

## GENG5505 – Tutorial class, WK12

### Case study

Threats to a sense of personal responsibility are neither unique to, nor more acute for, engineers than they are for others involved with engineering and its results. The reason is that, in general, public accountability also tends to lessen as professional roles become narrowly differentiated. With this in mind, critique each of the remarks made in the following dialogue. Is the remark true, or partially true? What needs to be added to make it accurate?

**Engineer:** My responsibility is to receive directives and to create products within specifications set by others. The decision about what products to make and their general specifications are economic in nature and made by management.

**Scientist:** My responsibility is to gain knowledge. How the knowledge is applied is an economic decision made by management, or else a political decision made by elected representatives in government.

**Manager:** My responsibility is solely to make profits for shareholders.

**Shareholder:** I invest my money for the purpose of making a profit. It is up to our boards and managers to make decisions about the directions of technological development.

**Consumer:** My responsibility is to my family. Government should make sure corporations do not harm me with dangerous products, harmful side effects of technology, or dishonest claims.

**Government Regulator:** By current reckoning, government has strangled the economy through overregulation of business. Accordingly, at present on my job, especially given decreasing budget allotments, I must back off from the idea that business should be policed, and urge corporations to assume greater public responsibility.

(Martin M., et al., 2010)