

## Oh, Salesmen

*Topic:* Training and Development

*Characters:* Jim, new manager at a large car dealership  
Mary, new salesperson at the dealership

Jim, 27, has recently been promoted to manager of sales personnel at a large car dealership. Mary, a new salesperson (and the only female salesperson), comes to his office late one afternoon with a complaint about something she says really bothers her. Specifically, she says she has never seen Tom, one of the most experienced (and best) salespeople, at any of a series of off-site training seminars (at which attendance is supposedly required). These seminars are designed to help sales staff learn detailed technical information about the mechanical advantages of the cars they sell.

Jim's "grapevine" impression is that most salespeople think the training seminars are a joke, and rumor has it that a lot of salespeople regularly skip them (although many salespeople can be heard saying things like, "I'm out of here--I'm going to today's seminar at the Hyatt"). Jim's boss, however, regularly sends him memos that stress the importance of the training. Upper management spends a lot of money on the training seminars, because they feel that such training will give the dealership a competitive edge.

Mary is so new that she does not yet have an established sales record. Also, Jim has heard through the grapevine that a lot of the salesmen are uncomfortable with Mary and wonder if a female can learn to sell cars. She seems eager, however, and obviously wants to follow the rules. She concludes by telling Jim that she'll check back with him tomorrow to see how he's handling the issue of the absent salesman.

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