

TV Review: FOX Launches Unique ‘Does Someone Have to Go?’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 23, 2013 - 8:51am

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CHICAGO – They could have called it “Undercover No-Boss”. FOX’s very unusual “Does Someone Have to Go?” is a new, Summer reality offering about workplaces that need shaking up and get their upheaval by turning the employees into bosses. Every week, the staff will be empowered by a series of exercises, and, ultimately, have to answer the title question - Is the best route of action for the company to let one of their employees go?



Television Rating: **3.0/5.0**

The series premiere of “Does Someone Have to Go?” focuses on a small Chicago-based company, VMS (Velocity Merchant Services), a credit card processing firm based out of Downers Grove. The woman who founded the company still runs it, and, much to the chagrin of some of her employees, staffs a few family members at VMS as well. The company seems to be doing well but could be doing better. There’s a lot of in-fighting in the staff, the sense that the workers that are related get preferential treatment, and some serious salary disparities. Some salespeople aren’t pulling their weight while others are underpaid. Something has to change.



Does Someone Have to Go?

Photo credit: FOX

Enter a FOX TV show! They’ll fix everything. They send the bosses away and empower the staff to make some changes. Over the next few days, they’ll have to decide as a team what needs to be done with an emphasis on nominating three people for termination. Something should already seem a bit off. While there is discussion of other changes that should be made, SO MUCH of the focus of this show is on cutting employees that it makes it seem like that’s the best answer for companies in crisis. I wish the show was a little more constructive in its criticism. Maybe a staff could be reorganized, duties reassigned, new rules put in place — it would be interesting to see what the men and women in the cubicles think could be done to fix their company other than just which peer they would fire.



Does Someone Have to Go?
Photo credit: FOX

How do they choose who to let go? First, the staff is interviewed about what they think of their fellow employees, not knowing that these interviews will then be shown to everyone in the conference room. When everyone is sensitive and embarrassed, the producers then unveil their salaries to the group. If you thought you resented your co-worker now, wait until you find out he makes twice what you do. Then the group discusses and votes for three people to be put up for termination. The next week, they plead their case and the group answers “Does Someone Have to Go?”

Yes, I said “the next week.” The biggest problem with the show is that each “case” is two weeks long, leading to the same issue that has led to the bloat of “The Celebrity Apprentice” and other reality shows — it’s too long. Everything feels stretched out with many of the same points made over and over again to reach a two-hour running time. The producers would have been smarter to really tighten it up and give viewers one company per episode because, conceptually, “Does Someone Have to Go?” is pretty interesting. There’s a “Lord of the Flies” thing that could happen here. Look at your co-workers. Do you really want THEM choosing your employment fate? Yikes. But it’s not a strong enough concept to carry over two-week installments. Few reality shows are. We want to get in and get out in modern television.

I’m also not convinced that “Does Someone Have to Go?” is fully engaged in its concept as much as it is in the tragic stories of those who might get fired. I really wanted to see if some of the revelations at VMS led to actual changes. A great structure would be to devote 45 minutes to the concept and then an epilogue to explain if the company improved by being a part of the experiment (there may be something similar to that but I wouldn’t know because FOX doesn’t trust me with the end of the episode — a baffling trend in some reality TV show screeners given that it’s never done in other kinds of TV and I don’t spoil those either.) The fact is that just firing the most-expendable worker doesn’t save a lot of struggling companies. I suppose “Does Someone Have to Change?” would be a lot harder to pull off.

“Does Someone Have to Go?” premieres on FOX on Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 8pm CST.



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