



Objectives

Aim 1: You will be able to compare the professional ethics among others

Aim 2: Given a case study, you will be able to distinguish the ideal solution among alternatives

Aim 3: You will be able to define the concepts of general and vocational ethics and social responsibility

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS (Case Study)

In this module, we will analyze a 3-part case study. We will have the opportunity to evaluate from different perspectives in each section. After this case study, I suggest you consider yourself in 3 different positions: Walt, Norm Nash and the Management. I want you to adjust your perspective for each position and reassess the case. The most important question in solving this case will be: What is the source of the problem in this situation we are in? Before you start, please follow the instructions below:

- Read the case a couple of times.
- Do a quick research about the technical terms.
- Try to understand the case in detail.
- Put yourself in Walt's shoes in the case.
- Analyze the case and reflect on how you would react.
- Try to explain what you would do and why?
- For further discussions, visit the online course forum page!

Case

Part I

R&M Machinery had for years provided XYZ with sophisticated equipment and reliable repair service. XYZ returned a failed piece of equipment. A meeting was held which included Archie Hunter, a representative from XYZ; Norm Nash, R&M's returned goods area representative, and, Walt Winters, an R&M engineer intimately acquainted with the kind of equipment XYZ had returned.

Norm Nash represented R&M's "official position": the piece of equipment is all right. However, during the course of the meeting, it becomes apparent to Walt Winters that the problem has to be R&M's. He suspects that the equipment was not properly tested out by R&M and that it failed because of an internal problem.

Discussion Question 1

Should Walt say anything about this in the presence of the customer, or should he wait until after the meeting to discuss this with Norm Nash?

Part II

Walt keeps silent during the meeting. After the meeting, he talks with Norm about his diagnosis. He suggests they tell XYZ that the problem is R&M's fault and that R&M will replace the defective equipment. Norm replies, "I don't think it's wise to acknowledge that it's our fault."



There's no need to hang out our wash and lessen XYZ's confidence in the quality of our work. A 'goodwill' gesture to replace the equipment should suffice.

"R&M management decides to tell XYZ that they will adjust to the customer's needs "because you have been such a good customer all these years." Although R&M replaces the equipment at its own expense, it does not tell XYZ the real nature of the problem.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss R&M resolution of the problem. Should R&M's way of handling the problem be of any concern to Walt Winters at this point, or is it basically a "management problem"?

Part III

Many engineers eventually move into management positions. If Walt Winters moves into management, what lessons if any, might he take with him from the above situation?

Your Turn: Why do you think that this problem happened? What might be the nature of the problem? Discuss this with your friends on the online course forum!

REFERENCES

- Fleddermann, C. B. (1999). Engineering ethics (Vol. 4). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
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