



Decision Dilemma¹

Amit Sharma, Director (Financial Services), was in his Mumbai office going over feedback received for Rahul, one of the Managers in his team. An outstanding performer and a critical resource for the project, Rahul had had numerous negative feedbacks on the people management front. It was time for his annual appraisal. Amit had to decide on his rating.

Company Background

Agilent Software Solutions (AGS from now on) was a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with net revenues of US\$15.55 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2005. Committed to delivering innovation, AGS collaborated with its clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments.

Clients

AGS had extensive relationships with the world's leading companies and governments and worked with diverse client base — including 87 of the *Fortune* Global 100 and nearly two-thirds of the *Fortune* Global 500. AGS's commitment to client satisfaction strengthened and extended their relationships and clients stayed on with AGS as a service provider once they had experienced AGS standards of service. For example, 96 of Agilent software solutions' top 100 clients in fiscal year 2005 based on revenue, had been clients for at least five years, and 83 out of the 100 had been clients for at least 10 years.

Table 1 Different customer segments services by AGS

Account Groups & Industry Groups			
Communications & High Tech	Financial Services	Products	Resources & Government
Industry Groups			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Electronics & Instrumentation • Media and Entertainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking • Financial services • Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automobile manufacturing • Consumer goods & Services • Health & Life Services • Industrial Equipment • Retail • Transportation & Travel Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals • Energy • Natural Resources • Utilities • Government

¹ This case has been written by Arijit Sarkar, Bhuvana Kumar and Hitika Mehta of Accenture, India as part of course requirement for XLRI-Accenture HR Academy. The case is intended to be a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. This case neither purports to be nor should be used as a source of data regarding any organization or industry. © 2006, XLRI, Jamshedpur.



Industry Expertise

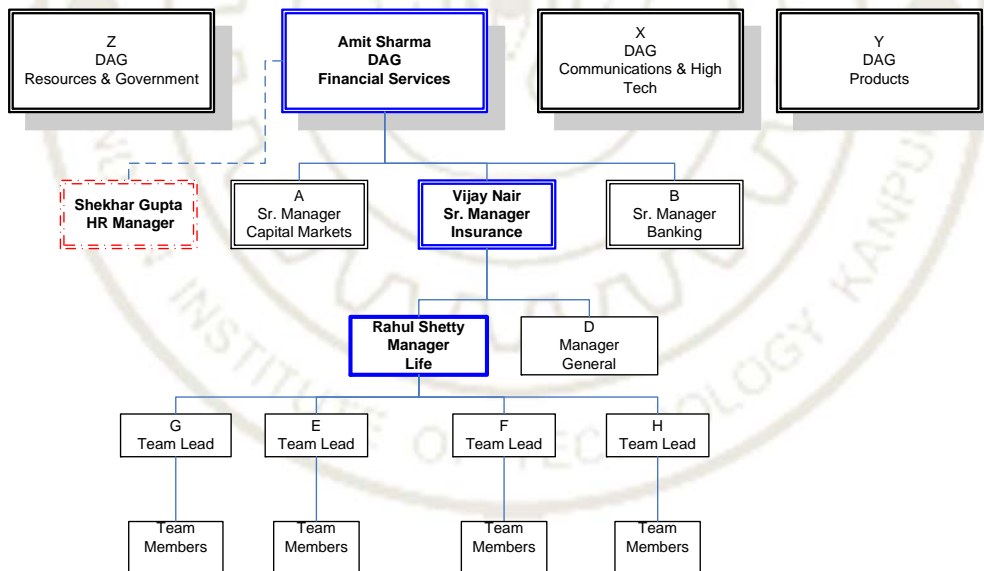
AGS delivered its services and solutions through 17 focused industry groups in five Account Groups. This industry focus provides Agilent software solutions' professionals with a thorough understanding of industry evolution, business issues and applicable technologies, enabling Agilent software solutions to deliver solutions tailored to each client's industry.

Introduction to the Financial Services Account Group

Financial Services catered to 12 Fortune 100 financial services companies. Combined, these provide banking & investment services to more than 50 million customers in the United States and 14 other countries. The total revenue from this AG in 2005 was \$34 billion.

Organization Structure

The partial organizational structure of AGS is given in figure 1.



Roles & Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders



The **DAG (Director of Account Group)** was the single point of contact to the organization from the Account Group and was responsible with the CSO for delivery. He usually had 3-6 senior managers reporting to him.

A senior manager was typically responsible for one industry group within an Account Group and was responsible for the delivery of 10-15 projects. He was also responsible for the overall development of the resources in the team, jointly with the HR Manager. He usually had 2-3 Managers reporting to him.

A manager usually had a team of 70-100 people. He was directly responsible for the delivery of around 3-5 projects.

The HR Manager was responsible for ensuring adherence to the HR processes of the organization. He was also responsible for retention of resources through:

- Facilitating training & development
- Creating and maintaining growth opportunities
- Ensuring a healthy work environment

The dilemma created by Rahul

Rahul Shetty was the Manager for the Life Insurance related applications group. He had a team of 83 members. He had joined less than a year back. As manager, Rahul was accountable for:

- Managing resource utilization to achieve targets
- Managing quality of deliverables to minimize defect density
- Ensuring timely feedback is provided to direct reports and that direct reports provide timely feedback to their team members
- Working within the spirit of the guidelines set by the Operating Level Agreement (OLA)
- Identifying and proactively managing issues
- Creating a positive work environment that attracts and retains the right resources
- Proposing solutions to client requests that maximize value for their business
- Ensuring that the team adheres to process

Rahul had received extremely good feedback for his performance on the delivery front from his supervisor. Even the clients had consistently provided very good feedback for him. Rahul had also to manage a project that he had taken over from the previous manager. Rahul's supervisor expected him to play a key role in successfully completing the implementation of the project. His weak area as highlighted by his supervisor was that he was sometimes misconceived as aggressive by other employees.

There had been numerous complaints on his people management style to the HR Manager. In fact, the kind of feedback received by the HR Manager seemed to indicate that Rahul managed the team in a very dictatorial manner. There was also evidence to suggest that people were leaving the team due to his managerial style. Shekhar felt that to be a serious issue that needed to be addressed in the appropriate manner.

Vijay Nair's feedback on Rahul

The comments were given regarding Rahul and forwarded to Amit.



- Rahul has a very good background in the insurance industry. This gives him insight into opportunity areas within the current client account. He has been able to build confidence with our client sponsor. He has effectively demonstrated that he is instilling the concepts of ownership and accountability in the Life Insurance organization which our client values tremendously. For instance, Rahul developed a report to help identify the extent of application knowledge held by each team in the Account Group. This report is evolving into an Application Readiness database that will eventually be used for all development segments.
- Rahul implemented more rigorous peer review processes for the Life Insurance organization. Through this enhanced review process, Rahul was able to avoid 6 major defects in a highly visible release, ensuring that our defect density metrics could be achieved.
- Rahul is able to quickly assess the technical and managerial capabilities of his people. He has effectively realigned a large percentage of the Life Insurance organization to better leverage technical capabilities and to help people achieve their career objectives. Rahul provides his people with opportunities for career growth
- Rahul needs to find ways to delegate more responsibility to other team members and he needs to scale back on the hours he is working in the office to allow time to re-energize and re-charge
- Rahul sets high expectations for his people to perform, and he leads by example. He also needs to focus more on his soft skills; he is sometimes interpreted incorrectly as being too aggressive when his intent appears to be to instill a sense of ownership and accountability
- Rahul is eager to mentor and enhance the capability of his team and rewarding good performers. He formed SWAT team to address technical issues. He puts in lot of additional hours to help the team to address project issues. However, he needs to improve on Interpersonal Skills (There were few complaints on behavior towards subordinates. One of them was escalated to HR)
- Rahul has shown lot of energy in getting into the details of the work and participating in team calls. However he does not seem to have good way of organizing and prioritizing work. He also needs to improve on responding to mails in a timely manner and attending meetings on time

Shekhar Gupta's Feedback on Rahul

- Rahul Shetty's Management style is cause of concern. From all that has been reported, it is evident that his team is not happy with the kind of leadership provided by him. The following points have come out strongly in discussions with various team members across all levels:

Rahul lacks of trust and confidence on team members. He neglects recognition and appreciation of good performance.

- There is Micro Management in the team and any for small mistake employees are called into a room and threatened of dire consequences, creating an atmosphere of



fear. For instance, a group of individuals were called into a room and were reprimanded at the top of his voice for a DCR issue. His body language was extremely aggressive. One individual was asked to move out of the team the next day.

- Rahul lacks professional approach and has an abrasive approach– he shouts in the bay at individual team members. The following incidents support this:

An employee was reprimanded for copying HR in one of the mails that she wrote to her team lead expressing her discomfort with the leadership in the team.

An employee was slapped

- Rahul becomes vindictive if somebody has an opinion on an issue and is not ready to accept others' point of view. He does not solicit opinion and has a dictatorial approach.
- Rahul gives impractical deadlines to his team members.
- Performance feedback discussion with his team members is one way and what is documented is not the same as what is discussed. He does not acknowledge appreciation by the client for the team members. As part of the process, he provides final feedback documentation to the team members but only after repeated follow-ups from the team. One Team Lead, who had submitted his self assessment on the 24th of March, was given performance feedback on the 10th of May after repeated follow-ups.
- Rahul passes sarcastic remarks during discussions.
- There is a clear divide between favorites and non-favorites. He has introduced an independent recognition system in the team & the list of employees recognized through that suggests that the system is not very fair.
- 8 employees cited Rahul's managerial style as reason for quitting the organization.

Amit Sharma's Dilemma

It was time for the Annual appraisal. As part of the process, all ratings for Managers were finalized at the DAG level with inputs from various stakeholders like Supervisor, HR Manager and clients. The Performance Management process in the organization evaluated an individual's performance on 3 parameters:

- **Value Creator** - Generates or contributes to long term value for Agilent software solutions and/or clients
- **People Developer** - Builds capability & morale of others; creates a strong legacy among peer & team
- **Business Operator** - Efficiently executes work processes and manages resources

A five – point rating scale was used to evaluate an individual's performance as given below.

Rating	Definitions
A+	Consistently demonstrates performance above expectations for current



	career level. Exceptional performance in relation to others in peer group. Performance demonstrated is consistently at the very top of the peer group, visible and acceptable within the peer group.
A	Consistently demonstrates performance in line with expectations for current career level, and frequently above expectations. Demonstrates performance significantly above the peer group.
B	Consistently demonstrates performance in line with expectations for current career level. Career progression on track. Demonstrates performance above the peer group. Able to complete the task assigned as per timelines.
C	Contribution is consistent with the peer group. Improvement is required in order to progress. Needs monitoring and guidance.
D	Contribution is below the peer group. Requires considerable improvement

Amit has had discussions with Rahul's supervisor & the HR Manager. Rahul's supervisor strongly feels that he should be rated A+ because:

- He had been a good performer on the delivery front
- Clients thought highly of him
- He was very critical to the project at this point of time and if he was de-motivated the whole project can suffer.

The HR Manager feels that he should be rated D because:

- As a manager, people management is equally important as Operational effectiveness
- If people are quitting because of his managerial style, it will have an adverse effect on the project
- Giving a good rating will lead to the impression that the organization is only concerned with Delivery & does not value the self-respect of its employees

Both HR Manager and Rahul's supervisor had valid points. Amit had to decide not only on Rahul's rating but also how to communicate it to him in a constructive way.
