

## Case Study: Memorabilia Sales for the Chief's Mess

**Description:** Senior Chief placed in charge of memorabilia sales for USS Ship. Innovative and entrepreneurial E-8 takes a solvent but struggling chief's mess and builds it into a thriving business.

**Background:** An informal investigation was convened to explore the case and to determine what decisions, events and circumstances contributed to the behavioral failing. The investigation was initiated following the results of the NJP but completely separate from NJP.

### Findings:

1. Ship's Command Master Chief (CMC), with oversight of the chief's mess, assigns a newly promoted E-8 to take over the operation of memorabilia sales and chief's mess funding.
2. The E-8 is an exceptional leader and innovator.
3. The E-8 has the imagination and drive to become a very successful business man. Prior to the cruise he and his wife incorporated as a small business that made memorabilia items.
4. The ship and air wing had returned from a successful combat cruise. The air wing had successfully attacked terrorist strongholds resulting in the deaths of several terrorist leaders.
5. The Chief and his wife believed they could capitalize on his assignment in the chief's mess by selling items to the ship at a significantly reduced price. The ship could then retail the items for a profit.
6. The E-8 discussed this arrangement with the CMC who agreed in principal that the business relationship would be acceptable.
7. The E-8 created a T-shirt covered with all of the highlights of the cruise depicted by cartoon characters.
8. In the center of the back of the T-shirt was a tombstone that had the letters "R.I.P. Rag Heads" printed on it.
9. The E-8 later admitted that the tombstone was a bit out of line but it was just the kind of thing sailors liked on a combat cruise T-shirt. He knew they would buy them in large numbers.
10. He also admitted that he considered discussing the issue with the

master chief but decided to wait and see how the shirts sold. He had one thousand shirts made and “donated” them to the mess.

11. The shirt was debuted on the pier during the Fleet Week Celebration and the entire production was sold out almost immediately.

12. The E-8 called his wife and told her to produce 1000 more shirts.

13. That afternoon all local news stations were showing sailors wearing the T-shirt. That evening various leaders of the Muslim faith and the Arab League were being interviewed.

14. At 0700 the next morning (Sunday) the E-8 and the CMC were summoned to the commanding officer’s cabin.

15. The damage control plan was extensive and it included message traffic to OPNAV, regional commander level flag intervention with the Muslim leadership and the Arab League, commanding officer intervention with the community, television apologies, destruction of all unsold shirts, forbidding the shirts to be worn on all naval installations.

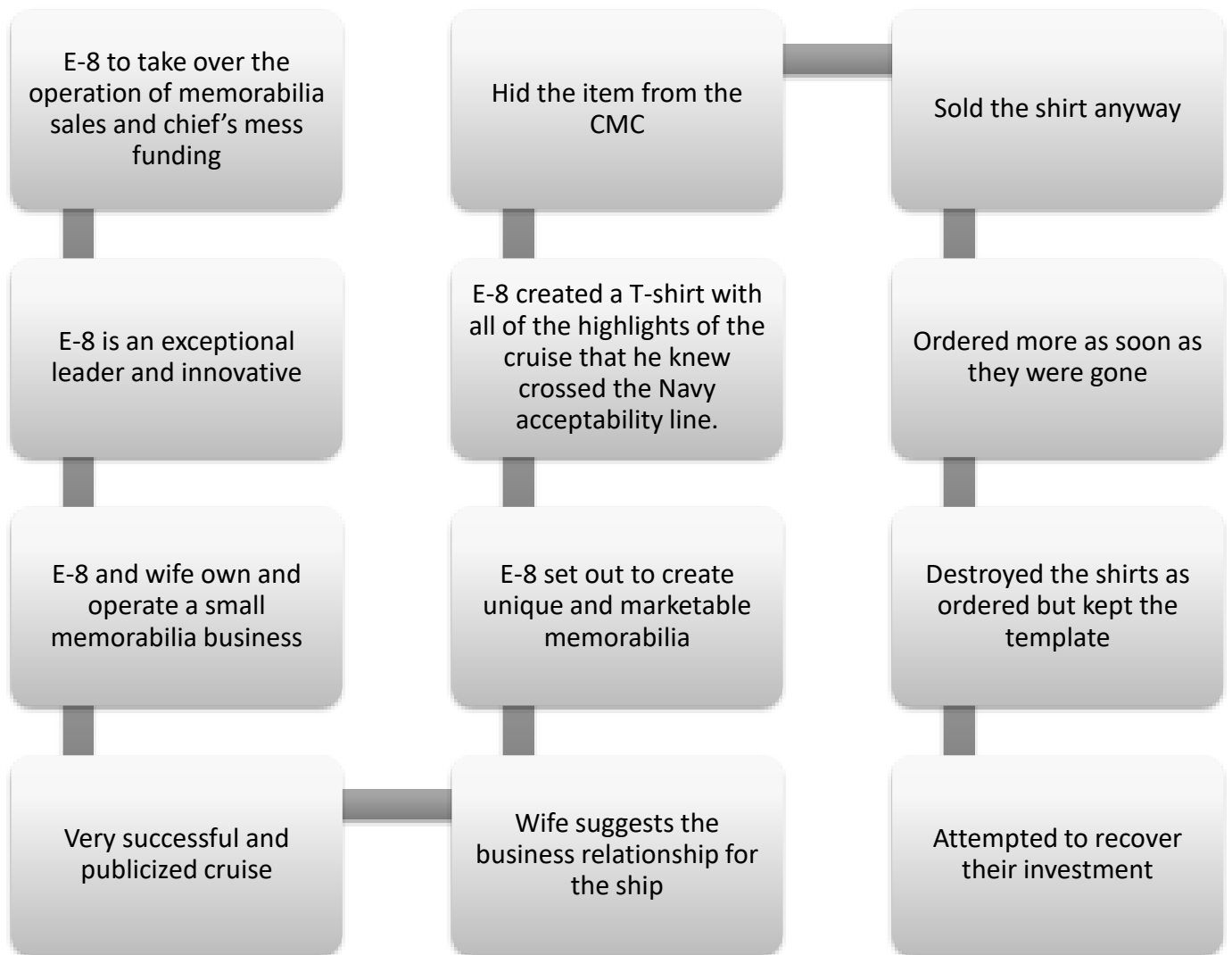
16. The E-8 and his wife destroyed the shirts but kept the template and reproduced the shirts to recover their losses.

17. The E-8 was caught marketing the shirt a month later at a local air show and was taken to Captains Mast where he was fined and reduced in rank to E-7.

---

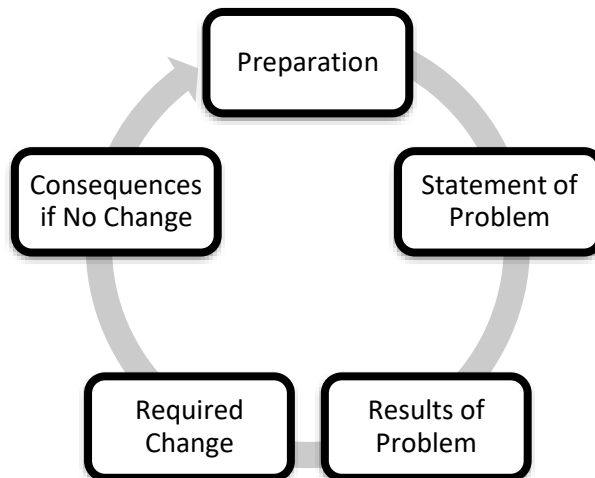
### Facilitation Questions:

1. Diagram the thought-to-action chain for the CMC.
  - a. Newly promoted E-8 to take over the operation of memorabilia sales and chief's mess funding, E-8 is an exceptional leader and innovative, he and his wife had incorporated themselves and created a small business that created memorabilia items, returned from a very successful and publicized cruise, wife suggests the business relationship for the ship, the ship's chief mess capitalizes on the entrepreneurship of the Senior Chief and his wife, E-8 set out to create unique and marketable memorabilia, E-8 created a T-shirt with all of the highlights of the cruise that he knew crossed the Navy acceptability line, he also suspected that it would be a big seller, hid the item from the CMC, sold the shirt anyway, sold them all in an hour and ordered more, E-8 and wife destroyed the shirts but kept the template and reproduced the shirts to recover their losses, E-8 caught marketing the shirt at a local air show.
2. Is there anything wrong with the T-shirt?
3. If so, where did the E-8 go wrong?
4. Where did the E-9 go wrong?
5. Have you ever witnessed a similar incident?
6. Discuss the damage control plan?



### Social Constructive Confrontation Discussion:

1. The first opportunity for constructive confrontation is internal. In this case, the E-8 would benefit from a constructive confrontation with himself. He is having issues with separating his personal business goals and desire to be the hero of the mess from his responsibilities as a chief petty officer. Have you ever been in a similar situation whereby you had difficulty sorting out ego and personal desires from responsibilities as a leader?
2. A next opportunity for confrontation might come from a friend or colleague. These “on-lookers” often know about or strongly suspect instances of misbehavior. Have you ever been in such a situation? Approaching a friend or co-worker in such a situation would be very difficult and you would have to be sure that real, negative consequences were likely. Using the case study, your own observations, or a hypothetical example, how would you realistically handle such a confrontation? Look at the wheel below for a template.



**Preparation:**

1. Put yourself in the position of a fellow chief petty officer. You are watching the situation develop and have decided to intervene. What does this step mean to you? How would you prepare? In what setting would this type of confrontation best take place?

**Statement of Problem:**

1. What is the problem (or likely result) of the misbehavior? What problem is it for you? What problem is it for the unit, etc.?
2. How would you state this to your colleague/friend?
3. What do you anticipate the response to be? How do you refute it?

**Results of Problem:**

1. Using the example, what are the likely results or negative outcomes from the problem and how would you state that to the friend?
2. Listen.

**Required Change:**

1. What change in behavior do you want to see? How do you state that?
2. Listen.

**Consequences If No Change:**

1. Hopefully, by this point in the confrontation you are having a discussion and not a shouting match. The understanding of consequences would be something that both of you agree to vice you listing them

**Case Conclusions:**

1. What main points did you take from this case study?
2. What are your concerns as a facilitator with this case study?