



**SOCIETY OF  
ACTUARIES**

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# WHAT WOULD YOU DO? A Difficult Discussion

By John West Hadley

**H**ere is our next entry in the “*What Would You Do?*” series.<sup>1</sup> Write to me at [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com) to tell me what you would do. In the next issue, I’ll compile the responses received (preserving your anonymity, of course), along with what actually happened in the real-life situation.

Help me craft future case studies. Write to me about your own challenging, surprising or nightmarish situations involving business, leadership, management, or any of the topic areas covered by *The Stepping Stone*, and what lessons you learned from them. I’ll collaborate with you on turning your situation into a simple case study, being careful to ensure no one is identifiable. And share your own thoughts (pro and con) on the series as a whole at [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com).

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## A DIFFICULT DISCUSSION

Sam is a senior VP and Jonas is a VP and actuary who reports to him and runs the actuarial department. Stuart is an actuary in that operation many years Jonas’ senior, and Sam likes him. Stuart comes to Sam to ask him to sign a software purchase agreement because Jonas is out of the office and has been slow to act on the purchase, which will support a new application Stuart is developing.

Sam signs the agreement and leaves for a few days’ vacation. When he returns, Jonas is already on vacation for the Christmas holidays. Sam gets angry when he finds that Jonas asked the CIO to hold the purchase agreement until his return. He



calls Jonas to tell him that was inappropriate, and to report to his office first thing upon his return.

If you were any of the principals in this situation, would you have done anything differently? And what would you do next? ■



John Hadley is a career counselor working with job seekers frustrated by their search and professionals struggling to increase their visibility and influence. He can be reached at [John@JHACareers.com](mailto:John@JHACareers.com) or 908.725.2437. Find his free *Career Tips* newsletter and other resources at [www.JHACareers.com](http://www.JHACareers.com).

## ENDNOTE

- 1 Past issues in the series have considered whether to demote or fire a difficult employee, performance reviews and their aftermath, interview challenges from both sides of the desk, evaluating job offers, a difficult product decision, how to build connections with the home office, and career decisions. To catch up on the entire series, which started in May 2013, check out back issues of *The Stepping Stone* on the Leadership & Development Section website at [www.SOA.org/ld](http://www.SOA.org/ld).