

USA2

### Scenario 2 – A Steep Learning Curve

**Setting** – three different desks/ workstations with laptops, placed at a distance from each other to represent them being in different ‘offices’.

#### Characters

<b>John Perry</b> – Manager/ Director of Sales and/or Marketing -	Iain Wotherspoon
<b>Sheila Martin</b> – Team Leader of Sales and/or Marketing -	Sheena Penson
<b>Edward Vettrains</b> – mid-thirties, new recruit to dept.	Paul Harper Swan

#### Scene 1

*Sheila is working on her laptop.*

*Enter John Perry (JP) with Edward (EV) into Sheila’s (SM) office space.*

JP Sheila, I want you to meet Edward Vettrains, our new recruit. He’ll be working closely with you and collaborating with you on your client portfolio.

SM Hi, pleased to meet you. I’ve heard a lot about you. Including the fact you were a star student at Wharton School of Business (US) / LSE (UK)

EV (*EV shrugs modestly*). Glad to be working with you.

*They shake hands etc*

JP Edward has been working for the Optimum Design Company since he graduated two years ago, so we’re looking forward to having the benefit of his expertise in our department.  
His task is to bring the company into the twenty-first century and bring us up to speed on the new communication technologies and software products

SM A very big change, working for our company, isn’t it?

EV Yeah, I guess so. But I’m interested in the applications of what I’ve been doing – and I wanted to get into the sales and marketing side. I’m hoping to be on a steep learning curve!

JP Well, Sheila’s been with the company for a long time, haven’t you Sheila? She worked her way up to team leader and what an impressive team she’s built up. She knows a huge amount about how the company works, and about sales and marketing. And she’s greatly expanded our client base and has extremely good relationships with all our clients. She’ll be able to teach you a lot.

EV You're semi-retiring?

SM That's right. I'm sixty years old, I have a number of delightful grandchildren I'd like to spend more time with, and I really want to improve my golf handicap! But I'm only reducing to part-time. I enjoy my job and I feel I still have a lot to contribute.

JP And we don't want to lose all your knowledge and expertise suddenly. You're a very valuable member of staff!

SM He always says that when he wants something from me!

JP How can you say that!

But seriously, we need you to mentor Edward, get him familiar with your client portfolio and teach him our ways of working with clients, all the people skills you use, the close personal contact and so on.

And with Edward's technology skills, we're expecting him to bring us right up to date, and to teach us about systems. We want sales and marketing to interact with clients a bit more efficiently.

**PAUSE briefly here and do Thinks bubbles for EV and SM and also JP – the ideal for the company.**

This brief pause does not focus directly on the technology issues, but may highlight the differences between SM and EV with regard to their understanding and use of technology, their strengths and weaknesses. This will affect how they deal with the technology problems that arise.

## Scene 2

*JP, EV and SM are all working on their laptops.*

*During the main dialogue between SM and EV, JP works quietly and thoughtfully, moving minimally, in order not to distract.*

EV Ah! That works!

*He types an Instant Message to SM then continues to think/gaze at screen/ use mouse etc*

SM *(interrupted by IM as she is working)* For goodness sake! Not another Message! How many times is that this morning? I'm trying to finish this.

*(She types a reply)*

Right. Now I can get on without interruption.

EV *( Reads IM as arrives on his screen)* “ Thank you for keeping me up to date, but I do not need to know every step of your thought processes instantly.”

Huh!

*(reads again)*“Why don't you email me or, even better, meet for a discussion. How about tomorrow?”

Well, that's not a very positive approach. I thought we were supposed to collaborate. What's bugging you, Sheila?

*They work silently for a few seconds.*

SM *(Thinking aloud)* OK, we need to meet with new client.

Bontoft Enterprises is a big one.

First impressions are very important.

Important one for Edward to start with.

Better make travel arrangements.

I'll email Edward, see if Tuesday is OK for him.

*SM taps away at keyboard*

EV She doesn't like IMs? OK I'll email her. Let's hope she reads it in time!

*Types for a few seconds.*

(EV) Right! See what you think of this, Sheila! Perhaps this will help the collaboration!

*He sends.*

SM What's this?

Oh! This must be a link to the new Wiki.  
Right, let's see.

So am I supposed to edit this somehow? It looks like it's just a web page.  
Oh, it must be that I click here to do that.  
What's all that strange stuff?  
I just want to change a few words.

*(Reading aloud and quite slowly. This is fairly new to SM)*

List of Contents.

Product description....Yes, that seems like the right thing to include here.....

Appropriate outlets....How has he organised these? ..Click there...

Now, go back.....

*While SM has been picking her way carefully through the wiki, EV has been working at speed*

SM That's not quite accurate.....Better add that.....

What? It won't save? Why not?

For goodness sake!

*Sheila rises and walks into EV's 'office'.*

SM I've got a problem!

EV Oh, hi!

SM This new wiki of yours, I can't save any of my changes in it!

EV Oh.  
I think it's because I'm working on it at the same time.  
I have write access at the moment.

SM That's not much use to me.

EV Sorry, I thought you didn't want to change anything, so I started to modify it.

SM Give me time! I've got to get my head round it first, so I understand what I'm doing!

EV Sorry, thought I'd given you enough time.

SM I'm not quite so 'up to speed' as you. I need plenty of time to get used to working something new.  
I'm just fine when I'm familiar with it.

EV OK, OK, I'll give you more time. I'm just used to working very quickly.  
Let me know if you have any more problems.

SM You could have come and talked to me about it.

EV OK. You want me to stop working on this?

SM Just give me a little more time to find my way around it.

EV I suppose I could set up a synchronous editing wiki.....just starting to catch on, but really interesting technology.

SM Don't do any more, please, till I've caught up with you!

EV OK.  
Will you Message me when I can work on it again?

SM I'll do that.

*SM moves back to own 'office'*

***EV indulges in an ironic fantasy dialogue with Sheila (who is out of ear shot), showing that he is rather irritated by Sheila's lack of appreciation of what he has achieved. This will work when performed by the actor.***

EV "That was a well designed wiki, Edward."

Don't mention it, Sheila, that's what I'm here for.

Is this collaboration, ma'am, or a battle for control?

The lady wants time. *(Looks at watch)* OK, I'll take a coffee break.

*Exit EV*

*SM is back at her lap top.*

SM I don't understand this.

A video conference with one of our best potential clients  
....possible...

But NOT as **first** contact! This can't be right! I must be missing something.....

*SM tries something on screen*

No, I'm not. He really thinks a video conference can break the ice!?..

This collaboration is just not working!

*She picks up phone*

*Phone rings on JP's desk*

JP Hullo, John here.

SM It's Sheila, John.  
I've hit a problem with Edward.  
He's thinking of using a video conference for the initial contact with a client.

JP Ah. That's not your normal practice, is it?

SM We need to sort this out pretty quickly. Especially as Bontoft Enterprises is probably our next big project.  
Could we have a meeting with you? As soon as possible, please?

*EV returns to his 'office'.*

JP Er, I've another meeting in fifty minutes. Could you and Edward come to my office right now?

SM Fine by me.

JP I'll Message Edward. See you in a couple of minutes.

*JP taps keyboard.*

*IM clearly attracts EV's attention.*

*EV and SM walk to JP's 'office'*

JP Come in, take a seat.  
Now, Sheila, you have an important point of discussion.

SM We need to establish our normal procedures for meeting clients for the first time in order to set up a good working relationship.  
Edward seems to be all in favour of using a video conference.

EV Well, it saves so much time; no travel arrangements and travel time; instant contact. The technology's there, why not use it?

JP It does make sense economically.

SM Not if the first meeting does not go well.  
I'm not against video conferencing.  
When you and your client know each other, when you've established a relationship. That's fine.  
But you know what it's like, John!  
How often are there technical difficulties?  
One of you has problems, the viewing angle is wrong, the sound is bad?  
That's not what you need when you're introducing yourself to a client.  
You're far more likely to come over as completely inept!

JP I take your point, Sheila. We've had one or two disastrous attempts. It's OK sometimes.

EV Surely we can improve on it?

JP We live in hope.

SM But in a face to face meeting you pick up signals you may miss on a video conference. Body language, vibes...

EV Can't you pick these up on a video?

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SM Not to the same extent.  
And if the technical bits aren't perfect, they are a distraction.

JP Sheila has got a great deal of experience.

SM And take Bontoft Enterprises. I happen to know, through my contacts, that the chief marketing guy has some visual impairment. I'm sure he'd find video less useful than a personal meeting.

EV You didn't tell me that!

SM You didn't ask! I do have my own area of expertise, you know!

**PAUSE – Brief interaction to give audience experience of the process**

*What do audience think is going on here?*

*Thinks bubbles for all three, so we can examine everyone's agenda.*

**Bring academic experts in as co-facilitators, especially for IBM performance. In Dundee and Miami, co-facilitators will be introduced, but the audience will consist more of people who can identify with the characters.**

*What are the HCI problems here?*

*Suggestions for improving the technology*

*Opportunity for audience to 'hot seat' EV and SM, SM in particular, as the older worker. (Actors to be well briefed in rehearsal period)*

*How can they get these two to respect each others strengths and work together?  
Eg EV appreciating SM takes much longer than he to adjust to a new system.*

*Having looked briefly at the HCI design issues, we then move onto how the audience has found the interactive theatre process. Actors can be re-roled in order to be questioned.*

*Ideally MM lead facilitator but she will very happily hand over to experts whenever anything technical comes up. This usually works pretty well.*

*"Clicker" Questions and Evaluation.*

*MM leads this, but others can add their comments or clarifications as they think necessary. (This avoids confusion and everyone speaking at once!)*

***HOT SEATING- Some background info in script. Extra 'technical' info can be demonstratd by experts during rehearsal period. Don't panic, Paul! If you are asked something very technical, will bring in expert!***