Although the ethics of technology are studied in a variety of disciplines such as science and technology studies, engineering, computer science, critical management studies, and law, less attention is paid to the role that firms and managers play in the design, growth, and distribution of technology across societies and within their own company (Shilton & Smith, 2019)

Managers, especially non-technical managers, often find themselves in situations where they must find fast and commercially viable solutions in a variety of situations in order to meet business demands and associated pressure. As a result, best practises and processes are invariably overlooked, putting customers and their data at greater risk.

As a need arose to support (temporarily) one of our clients during out-of-office hours, middle management chose to assign the job to some non-technical workers who were already working those hours rather than hire skilled engineers or make other suitable arrangements. The idea was to arm them with step-by-step instructions so that they could address recurring and other documented problems, and they were also given access to the merchant's database and other confidential information in order to carry out these tasks. The IT team objected to this activity, and after much debate about data security and ethical technology practises, management decided to make the necessary improvements.

This could have been prevented in the first place if all stakeholders in a technology project, regardless of their position, were made aware of the value of data security and ethical technology use. They should also be made aware that they, as well as the company as a whole, have a moral and legal duty to society, and that they must adhere to data protection regulations.

References:

Martin, K., Shilton, K. & Smith, J. Business and the Ethical Implications of Technology: Introduction to the Symposium. Journal of Business Ethics 160: 307–317. DOI:10.1007/s10551-019-04213-9