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Assignment: professional ethics

Case study 1

**Data Privacy in a Social Media Company:**

Problem Statement: Should a company use data from users without their explicit consent?

Scenario: A social media company collects data to improve user experience. However, to target ads more effectively, they plan to analyze private messages.

Solution: The company can adopt a transparent opt-in policy, ensuring users can choose whether to share their data. They should only access data explicitly permitted by users.

Case 2

**Whistleblowing in Healthcare**

Problem Statement: Should an employee report unethical practices in their workplace, risking their career?

Scenario: A nurse witnesses the head doctor falsifying patient records to cover up medical errors. Reporting this could endanger her job.

Solution: The nurse should report the malpractice through anonymous internal channels or speak with a legal advisor. Transparency in healthcare ensures patient safety and upholds professional integrity.

Case study 3

**Journalistic Integrity and Confidential Sources**

Problem Statement: Should a journalist reveal a confidential source under legal pressure?

Scenario: A journalist uncovers a major corporate scandal using confidential sources. Later, authorities demand the source’s identity.

Solution: Journalists have a duty to protect sources, but if legally required, they may consult with their source about disclosing or seek legal protection for source confidentiality.

Case study 4

**Automation and Unemployment**

Problem Statement: Should a business automate, knowing it will cause job losses?

Scenario: A manufacturing company considers adopting automation to increase efficiency, potentially leading to layoffs for a majority of its employees.

Solution: The company could implement automation gradually and invest in employee retraining programs, ensuring workers transition to other roles within or outside the company.

Case study 5

**Pharmaceutical Trials in Developing Countries**

Problem Statement: Should a pharmaceutical company test experimental drugs in less-developed countries?

Scenario: A pharmaceutical company wants to test a drug in a low-income country where oversight is less strict, raising ethical concerns about exploitation.

Solution: The company should obtain informed consent, ensure fair treatment, and provide lasting healthcare benefits to the community. Trials must follow international ethical standards.Environmental Responsibility vs. Profit

Case study 6

**Conflict of Interest in Academia**

Problem Statement: Should a professor use their position to advance a family member’s career?

Scenario: A professor’s daughter is applying to the program they manage. Accepting her without due process would be unfair to other candidates.

Solution: The professor should excuse themselves from the hiring process and allow unbiased staff to evaluate the candidate fairly.

Case study 7

**Environmental Responsibility vs. Profit**

Problem Statement: Should a company ignore environmental standards to increase profits?

Scenario: A mining company discovers they can boost profits by cutting costs on environmental safety, potentially harming local ecosystems.

Solution: Prioritize environmentally friendly practices and comply with regulations, balancing long-term sustainability with short-term gains.

Case study 8

**Confidentiality in Therapy**

Problem Statement: Should a therapist break confidentiality if a client poses a risk to others?

Scenario: A client shares plans to harm someone. Breaking confidentiality breaches trust but could prevent potential harm.

Solution: If the threat is credible, the therapist is ethically obligated to inform authorities, as public safety takes precedence over confidentiality.

Case study 9

**Intellectual Property in Creative Work**

Problem Statement: Is it ethical to use a competitor’s creative concept as inspiration?

Scenario: A graphic designer notices a similar design from a competitor and considers incorporating aspects into their own work.

Solution: The designer should create original work without directly copying the competitor. Drawing inspiration is acceptable but copying violates intellectual property rights.

Case study 10

**Bribery in International Business**

Problem Statement: Should a company engage in bribery to enter a foreign market?

Scenario: A manager of a large corporation is informed that securing a contract in a foreign country requires “facilitation payments” (bribes).

Solution: The company should follow its code of ethics, declining bribes and pursuing transparent legal means to enter the market. Ethical practices strengthen long-term reputation and partnerships.

Case study 11

**Diversity Quotas vs. Meritocracy**

Problem Statement: Should a company implement diversity quotas over merit-based hiring?

Scenario: A company faces pressure to improve workforce diversity. They consider setting quotas that may bypass some more qualified candidates.

Solution: Aim for a balanced approach that values both diversity and merit, implementing quotas as one part of a comprehensive diversity initiative while prioritizing qualifications.

Case study 12

**Consumer Privacy in Tech Products**

Problem Statement: Is it ethical for a company to collect user data without transparent policies?

Scenario: A tech company collects location and behavior data to personalize ads but lacks clear communication with users on data practices.

Solution: Implement clear policies that inform users about data collection and usage, offering opt-out options to those uncomfortable sharing personal information.

Case study 13

**End-of-Life Decisions in Medicine**

Problem Statement: Should doctors honor patient autonomy when the family disagrees?

Scenario: A patient requests end-of-life measures, but the family insists on continued treatment.

Solution: If the patient is competent, the medical team should respect their wishes while supporting the family through counseling and clear communication about the patient’s rights.