

Case Studies in Conference Management

Shane Cutler, Director of Conference & Event Services
The University of Vermont

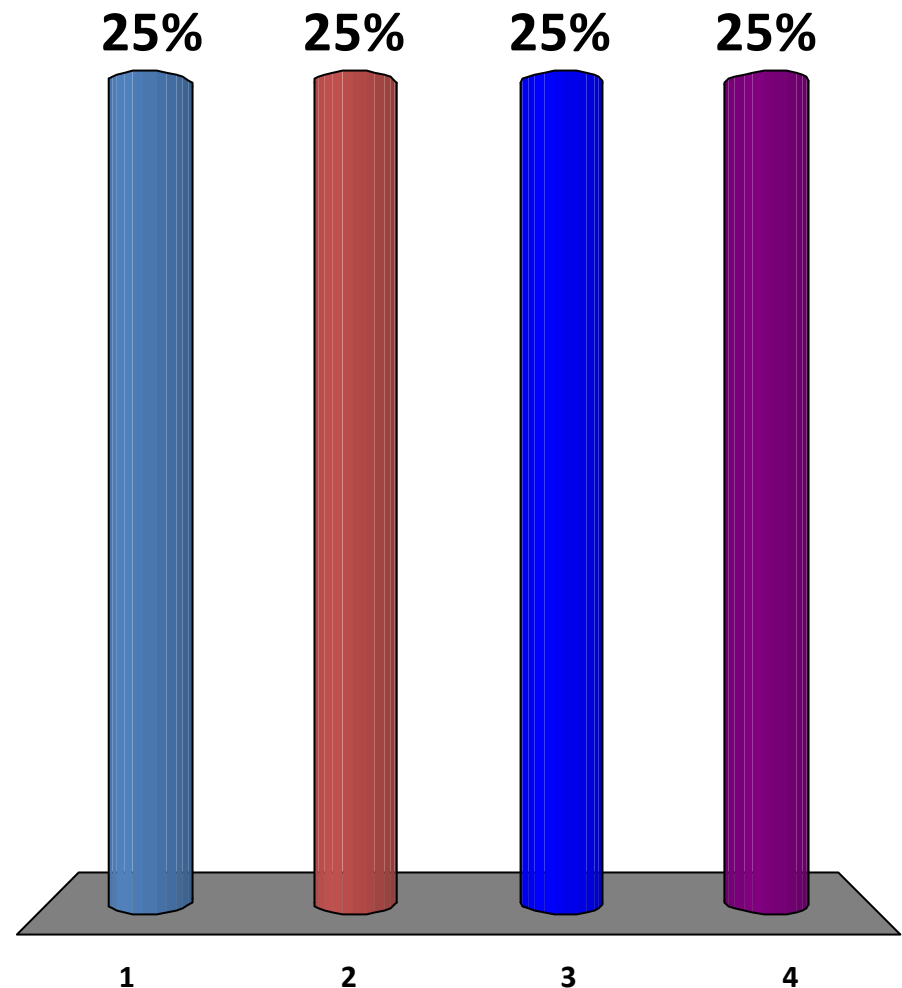
Johanna Mancivalano, Conferences & Events Manager
Salve Regina University

CASE STUDY #1

- An NBA basketball team arrives to campus for their first day of training camp. It is raining, hot and humid, and the air-conditioning is not working properly. The gym is extremely hot. Doors cannot be opened, because the humidity will cause the gym floor to become slick and unsafe. The blowers are turned on and fans are brought in. The gym is still not cool enough, and the fans are creating quite a bit of noise. The coach says that if the problem is not fixed by start of camp the next day, they are going home. Now, camp has been nationally and locally advertised, and is quite an exciting public relations event for the University. An “all hands on deck” meeting is called and it is decided that portable air-conditioning units are going to be brought in.

How would you have handled the situation?

1. Explain that there is nothing we can do and watch them load the bus and go home.
2. Arrange for the portable air-conditioning units to be brought in at the expense of the University.
3. Arrange for the portable air-conditioning units to be brought in and ask the NBA team and its organization to cover some or all of the expense of it.
4. Turn the issue over to the University Facilities Department to solve.



OUTCOME

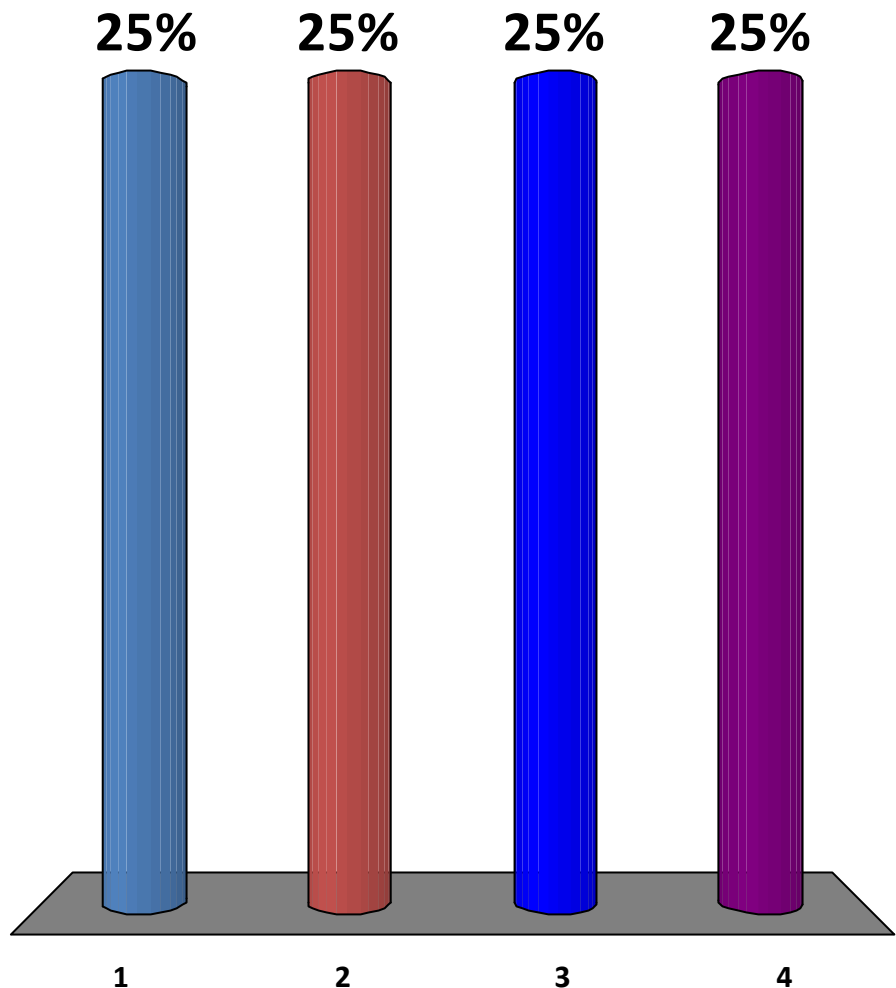
- The University arranged for and covered the expense of the portable air-conditioning units. The University was providing use of facilities that were inadequate and felt they needed to fix the problem. The University ended up saving themselves from what would have been a public relations disaster had they left, while proving to the NBA team and its organization that they value their time on campus working towards becoming a winning team.

CASE STUDY #2

- There is a 13-year old girl attending a youth conference on campus. Upon registering, the girl's mother tells the conference coordinator from the organization that there is a restraining order against the girl's father and he is not allowed to come in contact with her. The organization's conference coordinator neglects to share this information with the University. Early one morning, a conference chaperone is awakened by the sound of a young man attempting to enter a dorm room. The chaperone approaches the young man and asks him what he is doing. It turns out that the young man is a student of the University, who had come home from being out, thought he was entering his room, only to realize he was on the wrong floor. Security is never notified. The organization's conference coordinator mentions the incident and the restraining order in passing to the conferences and events manager.

How would you have handled the situation?

1. Ask the organization's conference coordinator to contact the University's security office and file a report of the incident.
2. Tell the organization's conference coordinator that you are happy that all worked out and leave it at that.
3. Panic and immediately contact the University's security office and local police department.
4. Explain to the organization's conference coordinator that this should have been reported upon hearing about the restraining order at registration.



OUTCOME

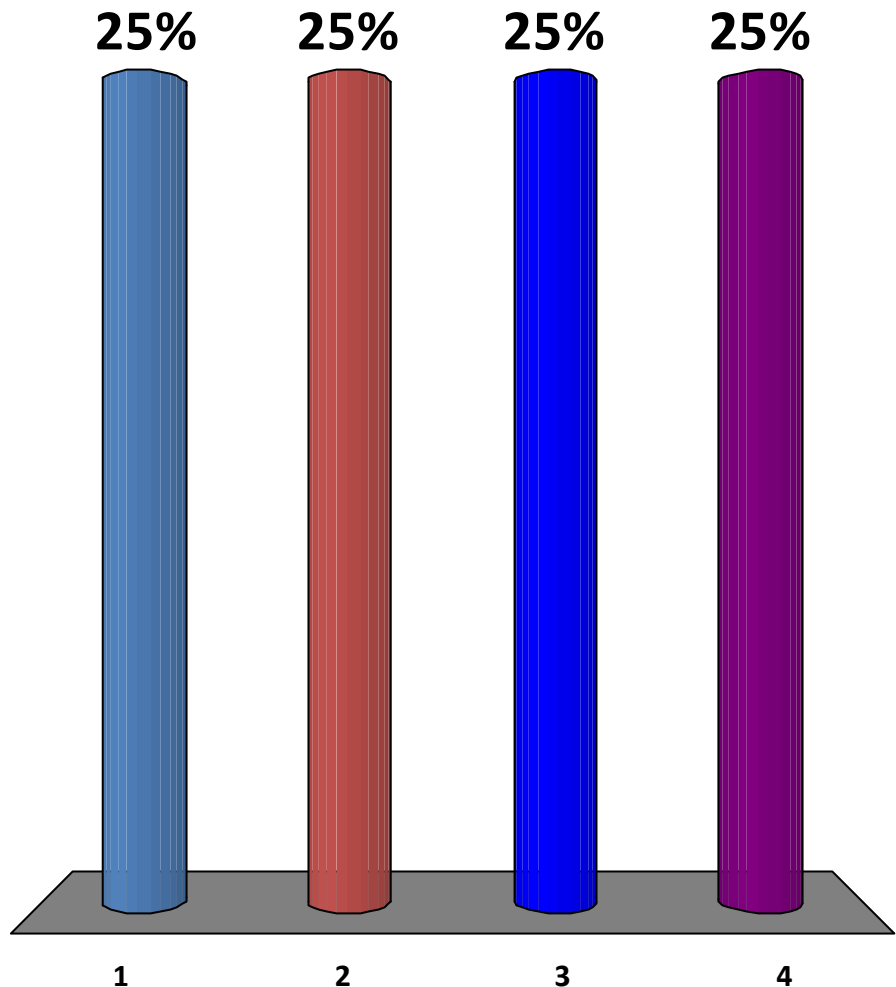
- The University conferences and events manager explained that this should have been reported to either her or the University's security office as soon as they were told about the restraining order. The organization's conference coordinator apologized for not saying anything.

CASE STUDY #3

- A University scheduler realizes that she has forgotten to schedule one of the Music Department's concerts. The concert is scheduled to be held on a specific date and at a specific time in the University's flagship building. When she checks the calendar of events, she realizes that wedding photos have been scheduled. When she questions another University scheduler about the wedding photos, she finds out that the bride has already signed a contract and paid in full for the wedding photos. She explains the situation to the Music Department, who insists that the concert be that date and time. It truly is not possible to have the music risers and 200 chairs set-up in the room where the bride will be taking photos, and it turns out that the Music Department needs to hold a final rehearsal before the start of the concert.

How would you have handled the situation?

1. Cancel the wedding photos stating that University events take preference.
2. Insist that the risers and chairs not be set-up and tell the Music Department that they cannot be in the building until the photos are done.
3. Explain to the bride that the building will be set-up for a Music Department concert and that she is welcome to still have her photos taken in other parts of the building.
4. Figure out a way for the Music Department to rehearse in the building and for the risers and chairs to be set-up immediately following the completion of the wedding photos.



OUTCOME

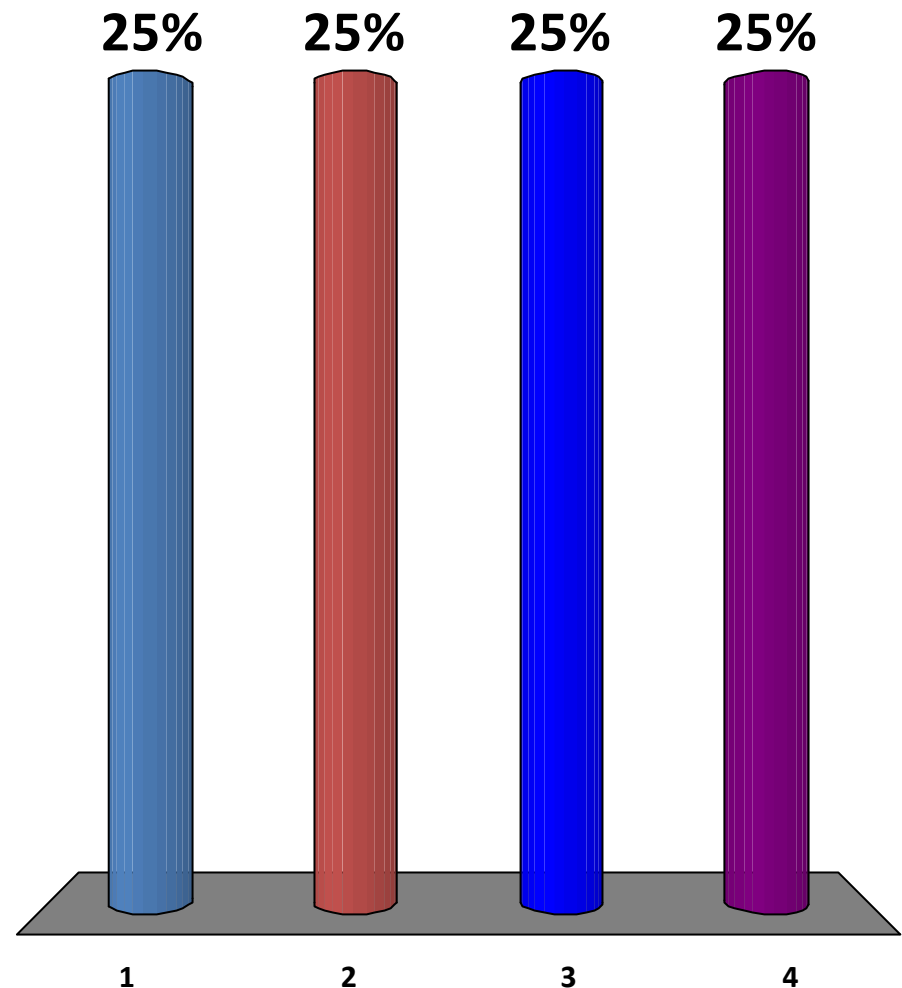
- Both will take place on the same date. The risers will be set-up prior to the wedding photos, the Music Department will hold their final rehearsal in one of the rooms (with doors closed) in the building, and both music and conferences and events staff will set-up the chairs once the wedding photos are done.

CASE STUDY #4

- The University is hosting a 3,500 person send-off ceremony for National Guard members who are leaving for Afghanistan. In attendance are individuals from Washington DC, the Governor, all Senators and Representatives, and several VIPs. Security is high due to the possibility of protesters and the safety of those in attendance. The building was previously swept by State Police and the building is secured. Both local and national TV are present and satellite trucks are stationed in an agreed upon location that allowed cables to be run while ensuring the building is secured. One of the media stations realizes their cables are not long enough and decides to open a door closer to their vehicle, breaching security. The Conference Coordinator is approached by the University's Chief of Police asking to have the truck removed immediately. The event begins in 15 minutes.

How would you have handled the situation?

1. Ask the media station to move the truck and not worry about the station's coverage.
2. Ask the media station to move the truck and try to run new cables in time to start the event at the original start time.
3. Try to contact University Police and/or Risk Management for approval.
4. Talk to your contact in the National Guard to see if you can delay the start time to give additional time to hook up the truck.



OUTCOME

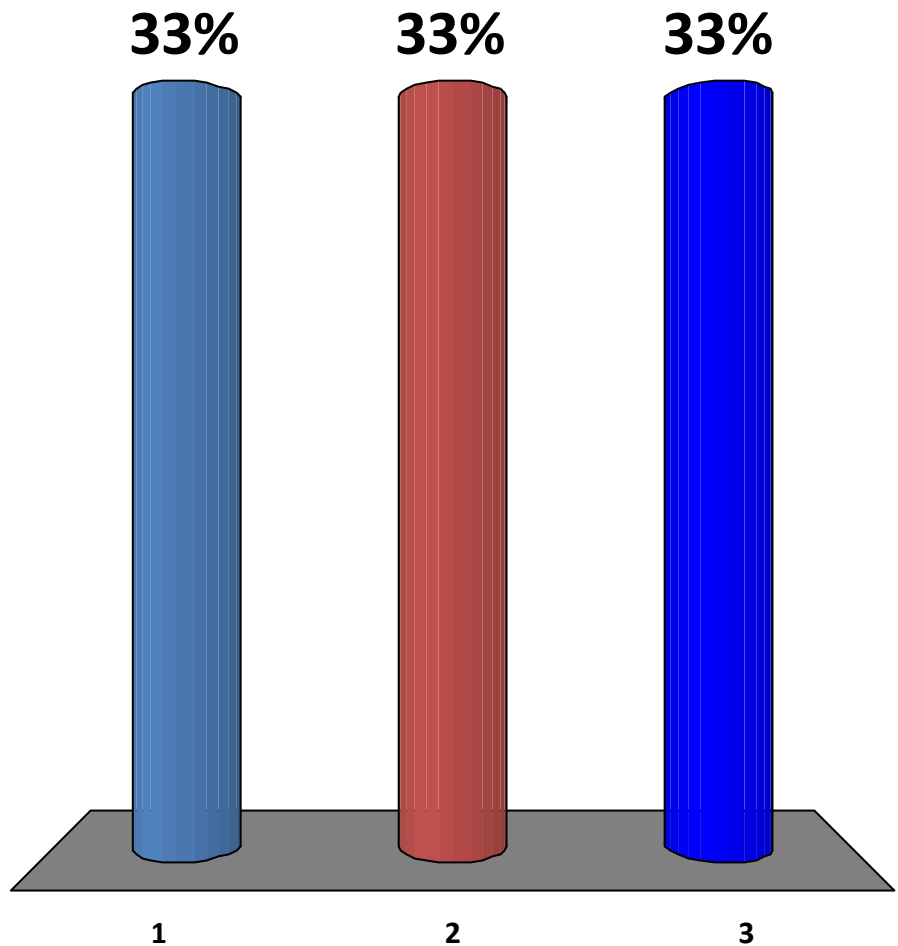
- Approach the Chief of Police and ask her if it would work if a National Guard Member was posted at the door to guard and monitor only the TV crew entering through that door. She agreed and the emergency situation was resolved.

CASE STUDY #5

- It's Friday at 6:00pm, and the State Special Olympics is hosting their annual summer games and the opening ceremony starts in 30 minutes. The University had asked for a detailed program of the ceremony. While having dinner with some of the organizers, the University staff overhears a conversation about the "21 gun salute", which is new information. Ammunitions and weapons are prohibited on the University campus. When the salute is questioned, the University staff member is told they were not real guns, and they were shooting blanks. They will be dressed in Civil War regalia and carry sawed off shot guns.

How would you have handled the situation?

1. Let the State Special Olympics proceed with no action on your part.
2. Tell Special Olympics they cannot include the gun salute as part of the opening ceremonies.
3. Try to contact University Police and/or Risk Management for approval.



OUTCOME

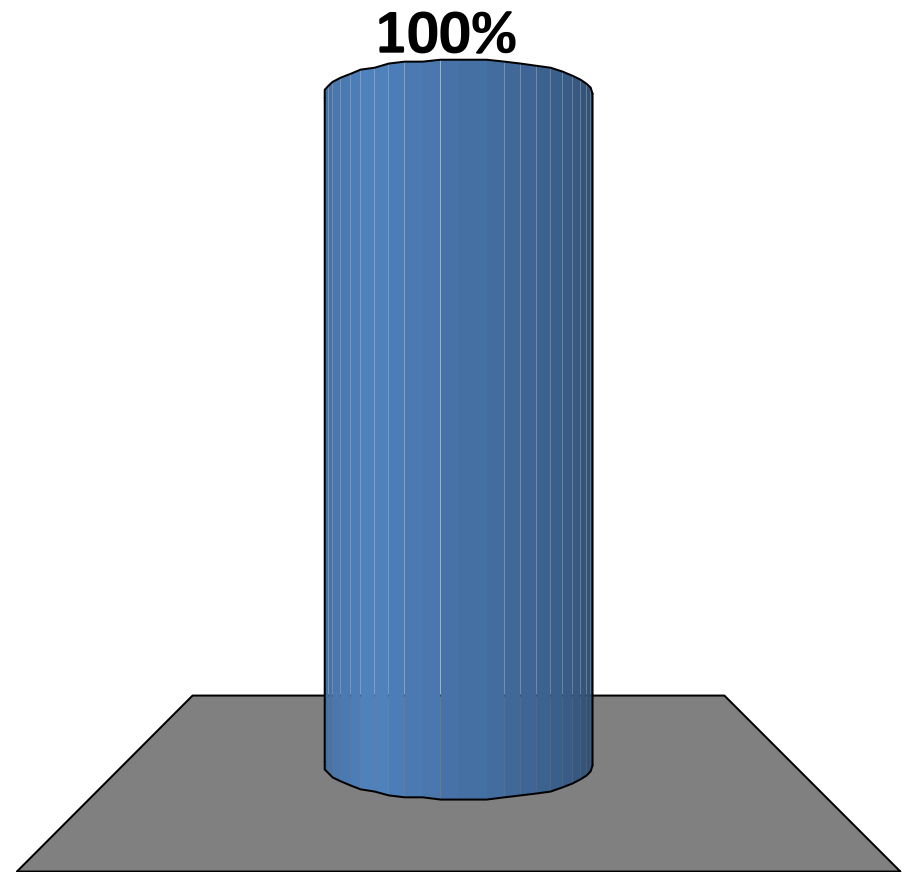
- Given it was after hours and Risk Management could not be reached, the University contacted University Police. The police asked to hold off on the opening ceremony until they could speak to the organizers. They examined the weapons and the ammunition and after a stern reprimand of protocol, allowed the program to continue with their presence on site. They were told that weapons and ammunitions were banned for future use for any event on campus.

CASE STUDY #6

- It's on a Saturday during the peak of the summer conference season and the University has thousands of guests on campus. Many of the summer groups have outdoor activities planned. The weekend weather initially forecasted severe thunderstorms, but on Saturday morning, the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Watch for the area.

How would you have handled the situation?

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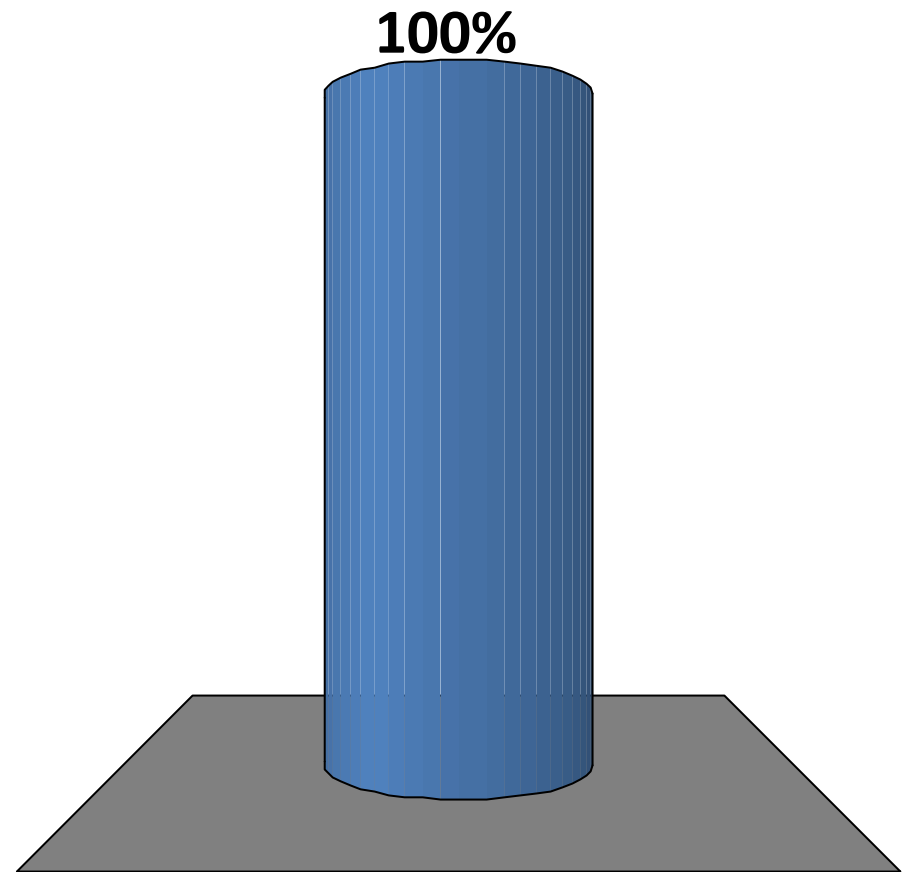


OUTCOME

CASE STUDY #7

How would you have handled the situation?

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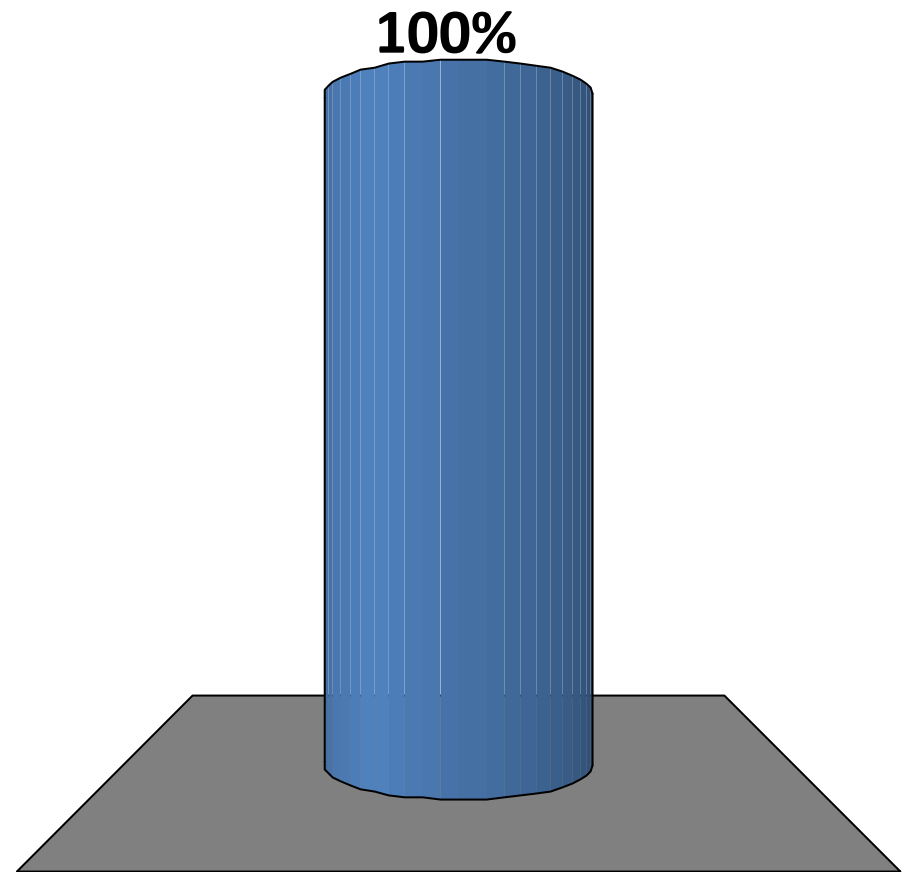


OUTCOME

CASE STUDY #8

How would you have handled the situation?

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OUTCOME