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### Agrico Case

Agrico is a large company that specializes in leasing land to farmers. It is based out of Iowa. Their main problem is converting to a software-based system for managing their agriculture business. The cash-rent leases are fairly straightforward. The crop-share leases are more complicated and what caused the need for complicated software to be needed. It was this complication that led to the ethical dilemma that Agrico faces. The crop-share leases required data storage of what crops were used to pay off a share, how much those crops were sold for, the commodity market data that supported the selling of said crops for said price, the payment of the leaser in addition to crops that were given to Agrico as part of the lease, etc.

Agrico soon realized after testing AMR's software that they needed to have a copy of the object code and source code. This was due to the intricacies of what Agrico is trying to accomplish as well as AMR's reluctance to give Agrico the source code. AMR is very wary of its code being distributed without its consent. Also, AMR and Agrico were having many heated discussions about the source code and where it should be stored. This is the second stewardship issue (Cash, pg. 235). AMR does not trust Agrico to protect its Intellectual Property from unwanted access and disclosure. This is a great source of tension between the two companies. This is at the heart of the issue, and this issue is not adequately addressed in the contract. Agrico sees AMR as encroaching on their interests, while AMR sees it the other way around. Both are engaged in defenses or attacks designed to sustain or improve their position (Morgan, pg. 157).

Jane Seymour (AMR employee) then leaves the AMR source code in an open file on an Agrico computer. The Question is: should the VP of Information Systems (Burdelle) give the green light to copy the AMR source code without AMR's knowledge? The fact that this code was left available by an AMR

employee and that several employees of Agrico are considering copying the source code makes it clear that *groupthink* is already well at play here (Morgan, pg. 211). What are the ethical and moral considerations at play? Ethics is the standards that is imposed by an outside group such as society or a profession while morals is one's own personal sense of right and wrong (Ethics vs. Morality Video).

Mission: To provide farm and ranch management services for property owned.

Agrico uses the Generic Cost Leadership Strategy. The commodities produced by Agrico's farms and ranches compete in a broad market with lots of competitors. The consumer has many different options for buying basic commodities like wheat or grain. These products are price sensitive so keeping prices low is a must to compete.

Competitive Rivalry is high. The commodities market is a cost sensitive, competitive marketplace.

Threat of new entrants is low. The overall costs of acquiring land and the loans needed to operate a farm till crops can be harvested and sold is high.

Threat of substitutes is low. People need food to eat.

Bargaining power of suppliers is moderate. Seeds and traditional farm equipment are not expensive, however the new advanced technology that John Deere has develop to manage crop harvesting and monitoring is.

Bargaining power of customers is high. The commodities market is an extremely competitive market.

Organizational structure is the functional structure with each division of labor broken up by its main functions: Marketing, Treasury, Corporate Operations, Operations.

The Stakeholders in this case are Agrico and AMR. Agrico needs the source code in order to customize and maintain it. Agrico had already been experiencing problems with getting the source code from AMR due to various reasons. Having the source code would allow Agrico to better function as an organization. AMR wants to protect its source code to prevent the unauthorized spread of its intellectual property. AMR also has a somewhat dubious legal obligation to provide the source code.

First Alternative is to do nothing. This would be the morally correct action for Burdelle to take. It is wrong to take something that is not yours or that has not been given to you. However, morals only apply to the individual and Burdelle needs to do what is best for the company. Ethically, doing nothing would be the best answer as well. The issues that the two companies are having with each other should be resolved with both parties present. And the resolution should be a conclusion that both parties agree too. An argument can be made that the two companies will never reach an agreement, but that is the nature of the contract they both signed. This alternative benefits both stake holders, Agrico and AMR. Agrico will not have to face the possibility of a lawsuit. AMR will not have to file a lawsuit against Agrico and AMR also will not have to worry about the unauthorized distribution of the source code.

The Second Alternative is to go ahead and make a tape of the source code, store it in a secure location, and notify AMR of what has transpired. This alternative will most likely result in a lawsuit. Morally, Burdelle could make the argument that Agrico has put in a lot of effort towards reaching a solution with AMR and that at this point he has a right to take the source code. As an individual, Burdelle could see his taking the source code as OK, in light of the recent conversation he had with the company lawyer. Ethically this is wrong. It is poor business practice to act outside the bounds of a contract. If the contract has language in it that is unclear, then it is the responsibility of both sides to come to an agreement on the clarification of this language. This alternative benefits Agrico in the short-term, in that they have the source code, but long-term, they could lose the lawsuit and lose the source code as well

as pay a penalty. This does not benefit AMR, as AMR is having their source code taken without its approval.

The Third Alternative is to make a tape of the source code but do not notify AMR and make all employees who are aware that you have the tapes sign an NDA. This is the “It’s just business” approach (Organizations as Sociopaths article). This alternative is morally wrong due to the fact that at this point the source code is being taken without notifying AMR. This is a representation of the “amoral person”, a person that is only concerned with their stockholders (The Corporation, minute 12). Also this alternative is ethically wrong because essentially the tapes are being stolen, and then all employees involved having to sign NDAs. This alternative benefits nobody. This puts Agrico in great legal jeopardy and could ruin the reputation of Agrico in the wider business community. This alternative proves AMR’s suspicions that Agrico could not be trusted and will result in a massive lawsuit when AMR finds out about this transgression.

The best Alternative is Alternative One. It is the morally and ethically correct decision to make. Agrico and AMR signed a contract. The two parties need to reach a resolution regarding the language of that contract in the proper setting.

Alternative Two is ethically wrong. There is a legal argument to make that AMR could have the right to make a copy of the source code, but ethically this is wrong. This goes outside the bounds of the contract. The two parties signed a contract and should resolve their issues within the framework of that contract.

Alternative Three is ethically and morally wrong. Taking property from a party without their consent is ethically and morally wrong. Having employees who are aware of this sign an NDA is ethically and morally wrong.