

An airlines executive, who was in charge of all personnel issuing tickets at the airline's terminal counters, had a new computer program developed for the centralized reservation system to monitor the work performance of the sales and ticket agents. The program provided detailed performance statistics on each agent, including the number of sales and how quickly and accurately an agent produced airline tickets. It also monitored and reported on time spent working at agent ticket counters. This monitoring was not revealed to the sales and ticket agents but the statistics were used extensively on job performance evaluations for salary adjustment and advancement.

Is the monitoring system fair? if so, why? If not, why not. Furthermore, if the system is not fair, would it be fair if the sales and ticket agents were informed about it prior to putting it in operation? Again, if so, why? If not, why not?

ANSWER: The monitoring system is unfair if employees are not informed about it. According to recommendations of the Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers Association, as a matter of basic workplace fairness, employees should be informed about how and when their work is being measured and about why measurement is necessary. Furthermore, they should have access to their records and receive regular feedback. The Computer and Business Equipment Association recommendation also states that even if an employer informs employees about monitoring this is not enough to guarantee that the monitoring is fair. The standards of performance must be reasonable. The system of monitoring should not promote excessive competition among employees, and it should not be used to "inch up" production standards so that people have to work harder and harder to achieve the same rate of pay.

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