Assignment - 02

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| Group 10 | |
| Grace Agumadu  S M Rakibul Basher  Gihan Shamike Liyanage | 1168303  1168369  1142109 |

Submitted for: Prof. Chantal McQueen

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**Task 1: Ethical Dilemma – A Case Study**

1. Business ethics are the moral principles, policies, and values that govern the way companies and individuals engage in business activity. It goes beyond legal requirements to establish a code of conduct that drives employee behaviors at all levels and helps build trust between a business and its customers. (Investopedia, 2024). Therefore, businesses need to explore how to prioritize the requirements to do things right. (Gamlund, 2012) considers different ethical theories, including Deontological and Consequentialism theories.

The Consequential theories comprise of Universal consequentialism and Egoistic & Particularistic consequentialism, and both are centered around doing what is right for oneself or the stakeholders. On the other hand, Deontological theories, derived from the Greek word “duty” or “obligation”, evaluate whether an act is in conformity or conflict with moral duties and rights. Business ethics involves considering values, facts, and arguments to make well-informed decisions and take reasonable actions. It is essential for promoting acceptable behaviors and boosting the integrity of businesses. (University of Redlands, 2021). In the case study, Rob was faced with the dilemma of choosing between two “acceptable” alternatives that impact different stakeholders while hosting a Virtual Reality (VR) party.

Based on the narration of the Case Study and an evaluation of the Consequential theory, Rob had to do the right thing to save his business, as much as he has the responsibility to ensure that his customers are satisfied with his service and to see that his business continues to grow its client base. He therefore leveraged the customer feedback platform on Yelp to continue to get positive reviews and create more publicity and visibility for his VR business. Not until Jen left a bad review which triggered his next move which was the creation of fake accounts to write positive reviews about the business. This action was in a bid to redeem the image of the business which was already dwindling due to Jen’s negative review. One could argue that Rob took that decision because he did not want his business to fail due to Jen’s supposed bad experience.

Also, in analyzing the Deontological theory based on the Case study, Rob has an obligation of integrity to his customers, but he chose to create fake accounts to give positive reviews and increase his Yelp ratings. The ethical dilemma faced by Rob, who recently opened a business hosting VR party, revolves around the decision to leave, or take down fake reviews he posted on Yelp to improve his business's rating. This situation will naturally present a dilemma in choosing between the honesty and integrity of genuine customer feedback and the yearning to promote his business. Rob’s action could lead to a lack of trust and loss of potential customers, and this focuses on the importance of upholding ethical standards in business, especially in the age of online reviews and reputation management. This ethical dilemma, unfortunately, is prevalent for a lot of small business owners and Rob will have to determine which option is most suitable to take based on various factors.

2. Stakeholders

Four major stakeholders identified in the passage are Rob, Customers, Website, and Insurance company.

1. Rob, as the owner of the VR company, is tasked with nurturing his business and utilizing all available resources to ensure its growth and success.
2. Customers of the VR business was requested to leave positive reviews to help boost the company’s patronage. Expectedly, due to their experience at the VR parties, most of the customers did exactly so, except for Jen who had an unhappy experience and went ahead to leave a negative review for the VR business. This led to a decline in the client base. Also, Jen’s reaction showed a flaw on Rob’s part as he has the responsibility to treat the customers fairly and ensure their expectations are met.
3. Yelp Website is an online platform utilized for reviewing and rating businesses, as therefore should ensure proper due diligence by conducting accounts verification and authentication before posting reviews on their site. This is done to maintain the integrity of the reviews and ratings provided. Many consumers depend on the Yelp platform and the realization that such reviews are generated from fake accounts could lead to a lack of trust and consequently, a decline in the public’s reliability of their website.
4. Health Insurance companies to provide coverage for customers of the VR who take ill during the parties, as was the case with Jen. However, games might incur high insurance coverage costs if more customers become frequently sick during the VR game.

3. Rob’s possible course of action includes:

* Conduct a sales promotional offer to get new customers.
* Leave a response to Jen on Yelp to publicly explain the situation, as well as demonstrate his company’s commitment to the service given to their customers.
* Regularly remind customers to leave positive reviews.
* Apologize to Jen and give her a refund.

4. Course of action – Advantages and Disadvantages

* Conduct a sales promotional offer to get new customers.
  + Advantage: Promotions and offers help to attract new customers and could lead to short-term revenue growth due to the discounts and freebies offered.
  + Disadvantage: Over-reliance on such offers and discounts promotions could wear down profit margins and impede profitability and long-term growth.
* Leave a response to Jen on Yelp to publicly explain the situation.
  + Advantage: Addressing negative feedback early helps to mitigate the impact on the reputation of the business.
  + Disadvantage: The public can perceive Rob’s attempt to address the undesirable review negatively, especially if the response appears to be defensive. This could further damage the reputation of Rob’s business.
* Apologize to Jen and give her a refund.
  + Advantage: Sending an apology to Jen shows Rob’s remorsefulness and good customer service skills. This is likely to make Jen desist from posting negative reviews about Rob’s business which could help improve his Yelp score.
  + Disadvantage: Malicious customers could adopt the same strategy to get refunded, even when it is faked, knowing fully well that Rob would want to avoid negative outcomes.
* Regularly remind customers to leave positive reviews.
  + Advantages: Regular reminders can prompt satisfied customers to share their positive experiences, which is more likely to improve the business’s visibility, and potentially attract new customers who rely on reviews for decision-making.
  + Disadvantages: Customers may perceive constant reminders as being manipulative and this could lead to negative reactions and potential backlash. This can damage the business's reputation and discourage future customers who value authenticity and transparency.

5. Businesses have a responsibility to consider some other factors in their operations. These include the customers and stakeholders in the community. Businesses must therefore consider ethics and integrity in their approach rather than concentrating more on profitability. Based on the learning outcomes of Module 3 (Ethics and Social Responsibility), Rob’s approach should be to respond to Jen’s review on Yelp by thanking her for her patronage and for taking out time to share her experience with the VR party.

Rob should also apologize to Jen and other customers who in one way or the other feel disappointed by the services they received from his business. It is also important to promise to keep devising ways to improve the VR business operations in order to continue to serve them better.

Thereafter, he should give a detailed explanation of the events leading to the incident and what precautionary measures he had suggested to Jen to avoid getting nauseous, which she ignored and hence the unfortunate situation. Additionally, Rob could highlight how he had signages or adverts advising his customers to take scheduled breaks during the gaming sessions. Rob’s response is anticipated to give the public an insight into what occurred between both parties and to unravel how irrational Jen was in her reaction. This could also result in more patronage due to sympathy from the public having realized the true situation. Furthermore, the response and clarifications provided by Rob could showcase the business as being customer-friendly and willing to improve by implementing customer feedback as a strategy to continually enhance its operations and processes.

Prioritizing customers and stakeholders help to not only create a positive and trustworthy business environment but also to foster customer loyalty. Businesses that stress ethical conduct and customer satisfaction eventually lay the foundation for a more resilient and sustainable business model for success.

Therefore, positive business practices should include the Consequential and Alternative theory of ethics. This is a situation when care is shown to others rather than oneself. I therefore highly recommend this theory of ethics for Rob and other businesses.

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**Task 2: Code of Ethical Conduct**

**CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of our Code of Ethical Conduct is to establish clear guidelines for all members of our team, including management and employees, to uphold ethical standards and principles in every aspect of our business operations. By adhering to this code, we aim to promote trust, integrity, and accountability within our organization and foster positive relationships with our clients and stakeholders.

This code serves as a framework to guide our decision-making processes and behavior, ensuring that we uphold the highest standards of professionalism, fairness, and respect in all our interactions. It outlines our commitment to ethical business practices, including the treatment of team members and clients, and the handling of confidential information.

Furthermore, this Code of Ethical Conduct reflects our dedication to maintaining a positive reputation in the industry and contributing to the greater good of society. By adhering to these principles, we strive to build a culture of trust and integrity within our organization and uphold the values that define our business ethos.

**HOW TO USE THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Utilizing the Code of Ethical Conduct effectively involves integrating its principles into daily operations and decision-making processes across all levels of the organization. Here's how we can ensure the code is effectively utilized:

* ***Education and Training***: Provide comprehensive training sessions for all employees, including management, to familiarize them with the content and purpose of the Code of Ethical Conduct. Ensure they understand the implications of ethical behavior and how it relates to their roles within the organization.
* ***Integration into Policies and Procedures***: Integrate the principles outlined in the code into existing policies and procedures. This includes HR policies, customer service protocols, confidentiality agreements, and any other relevant documents. Ensure consistency across all organizational practices.
* ***Lead by Example***: Leadership plays a crucial role in setting the tone for ethical behavior. Managers and executives should demonstrate adherence to the code through their actions and decisions. Encourage open communication channels where employees feel comfortable raising ethical concerns without fear of reprisal.
* ***Regular Review and Updates***: The business environment is dynamic, and ethical dilemmas may evolve over time. Conduct regular reviews of the Code of Ethical Conduct to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Update the code as needed to address emerging issues or changes in industry standards.
* ***Promote Accountability***: Establish mechanisms for accountability to ensure adherence to the code. This may include implementing reporting channels for ethical violations, conducting audits or assessments, and enforcing disciplinary measures when necessary. Celebrate and recognize instances of exemplary ethical behavior.
* ***Client and Stakeholder Engagement***: Communicate the organization's commitment to ethical conduct to clients, stakeholders, and the broader community. Incorporate ethical considerations into client interactions and decision-making processes, demonstrating a commitment to integrity and trustworthiness.
* ***Continuous Improvement***: Foster a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging feedback and suggestions for enhancing ethical practices within the organization. Solicit input from employees at all levels and use this feedback to refine and strengthen the Code of Ethical Conduct over time.

By actively promoting and integrating the principles outlined in the Code of Ethical Conduct into everyday operations, our organization can cultivate a culture of integrity, accountability, and trust, ultimately contributing to long-term success and sustainability.

**ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES**

Ethical principles and professional values serve as the foundation for guiding behavior and decision-making within an organization. Here are some key ethical principles and professional values that can inform the development of a Code of Ethical Conduct:

* ***Integrity***: Upholding honesty and truthfulness in all actions and communications. Acting in a manner consistent with one's values and principles, even when faced with difficult decisions.
* ***Respect***: Treating others with dignity, empathy, and fairness. Valuing diversity and embracing different perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds.
* ***Responsibility***: Taking ownership of one's actions and their consequences. Fulfilling commitments and obligations to clients, colleagues, and stakeholders.
* ***Transparency***: Operating with openness and honesty in all business dealings. Providing accurate and truthful information to stakeholders and maintaining clarity in communication.
* ***Accountability***: Accepting personal and organizational responsibility for actions and decisions. Holding oneself and others to high ethical standards and being willing to answer for one's conduct.
* ***Confidentiality***: Safeguarding sensitive information and respecting privacy rights. Ensuring that confidential data is handled securely and only disclosed to authorized parties as necessary.
* ***Fairness and Justice***: Treating all individuals equitably and impartially. Avoiding discrimination or bias based on factors such as race, gender, religion, age, or disability.
* ***Professionalism***: Demonstrating competence, diligence, and ethical behavior in all professional interactions. Maintaining a high standard of quality in the delivery of products and services.
* ***Empathy and Compassion***: Showing empathy and compassion towards others, both within the organization and in interactions with clients and stakeholders. Recognizing and responding to the needs and concerns of others with care and understanding.

By incorporating these ethical principles and professional values into the Code of Ethical Conduct, organizations can create a framework for ethical behavior that guides decision-making, promotes integrity, and fosters trust among stakeholders.

**APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR OF MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES TOWARDS EACH OTHER:**

* ***Respect for Diversity***: All management and employees are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect, embracing diversity in all its forms, including but not limited to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability status. Discriminatory behavior or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.
* ***Open Communication***: Transparent and honest communication is encouraged among all team members. Constructive feedback should be given respectfully, and conflicts should be resolved professionally and amicably. Management will maintain an open-door policy to address any concerns or grievances promptly.
* ***Confidentiality***: Management and employees are required to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information, including but not limited to client data, business strategies, and personal information of colleagues. Breaches of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action.
* ***Fair Treatment and Equal Opportunities***: All team members will be treated fairly and given equal opportunities for advancement based on merit, skills, and performance. Discrimination or favoritism in hiring, promotion, or any other employment practices is strictly prohibited.

**APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR WITH OUR CLIENTS:**

* ***Honesty and Integrity***: We are committed to conducting business with honesty, integrity, and transparency. Misrepresentation of products or services, false advertising, or deceptive practices of any kind will not be tolerated. We will always strive to deliver what we promise to our clients.
* ***Respect for Client Privacy***: We respect the privacy of our clients and will handle their personal information with care and confidentiality. Any use of client data will be in compliance with applicable privacy laws and regulations.
* ***Professionalism and Courtesy***: Our interactions with clients will be characterized by professionalism, courtesy, and respect. We will listen actively to their needs, provide prompt and helpful assistance, and strive to exceed their expectations in every interaction.
* ***Conflict Resolution***: In the event of a dispute or disagreement with a client, we will seek to resolve the issue promptly and fairly. We will listen to the client's concerns, offer solutions where possible, and work towards a mutually satisfactory resolution while upholding the principles of our business and ethical standards.

**ETHICS FOR VIRTUAL REALITY:**

* ***Do No Harm***: Prioritize customer well-being by ensuring that VR experiences are appropriately tested to avoid content that objectifies, demeans, or violates the rights of individuals or animals.
* ***Secure the Experience***: Implement robust security protocols to protect customers from malicious activities and ensure the integrity of the VR environment.
* **Transparency in Data Collection**: Clearly communicate data collection practices in privacy policies, specifically addressing VR data and how it will be used, shared, and protected.
* ***Permission Requests***: Obtain explicit permission for collecting sensitive data such as eye-tracking, health, and biometric information, including movement-derived data.
* ***Minimize Nausea***: Employ best practices to reduce motion sickness among customers and conduct thorough testing to mitigate discomfort before releasing VR products to the public.
* ***Diversify Representation***: Provide a diverse range of avatars and ensure that representations of individuals and groups do not perpetuate stereotypes.
* ***Regulate Social Spaces***: Implement measures to prevent cyberbullying and sexual harassment in VR environments, promoting inclusivity through community guidelines and privacy protections, especially in projects involving children or vulnerable populations.
* ***Consider Accessibility***: Design VR experiences with accessibility in mind, offering options for customers with different abilities to participate meaningfully. Incorporate modular design to allow for integration of additional software or hardware as needed.
* ***Innovate Proactively***: Continuously seek out and implement new methods to enhance the immersive experience for customers, collaborating with them to achieve the best outcomes.

In conclusion, our Code of Ethical Conduct for Virtual Reality (VR) encompasses a commitment to responsible and ethical practices in the development, facilitation, and use of VR experiences. With a focus on prioritizing customer well-being, safeguarding customer privacy, promoting inclusivity, and fostering a respectful virtual environment, our Code serves as a guiding framework for our business operations. By adhering to these ethical principles, we aim to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in our VR business. Our commitment to ethical conduct not only ensures the safety and satisfaction of our customers but also contributes to the positive impact of VR technology on society.

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**Task 3: Best Practices in Social Responsibility**

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| S. N | Top 100 Employer Name | Socially Responsible Activity/Behavior  That This Employer Does |
| 1. | GHD Canada Holdings Inc. | * Offers an incentive program to encourage employees to commit to a "greener" commute by walking, cycling, carpooling, or using public transit to travel to and from work (to a maximum of $200 per category and a total maximum of $400) * Supports employees through all phases of family planning, including coverage for fertility drugs and treatments if needed, and maternity and parental leave top-up for birth and adoptive parents (to 80 per cent of salary for up to 17 weeks) -- new parents may also extend their leave into an unpaid leave of absence. * Offers professional development opportunities for individuals at all stages of their careers, from a dedicated graduate development program to formal mentoring opportunities and leadership development. * Encourage and assist efforts to protect ecosystem values in projects that interact with locations designated as Ramsar, World Heritage, or biologically significant by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). * A wellness program that is available to all employees, which was initially introduced in 2020 in response to the psychological and physical difficulties that the COVID-19 epidemic was causing. The first Global Wellbeing Leader was appointed in 2022. This new senior position was developed to represent the significance of wellbeing inside the organization. The Global Wellbeing Leader is in charge of creating, promoting, and ingraining a business culture that supports the wellbeing of its employees. They have created a fresh approach to overall wellbeing in order to complement this appointment, and it will include a program. This raises people's quality of life and puts their long-term health and productivity first. * The independent non-profit GHD Foundation was founded in October 2020 to allow GHD employees, clients, and partners to contribute to charity organizations that offer fair access to STEM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics). In addition, GHD contributes funds and has promised to donate 1% or more of its earnings to Foundation initiatives during the following three years |
| 2. | Graham Construction | * To encourage employees to take care of their physical and mental well-being, the company provides free access to a fitness center located on the premises of the main office. It also offers a health and wellness portal that includes information on sleep, nutrition, and mental health, as well as benefits plan coverage for mental health treatment up to $2,000 annually. * Offers tuition breaks, manages a graduate program to develop future talent, and motivates employees to keep up their skill levels with its all-inclusive internal Builders Framework program, which is directed by in-house specialists. * The company is entirely owned by its employees, and it promotes an ownership mindset by providing a share purchase plan to every employee. By providing a defined contribution pension plan, it also helps employees save money over time. * They invested more than $1 million to charitable causes and sponsorships; to take tangible steps towards reducing their carbon footprint; established new joint ventures with Indigenous partners; and implemented leading edge safety protocols to create safer work environments for stakeholders. * They are always operated with a vision of creating thriving communities, not only helping create social infrastructure for communities but also contributing to regional economies by hiring local subcontractors and vendors. Focus on waste reduction, recycling, re-use and recovery on the jobsite and in the office. They give to social programs and initiatives that are beneficial to their stakeholders through volunteerism and donations. * In the spring of 2018 over 100 Graham employees from branches across Canada participated in Threads of Life’s flagship fundraiser, Steps for Life, and helped raise funds for families affected by a workplace fatality or life-altering workplace injury or illness. Threads of Life provides families with one-on-one peer support, links to community resources and opportunities to promote workplace injury prevention. In addition to being a national sponsor of Threads for Life, Graham’s employees raised over $10,000 through fundraising activities including a chili cook-off in Calgary, a BBQ in Saskatoon, and various donations from our partners and clients. |
| 3. | Royal Bank of Canada | * Over the past year, the bank has improved its family-friendly benefits, offering more funding for fertility treatments and medications as well as support for adoption and surrogacy (up to a lifetime maximum of $20,000 for each); in addition, the bank offers all new parents top-up maternity and parental leave benefits, up to 100% of salary for up to 12 weeks. * Provides a variety of exciting opportunities for professional growth, such as a social impact learning program that allows high-potential staff members to use their expertise to solve organizational problems by collaborating with community partners. To date, the program has benefited over 48 community partners and engaged over 369 high-potential staff members. * RBC publishes a Blueprint for Well-Being and Mental Health to increase public awareness and provides coverage for mental health treatments up to $5,000 yearly, including psychotherapists, family therapists, marital counselors, and clinical counselors. Through its internal "Wellness+" program, which rewards good behavior with credits to a personal wellness account, the bank also encourages staff members to adopt healthy behaviors. * In order to guarantee that women are fairly represented on the Board of Directors, they are still working to diversify the membership. They contend that a wider range of experiences, attitudes, and knowledge result from diversity. A goal of 20% female directors has been set by the Nomination Committee for when it comes to reappointing or choosing new members. The goal was achieved in 2022 when there were two women (33%) on the board of directors. * RBC will keep trying to learn more about the potential and hazards associated with water for the industries we finance as well as the local communities where we live and work. Through donations and sponsorship, they assist groups that seek to address critical concerns and provide answers to the escalating water crisis, therefore promoting awareness and thought leadership on water-related topics. * RBC funds five beehives in France via the Bee Care Club. By using bees to pollinate plants, this project helps preserve a large number of disappearing species and promote biodiversity. Additionally, the club makes honey that is sold to staff members, aiding in the upkeep of the beehives, and supporting various youth and biodiversity-related projects (such as Race for the Kids). A honey pot sale was planned for December 2022 with the proceeds going to la Croix-Rouge luxe bourgeoise and Race for the Kids. 700 euros were gathered. |
| 4. | Rio Tinto | * Rio Tinto encourages employees to volunteer with their favourite charitable organizations through matching financial contributions for the number of hours committed, providing $250 for every 25 volunteer hours. * Rio Tinto raised the minimum paid vacation period for new hires to four weeks, with a maximum of six weeks available. The business also takes into account candidates' prior work experience when hiring new staff. * Rio Tinto offers maternity or parental leave top-up payments to all new parents, up to 100% of income for eighteen weeks. When head office staff are ready to return to work, they may also be allowed to use the on-site childcare facility. * They, along with BHP, Fortescue, and the Australian Minerals and Energy Skills Alliance, initiated the Building Safe and Respectful Workplaces pilot initiative. * They collaborate with others to make focused investments that support communities' continued prosperity when our activities end. They gave more than $72 million in 2021 to community initiatives in the areas of business growth, education, environmental preservation, health, and community infrastructure and services. * To assist entrepreneurs in commercializing technology advancements in energy efficiency and renewable energy, they contributed C$3 million to establish and maintain the C3E (Centre of Excellence for Energy Efficiency). This cooperation with Hydro Quebec made this possible. |
| 5. | Ross Video | * With generous maternity and parental leave top-up benefits (up to 70% of income for 26 weeks) and phased-in alternatives when they're ready to return to work, Ross Video supports all of its new parents. * Through a share purchase program, Ross Video incentivizes staff members to become shareholders and offers attractive new employee referral prizes ranging from $500 to $5,000, dependent upon the role. * They have approached waste reduction practically by searching for ways to incorporate low-waste procedures into every aspect of our business. This includes adopting a closed-loop ultrasonic stencil cleaning procedure, which guarantees that water consumption is limited to necessary services like restrooms and lunchrooms, and utilizing no clean solder paste and flux, which removes the need for water in the soldering process. * Their Ottawa-based research and development team is dedicated to creating goods that satisfy consumers and support a sustainable future. Ultrix, a hyperconverged platform, is the ideal illustration. * They recently revealed a $15 million expansion of the Ross manufacturing facility, which will include a number of environmentally friendly features including electric vehicle charging stations and increased usage of renewable energy sources. These elements are all intended to help the firm reach its 2030 target of emitting zero net carbon emissions. * Aside from policies that encourage a culture of sustainability, Ross provides staff with dishware and glassware in its kitchens with the goal of reducing disposable items. It also has showers available at the R&D centre in Ottawa as well as the Iroquois factory for those who choose to bike, jog, or walk to work. |

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