

Melissa Scenario

THE “IN TRAINING” SCENARIO

Training day:

Melissa, a young woman who has just completed a welfare to work program, is feeling pretty confident that her future is teeming with possibilities after landing the long awaited “good job” at University Medical Corp. After a brief but intense orientation process, she’s finishing up her computerized systems overview training today. She’s feeling somewhat dazed with technological information overload, but is moving forward unfazed. Tomorrow it’s off to the Admissions Office—the standard beginning placement position. Although entry-level wages are low, this is the point of entry to the coveted jobs in the executive staff pool which offer benefits, training, and mobility.

Week One :

Upon Melissa’s arrival to admissions, Mr. Snyder, her supervisor, was pleasantly surprised—taking careful note of her well-tailored suit and attractive appearance. His customary initial meeting stressed how his unit was evaluated based on efficiency and attention to details, Melissa appeared undaunted by his expectations. Days later Melissa gets a somewhat different, if perplexing, insider version over coffee break. Snyder, who had bitterly complained to Human Resources for sending him “all these welfare to work recruits,” was overheard to actually thank H.R. for finally sending him someone who “looked alright.”

The hospital’s information technology is demanding: the new Admissions software is prone to freeze and/or deny access to the next user if an entry does not fit its template. The communications system within the hospital seems to assume that you already know “who to ask.” Melissa has recovered from a small series of such breakdowns by asking whoever is nearby to bail her out, and so far this has covered up what she fears might be seen as a failure. Snyder had said to route questions through him, but he clearly seems too rushed and busy to bother with all these “how to” details.

Week Two -- Monday at 5:00 PM.

In a cloud of dust and smoke Jake and Christina Roberts finally arrived at the Emergency Room and with the aid of a hospital staffer. Between contractions, Christina was carefully seated in the wheelchair and brought inside, immediately checked by the attending resident doctor and moved quickly off to the hospital’s delivery suite.

Melissa has been asked to work a double, covering the 3:00-11:00 PM shift on the tail of her own daylight shift. The nearest day care she can afford ends at 6:00 PM, so she calls home whenever she gets a break. The neighbor looking after her child has to go to work herself at 8:00.

Knowing she is responsible for filling out the Roberts’ admittance, Melissa sends an internal email up to the delivery suite. She asks someone to tell Jake Roberts to come down for a formal admissions interview and turns her attention to more immediate tasks.

Tuesday 7:10 a.m.

Melissa arrives to work ten minutes late for the first time, feeling a bit worn. Mr. Snyder abruptly asks to speak with her, noting that some errors in her coding have affected the productivity and efficiency of other staffers. Snyder goes on to say his unit’s workload is backing up and an internal audit is due shortly. She needs to improve her performance soon, and soon.

Melissa realizes Snyder is under a lot of pressure. But, feeling angry and increasingly unsure of herself, she is now even more confused about what to do. Are the other staff complaining about her? Is it her fault if the new software is crash prone? And how is she supposed to learn the ropes?

On her break:

Things go from bad to worse. In the cafeteria Melissa hears about a young woman who nearly died in childbirth overnight and suddenly remembers the email (asking “somebody” in delivery to send Jake down) that had never been answered. Hurrying to her terminal, she accesses the admissions data and confirms her fears. Christina Roberts had never been formally checked in, and with her transfer to intensive care, her file would be redflagged for immediate review. Well, she had sent a message to the delivery suite, after all. And could she even hope to outleg the system, find Jake herself, and save face before a fuming Snyder?