

Case Studies on Module 1 & Module 2

Case study 1

A manufacturing company provides jobs for many people in a small town where employment is not easy to find. The company has stayed in the town even though it could find cheaper workers elsewhere, because workers are loyal to the company due to the jobs it provides. Over the years, the company has developed a reputation in the town for taking care of its employees and being a responsible corporate citizen.

The manufacturing process used by the company produces a by-product that for years has flown into the town river. The by-product has been considered harmless but some people who live near the river have reported illnesses. The by-product does not currently violate any anti-pollution laws.

What are the ethical issues involved in the case study?

What options does the company have?

What course of action it should adopt?

Guidelines

Some of the issues raised by this case study include

Whether the company is acting consistently with its reputation as a good corporate citizen and whether not doing so affects its integrity;

The ethics of companies compared to persons, and whether companies should have more or fewer obligations and why;

Whether and why the company should take action even though the by-product does not violate any laws, and if it should take action, whether the company should establish criteria for helping it decide when to address complaints that do not raise illegal actions.

Is there a problem with the current state of the law, and if there is, can the company use that to justify non-action?

How to write a answer

1. Highlight the ethical issues in the given case with explanation.
2. Write down the options you have with you- both positive and negative options.
3. Write down the merits and demerits of each options.
4. And write down what you would have done in such case.
5. Justify your answer.

Case study 2

A woman is sexually harassed by a top-level senior executive in a large company.

She sues the company, and during settlement discussions she is offered an extremely large monetary settlement.

In the agreement, the woman is required to confirm that the executive did nothing wrong, and after the agreement is signed the woman is prohibited from discussing anything about the incident publicly.

Before the date scheduled to sign the settlement agreement, the woman's lawyer mentions that she has heard the executive has done this before, and the settlement amount is very large because the company probably had a legal obligation to dismiss the executive previously.

The company however wants to keep the executive because he is a big money maker for the company.

What are the ethical issues involved in the case study?

What options does the woman employee have?

What course of action she should adopt?

Guidelines

Some of the issues raised by this case study include initial issues of unethical and unlawful conduct, by the executive and the company;

Whether the company should allow the executive to continue working because of the revenue he generates,

In view of his propensity to harm co-workers, and whether this action is ethical or reflects integrity;

Whether the company should require the woman to state that the executive did nothing wrong as part of the settlement agreement;

Whether the woman should agree to this settlement in view of the harm future employees are being exposed to; and whether the woman is prioritising justice for herself over harm to future employees in an acceptable way.

Case study 3

An undergraduate course required for graduation has a reputation for being extremely hard to pass, much harder than similar courses.

When posting materials to the class website, the teacher accidentally posts a test with answers indicated at the end. The teacher notices the error immediately and deletes the test, but before she does so a student downloads the test.

The website does not allow the teacher to see whether the test was downloaded, and because she deleted the test with the answers so quickly, the teacher later uploaded the same test without the answers and required students to take the test.

The Student Code of Ethics prohibits students from taking a test when there is reason for them to believe they have confidential information regarding the answers to a test they are not supposed to have. Violations of the Student Code of Ethics are punishable.

What are the ethical issues involved in the case study? What options do the teacher and the student have, and what should they do and why?

Gudelines

Some of the issues raised in this case study include the reasons why the teacher reposted the same test;

The undue difficulty of the course, and whether that or the teacher's actions justify a student who uses the answers accidentally disclosed by the teacher;

The relationship between ethical concerns and the Student Code of Ethics; and

The relationship of the student to the teacher and fellow students, and the effect the student's actions may have on fellow students.

Case Study 4

An international soft drink company has a signature soft drink that it sells all over the world.

In India, the version of the soft drink complies with India's food and health regulations, but is less healthy than the drink sold in the European market where the law is stricter. The soft drink company is obeying the law in India, but it is selling an inferior, less healthy product in a developing country like India.

What are the issues of integrity, ethics and law posed in the case study? What options does the soft drink company and the government of India have, and what should they do and why?

Guideline

Some of the questions raised by this case study include

How the issue first arose, including globalization, and why the company and the country would benefit and not benefit from the current position;

Whether the company and country are acting ethically, with integrity, and consistent with law;

The role that consumers in India and elsewhere play in this case study; and

The different approaches the company could take to health standards, e.g. establishing its own standard to meet even if that standard exceeds what is required in a particular country.

Case Study 5

A journalist won the trust of a public employee involved in a corruption scandal in order to write an article about it.

The journalist sympathized with the employee, who provided the detail the journalist needed to write the article.

The journalist and the employee made no agreement that the journalist would not publish information about the employee, but the employee thought that the journalist was the his friend, something the journalist encouraged with text communication and friendly meetings.

The journalist published the article, which exposed a large corruption scandal that had been going on for years and which diverted badly needed public funds.

The employee was not named in the article as the source of the information, but was arrested with others involved in the scandal following the publication of the article.

The employee was also publicly criticized on social media and is unable to find employment.

Guidelines

Some of the questions raised by this case study include

Would people normally be able to treat another person in this way? Why or why not?
Why did the journalist do this?

Do those reasons excuse or justify the way the journalist treated the employee?

Should the employee have realized that talking to the journalist could result in the corruption being exposed, and the employee being subject to criminal proceedings?

Has the employee been injured by the journalist's actions or the employee's actions, such as the employee's failure to report the problem?

Model Answer

1. Give the definition of Professional Ethics and write down the case-relevant professional ethic.
2. Answer the questions asked ?
3. Justify your answer or response in your language.