

## A Heating Unit Defect

Jack Wang is a **young** single engineer who graduated from college about **two** years ago. Since then he has been **employed** by the Kitten Manufacturing Company. His most recent assignment, which began **four** months ago, is to work on the development project of a part which is to be integrated into a new electric heating unit the company is planning to market mainly to young people living in **small** apartments. Wang is happy in his work, since he **likes** and respects his coworkers. His home life is more troublesome, since **he lives with his elderly parents who largely depend on him to take care of them**, since his father is unable to **work** due to a debilitating disease and his **mother** is in a permanently **depressed** state because of this.

Wang's work on the project goes on schedule, although he is under **some** **pressure** to complete his part of the project, until one day his testing of the part shows that it will **fail** within the first **2000** hours of service in **about one** out of thousand units in which it is to be installed. Failure of the part could **possibly** cause **overheating** of the unit and start a **fire**. Further testing shows him that in order to correct the defect he will need to basically start his work **over** from the **beginning**. Naturally upset by this finding, he **reports** **it** to **his supervisor, John Lu**. As usual, Lu is **sympathetic** to the young engineer, but when Wang asks for **extra time** **he is told in no uncertain terms that the part must be ready on schedule**. Lu has been **told** by the management of Kitten that it is **essential** that the heater be available on the scheduled date since **it has been learned from an informant** that a rival heating unit will be available from the company's prime competitor about a month **after** Kitten's scheduled launch of its own unit. Lu also **tells** Wang **confidentially** that Kitten is **in some financial difficulties**, although this **information is currently to be kept** from the **employees**.

When Wang **continues** to **express his concerns**, Lu **assures** **him** that he will personally see **to it that corrective action will be taken later**. He will **insist** to management, at the **possible** price of his **job**, that the part be **redesigned** and that already sold heating units be recalled. He tells Wang that in terms of the big picture this is the most cost **effective** way to handle the situation. Plus, he tells the young engineer, it is **likely** that most of the units will be **recalled** before any problems arise, since the units are **likely** to be used **less** than 2000 hours during an entire heating season and the recall **should** occur within six months.

Yellow ~ ethical issues

Green ~ facts

Blue ~ missing information