

Decisions, decisions,
decisions



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Decisions, Decisions, Decisions When I proposed buying a fleet of Volvo's for the Electric Company, my supervisor greeted the proposal with an emotionally charged response. He was very opposed to Volvo and he was firm in his convictions. There was no doubt he believed in his point of view. However, his process for reaching his decision was flawed by fallacy. The available heuristic he used led him to believe that all Volvos were junk by the anecdotal fallacy (The Fallacy Files 2007).

His brother in law possibly complained vividly and often about the quality of the car and that information stood out in my supervisor's mind. No other information on the Volvo was likely to find such an available spot in his memory. His position was further reinforced by the representative heuristic (The Fallacy Files 2007). Every Volvo he had known had been a piece of junk. Though the fact that he had seen only one Volvo in his lifetime rendered it statistically meaningless, to him it was 100 percent of them.

In making the decision on whether to buy a Volvo or Saab, I would rely on expert testimony. The experts at Consumer Reports would certainly qualify as informed and unbiased experts. I would also rely on the feedback from existing Volvo owners. To convince my supervisor, I would use an appeal to authority argument and persuade the supervisor that these were indeed experts (Nolt et al. 1998 p. 199). I would also demonstrate how many Volvo owners are very happy with the car. Though this may be the fallacy of appealing to popularity, my supervisor has shown he is vulnerable to false logic (Nolt et al. 1998 p. 201). I would have no ethical problem with this as I am convinced that the Volvo is superior by my own sound reasoning.

The Senior Marketing Manager's Bias

By acknowledging that the candidate for the Marketing Managers position

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was well qualified, it puts forth the belief that my co-worker was biased. My co-worker may have had an uneasy feeling about hiring someone who has worked for a competitor for so long. However, it seems that this experience would be useful in a marketing department. The masters degree is also a valuable asset. This leaves the bias against either gender or ethnicity.

Assuming that the bias was against gender or ethnic group, it would certainly be unethical. Decisions based on this would not be in the best interest of the firm. Depending on the situation, it may be illegal. If the firm had the minimum number of 15 employees they would be subject it to federal civil rights law, and it would be illegal on the basis of ethnicity or gender (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2006).

In this case I would ask for the reasoning my co-worker used to arrive at their decision. If I found their reasoning to be flawed, I would try to convince them with a more cogent and logical argument. If the action were illegal, the interest of the firm would certainly be of greater importance than any respect for misplaced bias. I would confront and refute their objections one at a time using sound arguments and logical decision making processes.

References

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2006). Retrieved January 16, 2007, from <http://www.eeoc.gov/>

The Fallacy Files (2007). Retrieved January 16, 2007, from <http://www.fallacyfiles.org/index.html>

Nolt, J., Rohatyn, D., & Varzi, A. (1998). Theory and problems of logic (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.