

Usually, the contemplated action will be supported by some clauses and opposed by others. When this happens, we must use our judgement to determine which of the clauses are most important before we can reach a conclusion about the morality of the contemplated action.

In the remainder of this section we will apply this methodology to three case studies.

### 9.5.1 Software Recommendation

#### SCENARIO

Sam Shaw calls the Department of Computer Science at East Dakota State University seeking advice on how to improve the security of his business's local area network. A secretary in the department routes Mr. Shaw's call to Professor Jane Smith, an internationally recognized expert in the field. Professor Smith answers several questions posed by Mr. Shaw regarding network security. When Mr. Shaw asks Professor Smith to recommend a software package to identify security problems, Professor Smith tells him that NetCheks got the personal computer magazine's top rating. She does not mention that the same magazine gave a "best buy" rating to another product with fewer features but a much lower price. She also fails to mention that NetCheks is a product of a spin-off company started by one of her former students and that she owns 10 percent of the company.

#### Analysis

From our list of nine fundamental principles, three are most relevant here:

- Be impartial.
- Disclose information that others ought to know.
- Share your knowledge, expertise, and values.

Searching the list of clauses identified with these fundamental principles, the following ones seem to fit the case study most closely:

- 1.06. *Be fair and avoid deception in all statements, particularly public ones, concerning software or related documents, methods and tools.*  
Professor Smith was deceptive when she mentioned the most highly rated software package but not the one rated to be a "best buy."
- 1.08. *Be encouraged to volunteer professional skills to good causes and contribute to public education concerning the discipline.*
- 6.02. *Promote public knowledge of software engineering.*  
Professor Smith freely provided Sam Shaw with valuable information about network security.
- 4.05. *Disclose to all concerned parties those conflicts of interest that cannot reasonably be avoided or escaped.*
- 6.05. *Not promote their own interest at the expense of the profession, client or employer.*