

People Manager Influence

CULTURE. TOLERANCE AND SENSITIVITY.

Details When Julie Leitch, a 22-year-old female did well in her job interview, the manager of CompuSoft, Shona Ward¹, an Australian company that specialised in the design of advanced storage technology, offered her a job as a trainee designer immediately. Leitch, who needed the job, was so happy that she accepted the offer straight-away.

When Leitch reported to work at the beginning of the following week, they found that they had to share an office with a colleague, John Korsgaard². Apparently Leitch's manager, Kylie Mautner, placed them together because both of them will be working on the same job. Ward thought that this way they would both help, and learn from, each other. They also thought, that given that Leitch and Korsgaard will be working together in a joint project that the company had just acquired, it was important that they both have access to each other during the day.

Leitch, however, was distressed with this arrangement as it was against their values and upbringing to be in complete isolation with a male unrelated to them.³

The following day, Leitch went to Mautner and told them of their difficulty. Mautner said they were acting on instructions from Ward and that it was not their problem. "Take it up with Ward if you want to."

That afternoon, Leitch went immediately to Ward and told them of the problem.

This presented Ward with a problem. They felt it was important that Leitch and Korsgaard bond professionally, while not being affected by outside influences.

Ward explained the reason for putting them together without anyone else in the room and asked if Leitch could put aside their beliefs while they were at work.⁴ Leitch said that they had talked it over with their spouse and both agreed that this was a step they could not take. Leitch asked "Are you sure it has to be this way?" Ward said, "I am sorry but I cannot budge on this, the project is too important to worry about cultural niceties. I am the boss and what I say goes."⁵

Cast	Role
Christine Anderson	Head of HR
Thomas Bourne	Leitch's husband
John Korsgaard	Senior designer
Julie Leitch	Trainee designer
Kylie Mautner	Leitch's manager
Shona Ward	CompuSoft manager

Table 1: P_2 Cast

¹ A member of the ACS even though they had not programmed in years.

² The lead designer of the project.

³ Leitch's husband, Thomas Bourne, was also upset and they both considered Leitch not going to work even though they desperately needed the money.

⁴ Ward went on to say "We are all professionals here. It's nothing personal; to bring the personal to work is unprofessional." We disagree: there is no magic circle around work.

⁵ They went on to say "Besides, Korsgaard does not have a problem with it."

Leitch went to the head of HR, Christine Anderson, and quit. Anderson refused to accept it and instructed Ward and Mautner to attend a meeting immediately.