Finger Food for Thought

*Disclaimer: This case study was prepared by Jaclyn Bokla and Mykala Levac under the supervision of Dr. Frances Tuer, DeGroote School of Business, solely for the purpose of discussion. While the injury in the case actually took place all details of person(s) and organization(s) have been disguised.*

**The Injury/Illness:**

One Tuesday afternoon around one-thirty, Fred Smith’s daughter, Amy Smith, who was the store manager, was working with Jude at Tasty Treats. She got a sudden and urgent phone call from a friend asking to be picked up due to a flat tire, just ten minutes away from the bakery. Amy knew that she should not leave Jude alone in the store, however, due to Jude’s impeccable competence, she thought there was no harm in stepping out for a mere twenty minutes. The lunch crowd had died down and Jude was just tasked with filling some pastries with custard in the back of the store. This was a daily task for Jude. He started filling the pastries, when he noticed the machine stopped dispensing the custard. This seemed to happen to the machine quite often but when Jude informed Fred of the malfunction, Fred just brushed it off and said he would look into it later. He knew the machine was becoming clogged and that something had to be done immediately. He called for Amy, but she did not reply. Jude had never received training for malfunctions on the baking equipment but could see where the problem was occurring. Jude thought a quick poke with his fingers would resolve the clog in the machine. To Jude’s surprise, the clog required much more force, which resulted in his left hand becoming caught between the machinery walls. The clog had been pushed through the machine and thus resulted in the machine resuming where it had left off. Jude called again for Amy, not knowing she had stepped out. Jude ripped his hand out of the machine and blood began to pour. He was in excruciating pain. Jude realized that three of his fingertips on left hand were missing. Jude ran around trying to find Amy, but realized she was not in the bakery. He frantically called 911 and grabbed the bread basket towel to wrap his hand in.

**Who and Where?**

Jude was a sixteen-year-old, male, who was in his junior year of high school. He lived in a family-oriented neighborhood, just outside of Toronto. Jude was a well-rounded student, who took pride in his academic achievements. He was involved in multiple extracurricular activities at school, including playing defense on his school’s football team, as well as being president of his school’s baking club. His dream was to one day open up his own bakery. The school baking competition was up and coming next week, and Jude was under a lot of pressure from friends and family to win the competition.

Tasty Treats Bakery was one of the finest bakeries in town, owned and operated by the Smith Family. People from all over Ontario came just to buy their famous butter tarts. Tasty Treats was quite small, however, all their equipment had its own designated space, making the bakery clutter free, and allowed for smooth and efficient operations and service. Jude had been working at Tasty Treats for just over six months and enjoyed the local family business atmosphere. The employees were friendly and Jude was able to gain the hands-on experience he needed to one day own his own bakery. Jude completed his training in a one-month period, versus the usual two-month period, due to the fact that the bakery was understaffed and needed employees quickly. Jude was trustworthy, mature, and worked hard to contribute to the bakeries success. This did not go unnoticed as the store owner, Fred Smith, made an extra effort to mentor Jude, knowing his aspirations.

**Background on this type of injury:**

“Penetration occurs when skin is cut or punctured by any sharp object” (Kelloway, Francis, Gatien, Montgomery & Montgomery, 2017). The classification of a finger amputation is dependent on how severe the injury is. Minor finger injuries involve soft tissue with no exposure of bone. (Lex Medicus, 2018). Usually, surgery is unnecessary, but there needs to be proper bandaging and a hygiene routine to prevent infection, and to ensure the injury heals nicely. (Lex Medicus, 2018). Risk factors of penetration include: maneuvering of industrial tools and machineries, crush injuries (caught under and in between), jamming doors, home power tools, and handling explosive materials/devices (Lex Medicus, 2018). Symptoms of penetration and amputation include sharp pain, extensive bleeding, movement restrictions, finger and/or hand deformity, and separation of amputated finger extremity (Lex Medicus, 2018). The most common causes of hand injuries are: carelessness, lack of awareness, boredom, disregard for safety procedures, and distractions (Irimia & Gottschling, 2016). The results from a hand injury may result in the loss of motion, dexterity, grip, and ability to complete the simplest of tasks (Irimia & Gottschling, 2016). Precautions taken to prevent penetration, amputation and other hand injuries are as follows: Being aware of your surroundings and how equipment functions, wearing appropriate clothing (not loose/baggy), engineering controls such as safeguards, and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves (Irimia & Gottschling, 2016). PPE is required for workers in Canada when performing potentially hazardous work to prevent injury (Canada's Occupational Health & Safety Magazine, 2015). This injury occurs in multiple occupations such as farming, surgery, dentist, construction, nursing, landscaping, welding etc. (Kalra, Mahmood, Patralekh, 2011). 2⁄5 workers hand injuries are from cuts or punctures (Superior Gloves, 2018). Injuries to finger and hands account for more than 23% of all injuries reported (Superior Gloves, 2018).

**What to do next:**

Jude was almost home from the hospital. He began to think how he would go about reporting this incident, or if he even should report it. He pondered a couple of options. The first option was to report the incident. However, he knew Fred and his bakery would be in big trouble for leaving him unsupervised. They would receive a fine, and being a small, family-owned bakery, they could go out of business. This would be problematic for Jude to continue his learning on how to run his own bakery. Jude also had a strong relationship with Fred and did not want to jeopardize losing his mentor. His second option was to report the injury. Jude’s injury was quite serious and he knew that he was legally required to report an injury of this magnitude. Jude wondered if he could possibly lie, that way he could report the injury, but not necessarily disclose all the details. This was his third option and probably the easiest way out of the situation. Regardless of his decision, Jude knew he needed to act fast! The baking competition was only days away and he needed to have a clear state of mind. Jude did not want to disappoint his friends, family, and most importantly, Fred.