

## Psych Me Out

*Topic:* Leadership (Communication, Power, Motivation)

*Characters:* Bob, Managing Partner  
Jerry, Partner  
Leandra, Stacy's Supervisor  
Stacy, Junior Accountant  
The Psychologist

Stacy is a recently hired employee of a growing local CPA firm. The partners of this firm have high expectations for Stacy, mainly because he scored near the top of his graduating class. However, nothing seems to flow right for Stacy at this firm. He is asked to perform at an advanced level on some jobs because of heavy firm turnover at the senior level. As a result of his inexperience, Stacy does not meet time budgets and much of his work on tax returns has to be redone. These problems have compounded to the point where no one thinks he can do anything right. Near the end of his first year, he told by his Supervisor, Leandra, and the Managing Partner, Bob, that he is on six-month probation without a salary increase. Stacy is determined to prove that although he has the ability, he is simply improperly managed.

During the past few months, the firm has suffered continued resignations of staff accountants. After Stacy mistakenly charges the wrong client account for a tax return, Jerry, the Tax Partner, loudly reprimands him in front of his peers and tells him, "Next time it's coming out of your paycheck." Later that week, as Stacy is helping interview a candidate for one of the open accounting positions, he accidentally chips a glass table in the conference room with his Coke bottle. This time, Bob asks Stacy if his insurance policy will cover the table, and, if not, what he intends to do about it.

Not long afterwards, the accounting staff finds out that a psychologist is coming to the firm for the week to assess the turnover problem, employee morale, and overall firm productivity. All remaining workers, including Stacy, describe the poor treatment of employees and awful work environment. Not surprisingly, the resulting report from the consultant points toward numerous management problems at the company. Shortly thereafter, the partners take the response personally, and rumors surface that they have put the firm up for sale. Still, the interviews for staff positions continue. The partners have asked all those who are interviewing candidates to present the firm in a positive and favorable manner. Stacy doesn't know what to tell potential new hires about the opportunities and working conditions at this firm.

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