

Ethics Essay
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The purpose of having/following a code of ethics is to provide engineers and professionals in fields in which safety is critical with a framework in which to guide them. Another purpose of having a code of ethics is to help people in these fields (engineers, project managers, managers, etc.) resolve ethical problems and make the most ethical decisions in all business situations.

The purpose of following a code of ethics is to protect ordinary people who are using the products the engineers create from any danger that could occur if the right ethical decisions are not made or if corners are cut in engineering. Also, following a code of ethics can help companies be protected financially, since situations that happen in which companies do not hold ethics to a high standard often include the company losing money directly through lawsuits or having to refund customers or pay for the solution to the problem they created. The companies also can lose money indirectly by losing business due to the public or their customers not trusting them anymore or by losing their licenses, or other issues that keep them from selling their product.

When I am faced with an ethical situation, I personally go about making a decision by first considering how I would feel if I knew that the other part knew the decision I had made or what I had chosen to do. This visibility allows me to put myself in the other

person's shoes while also considering what damage the decision could personally do to me or the organization I am working for.

In making an ethical decision, I also consider the incentives that I have to make either choice in the situation. For example, if I have a strong financial incentive to make a decision that is less ethical, that may drive me to make that decision, as finances often drive people in industry. Also, if I knew that making an unethical decision could lead to termination of my employment or my contract or could result in me losing a bid or a job, I would make sure to make the most ethical decision.

One strategy that helps me in any decision making procedure, but applied to ethical decision making, is creating a pro/con list. This involves creating one list of all of the benefits that could come from making a certain decision, as well as the drawbacks to less desirable results of making the same decision. Making a set of lists like this for each decision I am considering helps me to visualize the outcome of multiple situations, which makes decision making easier.

Another factor that I consider when making an ethical decision is how much personal damage this decision could do to me. For example, if this affects how much people want to work with me after or if I would get fired from the company. Also, how much people would trust me based on the decision I make is an important factor.

I also would want to consider how much damage my decision could create to the company or organization that I am working for. This could be either monetary or financial damage, or it could be damage to the trust that their customers or partners have for them.

Another factor that I consider when making ethical decisions is who does my decision affect exactly. If it is affecting people or the environment, I would be especially careful with the decision that I make to make sure I do not hurt anyone or hurt the environment. This ties into identifying and examining the ethical issue itself and who it affects and what the outcomes could be on a bigger scale.

The case that was discussed by my small group was “Hacking Cars”. The ethical dilemma we identified as a group (and as a class) was whether or not the ethical fault for the situation was on Chrysler or if the group of hackers acted unethically. My perspective was different from most of the rest of my group in that I believed that it was not Chrysler’s fault ethically because everyone has flaws or issues in their system. The hackers wanted to be hired or gain something from this situation with Chrysler and the hacking, and it was Chrysler’s decision whether to hire them (or otherwise compensate them) or not. I believed the team of hackers acted unethically because when Chrysler did not give them what they wanted, they tried to damage Chrysler’s reputation by going public with the information they had and released all their findings. Chrysler would have (and did) fix the issue on their own and make the situation right by fixing the security issue on cars.

My group and my ethical considerations for this case study were alike because we both believed Chrysler made the right ethical decision by fixing the problem.

We came to a consensus that the right ethical decision in this situation was Chrysler informing their customers of the issue and fixing the problem at no additional charge to the customer.

The virtues that I chose that relate to my case study (“Hacking Cars”) are integrity, fidelity, responsibility, and self-discipline. I think that integrity applied to the situation because Chrysler needed to act with more integrity with the way they conduct business. They will succeed more if they act with a higher standard of morality and treat their customers better.

The virtue ethic of fidelity applies because I think that Chrysler showed they (at least somewhat) valued their customers by fixing the issue, showing their faithfulness to their customers and their efforts to maintain their base of Jeep and other customers.

Responsibility applies because Chrysler ultimately fixed the issue with the car for free because it was the responsible thing to do. They took responsibility for their mistake/issue with their vehicle and repaired the issue.

Self-discipline applies to this situation because I thought that the group of hackers did not act with self-discipline. They wanted to get something out of the situation, which is why they contacted Chrysler. When Chrysler did not cooperate, they came forward with all of their information and showed it all to the public. They did not act on self-discipline and did this to gain fame and get their names out there, and ultimately get more jobs and more money. This was the unprofessional thing to do.