

# Case Studies

## Tania

Tania works at a large accounting firm. She is considered a high performer and is on her way up. Her manager regularly looks to her to tackle large, complex clients. Tania always takes on the tasks so she is often managing multiple, highly visible 'to dos'. She sometimes struggles to see the big picture because there are many things to get done.

Tania only allows perfection in her work. She will take over work done by her co-workers or her staff in order to ensure it looks 100%. As a result, she is not well liked by some in her group.

She is sometimes a difficult boss. When her team comes to her because they have too much to do, she doesn't have much sympathy. In addition, she regularly comments to her peers that the quality of the staff is subpar. She is sometimes harsh in her feedback.

Tania gets a lot of compliments from her manager and other senior leaders. Her work is touted as the example across the division. Her manager often comments that she couldn't run the place without her.

Tania believes her 'A' type personality and go-getter attitude have been the key to her success. She works long hours and sometimes feels overwhelmed. She views it as a weakness and rarely shows her boss what is going on. She looks like she has it together. But when she loses it, she can be inappropriately emotional.

Inside, Tania is approaching burnout and doesn't think she can add one more thing that's personal. She's frustrated with her friends who want her to go out with them and doesn't understand why they can't understand.



## Kylie

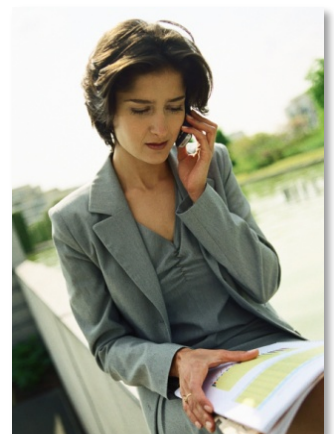
Kylie is a high performance team member. She was a former fast-tracker at a large consulting firm. She excels at her job and her manager relies on her to meet her deadlines consistently. She has taken a visible internal job and has negotiated a flex work schedule.

She is mother to a 6 year old and a toddler. She does drop off and pick off at day care/school for her family. She is responsible for the carpooling and doctor's appointments. She's been feeling quite guilty about her responsibilities. She feels guilty when she's at work because she's not with her toddler. She feels guilty at home because she should be working.

Because she comes and leaves at specific times, she is very conscientious in her work. She is diligent in everything she does and makes sure that everything she delivers either meets or exceeds expectations. There are rarely errors in her work. She is not being considered for a promotion and she does not want one right now. She just wants to keep her job.

She was asked to travel for business occasionally but refused citing her family obligations. Kylie also ensures she is there for her community and volunteers in the classroom on her non-work days.

Kylie has a strict 3pm end time so that she can do pick up. Her female manager asks if she can do an important phone call at 3pm because of a deadline. Kylie vehemently says no. She is very conscious of managing her boundaries so that she does not impede on her family.



## Jane

Jane works at a large finance firm. She is a middle manager with considerable knowledge due to her long tenure with the company. She has honed strong analytical skills. Jane's work is a keystone to other work. It regularly forms the basis for a new project or idea. As a result, she gained veto power and therefore can be found at the center of conflict as she seeks control of the outcome.

She manages a team of people but they are mostly administrative. Because she considers their skills lower than what's required, she will take over work done by her co-workers or her staff in order to ensure it looks 100%. As a result, she is not well liked by some of the women in her group, although the men seem happy to let her take lower-end, detail work off their plate.

She is sometimes a difficult boss. Because of her desire to control, she struggles to delegate and promote. When her team comes to her because they have too much to do, she solves the problem by adding more staff or doing it herself. The result is a large team of low-level "worker bees."

Jane often makes tasks more complex than is required and tends to put more time in than is necessary. When her work shifts to another department's responsibility, it is often simplified removing aspects deemed unnecessary.



## Natasha

Natasha works at a high tech engineering firm. She is extremely well-educated and excellent at her job. She has been recognized for her early successes.

Most of Natasha's peers in the organization are male. Some of them, while outwardly polite, give off a vibe of disrespect for Natasha. They jibe that she is in her position because of the company's diversity initiatives. In meetings, they are quick to interrupt her or talk over her as she shares thoughts or ideas. Worse, sometimes they seem to dismiss her ideas but then later accept them when someone else says them. And she feels she has to be constantly on guard, because if she or her team makes a mistake, it seems like the consequences are exaggerated and blame lands her way. She is even afraid to miss meetings for fear she will be discussed negatively behind her back.

When she speaks to her male peers individually, she gets the feeling they are not listening but merely humoring her. They seem to be uncomfortable in her presence: They avoid eye contact and look at their phones a lot. When they are in groups, they often brag about their weekend social activities or tell jokes about women they have dated, but then are quick to remind her they are "just kidding." They give Natasha the impression that failing to laugh along makes her appear stuck up or lacking in a sense of humor.

Natasha likes her technical career but wonders if it would be easier for her to be successful on a path where more women traditionally succeed, such as Human Resources or Marketing.



## Kerri

Kerri is a high performer on a strategy team for a Fortune 500 Brand. She finished her MBA 18 months ago and wants to be compensated for it. However, she failed to ask for a raise when she was hired. She also didn't negotiate for a signing bonus despite her top grades.

She is well liked by her team and manager. She really enjoys her work and gets enormous personal satisfaction from what she's been able to accomplish. She is ready for a promotion but has not yet asked for the next step. In fact, she has been doing more than necessary in the hopes that she will be recognized as ready.

She takes pride in her positive evaluations for her current work. She seeks out feedback from her manager in search of accolades.

Because of her role, she is asked to sit in on decision-making meetings. Kerri takes copious notes and will ask an occasional question. However, she rarely contributes her ideas or shifts the conversation. She typically goes with whatever the group decides even if she believes it's not the best course of action. She sometimes complains to her peers that the decision makers "just don't understand what is required."

Kerri is very social at work and is worried that if she gets promoted, she will lose her friends. She takes the time to invest in her work social network and is viewed as friendly and fun to be around.

Kerri isn't sure what is next but feels that she is contributing to the organization and should be recognized.



## Mayra

Mayra is someone everyone likes. She runs the satellite sales office by herself. People often forget she is out there, things run so smoothly. She is in charge of all operations: sales, accounts receivable, bill-paying, and distribution. She opens and closes every day, wearing multiple hats to ensure everything goes well. People look to her like a mother-figure, someone who takes care of their needs with a smile.

Of late, sales performance has been lackluster. Further, Mayra doesn't feel like she has the time to explore why – she's so busy running things she has no time for new projects. When asked to provide feedback about the region's sales decline, she made excuses about operational details getting in the way. Besides, she has cut office expenses proportionally so she doesn't understand why it is a problem. Overall, she tends to get a little defensive when people question her about her branch because she is so invested in how well it runs and puts in so much time to get everything done.

When the sales manager visited the branch last month, he found Mayra in the back office cleaning the coffee room. She commented that the warehouse staff always make a huge mess and leave their lunch trash all over the place, which she finds frustrating. She feels she has to keep the office clean in case a customer were to drop in for a visit. She is proud that she can show her commitment to the company in little ways like this.

