

# **Ethics Essay**

## **VW Emissions Scandal**

### **What I Would've Done**

Plain and simple, I would not have done what they did. I would not have taken a bribe to rig the emissions test. As a Software Engineer, I have a duty to report truthfully and accurately, the findings I encounter. Rigging the test also put people in danger through environmental risks. One obligation we have to the products and the people those products serve is safety. In my opinion this is the biggest obligation we have as engineers. Our designs and solutions are meant to help people. If they do the opposite, then that reflects poorly on ourselves. It is the aspect that affects lives in the biggest way. The VW scandal affected people's health and environment safety. So we can see that safety is a big part of both software development. This means that software developers have an obligation to keep software safe as an ethical standard. With this in mind, I would have not taken the course of action. There is a matter of what I would do after. The two choices I have are to do nothing like it never happened, or report it to the right people. I believe either way isn't inherently bad, but I would try and take it to the right authority. Since I wouldn't have accepted any bribe, nobody got hurt or was in danger, so the law wouldn't be a place to go. The next option is authority within the company. This is direct and shows trust and loyalty to the company to not whistleblow. I wouldn't want one person reflecting bad on the whole company. Hopefully, there would be someone that would take just disciplinary action toward the person who wanted to rig the test. The last option, as I can see it, is media. If no one listened to me from within the company, I would try to find someone who would. In my opinion, this would not be a great option, but something would need to be done and justice would need to be served.

### **Why They Did It**

The question of why they did it is up for speculation. Here are my thoughts on the matter. It is hard to say why they might have done it. There are many reasons for their personal decision on why. There are some more root causes that can be surmised however. I believe that almost everyone has some sort of notion of ethics and where the proverbial "line" is. Because of that, I don't think that they rigged the test because they didn't know better. I do believe that they did it for the money involved. The only incentive was that. In fact the only other consequence from this was any backlash that came from anyone finding out. To the engineers,

the incentives outweighed the risks. There is a matter as to how much they valued the money, and maybe other factors or decisions and processes that lead them to the ultimate one. I don't think those are relevant though. The factor that started the rest of their decision making process was started by the incentive of money. So, if there wasn't that, then I don't think they would've done it at all.