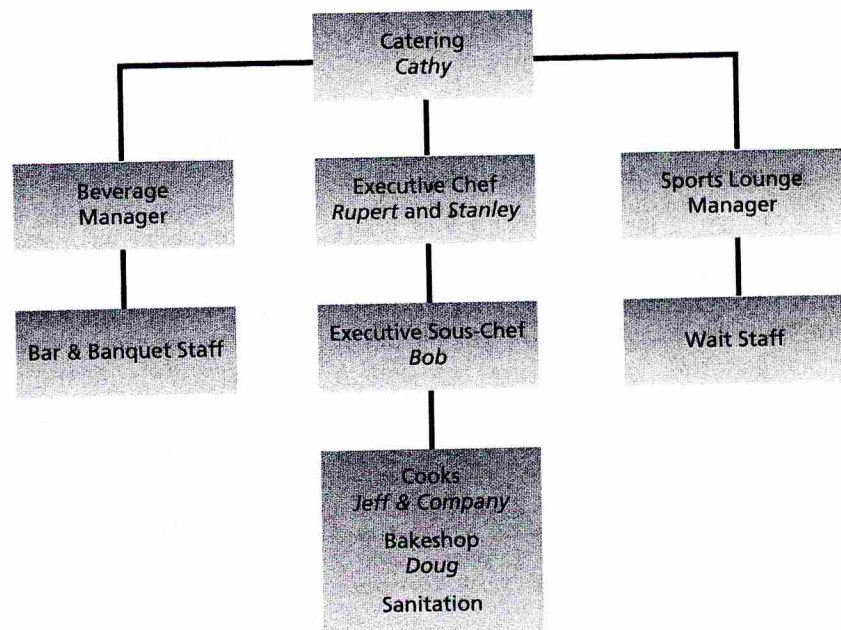
Club Chaos is an exclusive, upscale, non-profit private organization that provides members with an array of facilities. The club includes a golf club (complete with a pro shop and instructors), indoor/outdoor tennis courts (with professional instructors), a curling rink, swimming pool, private meeting rooms, and extensive dining facilities (banquets, catered meetings, fine dining, sports lounge, a patio BBQ, a poolside BBQ/snack bar, an in-house bakeshop, and catering outside the club for members). Club Chaos employs over 200 people and has an extensive organizational structure. (See Exhibit 2.7 for an organizational chart.)

The club's general manager is Antonio, a man with little formal education. Antonio can usually be found out on the golf course or playing tennis (usually in the

company of his wife). He has recently created the position of clubhouse manager and promoted his friend Rocco, the former head of the maintenance department, to fill it. Rocco is also a self-taught individual, with limited formal education or business experience. Rocco ran a two-person home renovation company for a few years, the club's maintenance department for three, and now finds himself in charge of the majority of club operations. Rocco can often be seen in the lounge drinking with the club members for extended periods, and it is widely rumoured that Rocco is to be the "broom" in a "clean sweep" of the organization.

Cathy was the head of catering and was known for her efficiency in heading up the Food and Beverage operation and her savvy in dealing with customers.

EXHIBIT 2.7
Club Chaos catering department (F&B) flow chart.



Soon after Rocco's promotion, Cathy was told in a meeting with him that she was to dismiss her assistant Jan (who is also Cathy's sister-in-law). The position of catering assistant was to be terminated, as the budget was being trimmed to boost revenue so that a new clubhouse could be built for the members. Cathy soon resigned as well, and the department fell into disarray. Rocco was playing an active role in the catering office, but new people occupied and left the position of catering manager at the rate of one every three months. Contracts came in late, last minute changes were frequent, and many details were left out of the function planning sheets. On one occasion, a contract for a wedding party of 160 people was overlooked until the morning of the event.

During this time, Rocco was also putting extreme pressure on the executive chef, Rupert. Demands were made to increase the kitchen's revenue, and the inconsistent quality of the food was a frequent criticism. On the other hand, Rupert was instructed to keep food and labour costs low and service levels high. Antonio and Rocco suspected that theft was the cause of high food costs lately. Rumours were circulating throughout the close-knit culinary group that Club Chaos was actively seeking a new executive chef, and phone calls by potential applicants were unwittingly forwarded directly to Rupert's office. Rupert soon resigned from his position, and Stanley was hired to replace him. Although Stanley had very odd behavioural quirks—he could be seen running through the kitchen on his hands and knees barking like a dog and playfully biting his employees—he did create control systems that revealed what had been suspected. Large amounts of inventory were missing from the kitchen on a daily basis.

Rocco posted threatening notices in all staff common areas and the chef took charge of the scheduling from the executive sous-chef, Bob, explaining that he wanted to phase out suspected thieves from the schedule and have them replaced. After three months, only 6 original employees of 26 remained, most having been forced to quit and one employee having been dismissed by the chef for a violent outburst. No formal training for new employees, performance evaluations, or raises took place. Rocco explained to staff that there was no money in the budget for such activities. With the high rate of turnover, the rate of missing inventory slowed marginally at first, but soon picked up speed

again, while the quality of the food the kitchen produced was still inconsistent—at best.

One day, executive sous-chef Bob was putting empty milk crates in the loading dock when he spotted something suspicious. Upon investigation, he found a heavily wrapped package that contained six pounds of ribs with all the trimmings. He left the evidence in place and consulted Stanley on the matter. Bob was ordered to keep an eye on the area, effectively setting a trap. Later that afternoon, Bob spotted two of the few remaining long-term, productive employees quietly leaving the facility through the loading dock. Bob not only found Jeff with the ribs, but the pastry chef, Doug, was pulling out a bag of assorted canned goods and a cake from under a pile of empty boxes.

This case is based on original work by Judson Bray, from *Organizational Behaviour: Canadian Cases and Exercises*, 5th ed., by Randy Hoffman and Fred Ruemper (Concord, ON: Captus Press Inc., 2004), pp. 54–57. Reprinted with permission of Captus Press Inc. www.captus.com.

1. What are the problems facing Club Chaos and what are some possible reasons for these problems?
2. In learning theory terms, what behaviours are being reinforced and punished? What behaviours are not being reinforced?
3. Consider the role of the situation and personality in the case. What factors explain employee behaviours? Does it make sense to change the people or the situation?
4. What kind of system was Rocco implementing when he posted threatening notices, and what effect did this have on employees' behaviour?
5. How might operant learning theory principles be used to increase desirable behaviours and eliminate undesirable behaviours? Be specific in terms of the relevant behaviours you would try to increase and decrease.
6. Discuss the potential of organizational learning practices for improving the situation at Club Chaos. What organizational learning practices would you recommend and how should they be implemented?