

Ethics Essay

In the unfortunate case of the unethical activity perpetrated by the executives, managers and engineers at Volkswagen, there are still a lot of unanswered questions. The actions and intent are clearly unethical, so it is easy for outsiders to say that what they did is wrong, and that they, themselves, would never contribute to a situation in which an environmental regulatory agency is intentionally lied to for the purpose of hiding unacceptable emissions data. I would like to say that in this situation I would choose to not comply with the creation of a system to deceive the inspectors. Realistically however, if it would cost me my job, my livelihood, or my reputation, I may not have the ability to resist complying. This is especially true if I believed that the part I was playing in the creation of the system was small. It takes bold person to blow the whistle, and I hope that if I were in that situation, I would choose to do so.

I don't believe every engineer who was complicit had negative intentions, and I would bet that many had expressed dissent for what they were instructed to do. It is extremely likely that there was pressure in every direction (from peers and management) to be complicit in their situation. There is a lot at risk if they disclose the actions of their company to outside parties, so I believe that many of the engineers at Volkswagen felt that they had no choice but to comply.