

Ford pinto argumentative essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Q1. What moral issues does the pinto case raise? The moral issues raised in Pinto case are that business should not put a value on human life and avoid known dangers. As ford thought they could get away with a dangerous automobile by paying off those lawsuits from people who were injured and the families of the dead. Ford thought it was more cost effective not to fix the dangerous condition than to spend the money to save people.

Q2. Suppose ford officials were asked to justify their decision. What moral principles do you think they would invoke? Assess fords handling of the pinto from the perspective of each of the moral theories discussed in this chapter.

The Ford officials would probably invoke the principles of utilitarianism. Ford had claimed that the strict cost-benefit analysis was made based on the statistics information provided by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an organization of the federal government. Ford then counted life as an economic product at a cost of approximately \$200,000. According to the cost-benefit analysis, the \$49.5 million benefits and \$137.5 million cost suggested that Ford implementation of safety improvements would totally offset their benefits Ford did not give equal consideration to the interests of each affected party.

During the preproduction crash test, Ford's engineers had already discovered that the potential danger from the ruptured fuel tank. However, the company's leader still decides to rush Pinto into production and proceed with the Pinto's. 1. Put yourself in the role of the recall coordinator for Ford Motor CO. It's 1973, and field reports have been coming in about rear-end collisions, fires, and fatalities. You must decide whether to recall the

automobile. In August of 1978 three teenage girls were driving a Ford Pinto and were struck from behind. The three girls died because the Ford Pinto's fuel tank ruptured from the collision and burst into flames. There was a big debate about the safety of the Ford Pinto to its proneness to its fuel tank catching on fire in low-speed rear-end collisions. In 1968 Ford decided to battle the foreign competition of small cars with large trunk areas.

The Ford Pinto did have a large trunk for its size of car, but this is what caused the fuel tanks to be susceptible to fire. This decision came after a battle between Semon “ Bunky” Knudsen, president at the time, and Lee Iacocca. Iacocca wanted to be in the battle of the small car market while Knudson argued to concentrate on other models. The CEO at the time, Henry Ford the second, agreed with Iacocca. It took three and a half years to put the conception of the product into production, Iacocca wanted to build the Pinto in just two years. Since two years is shorter than the regularly three and half years, some of the building processes were done less concurrently. Therefore when the fuel tank issue was discovered, it was too costly to redesign the product. Ford did eleven crash tests of the Pinto and discovered that eight of the eleven leaked fuel, however three Pintos did not.

Q3. Utilitarians would say that jeopardizing motorists does not by itself make Ford's action morally objectionable. The only morally relevant matter is whether Ford gave equal consideration to the interests of each affected party. Do you think Ford did this?

In utilitarian rule of business ethics many principles exist which may be used to inform the morality of actions when analysing cost-benefit, if

consequences are to favour more people overall. These include harm, honesty, justice and rights. So no harm should be done to others, people should not be deceived and their rights to life, free expression, and safety should be acknowledged. I myself believe that Ford abandoned these principles, abused the utilitarian theory to suit their needs, stayed within the laws of the time, but behaved unethically. The ‘utilities’ as a consequence, appeared to be money, and they used that to define the value of their needs against the value of human life.

Q4. Is cost benefit analysis a legitimate tool? What role, if any should it play in moral deliberation? Critically assess the example of cost-benefit analysis given in the case study. Is there anything unsatisfactory about it? Could it have been improved upon in some way? Cost-benefit analysis is clearly a legitimate tool for businesses to use in deciding what actions to take. As Friedman has argued, the role of business is to make money and a cost benefit analysis is a very useful tool in figuring out how to do so. When it comes to morals, however, cost-benefit analysis is less useful unless one believes in utilitarianism. For most other understandings of morality, a person should not be asking “what do I gain and lose” when trying to figure out what to do.

People should, instead, be asking “what’s the right thing to do.” Cost-benefit analysis can’t really help with that. When Ford Motor Company performed a cost-benefit analysis to determine the benefits and cost relating to the fuel leakage associated with static rollover tests portion of the FMVSS 208 (Ford “Pinto”), it failed to make conservative accounting estimates of the worst-case scenario. In 1970, Ford used \$200, 000 as the cost of a life (provided by

the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)); the value was based almost entirely on deferred future earnings. The Ford cost benefit analysis presented a \$137 million cost and \$149 million benefit.

In the formula, the number of deaths, the cost per vehicle to make the design change, and the proportion of deaths to be attributed to small light vehicle were all subject to such dramatic change that the \$2.75 cost to \$1.00 benefit ratio achieved could have easily been changed so that the benefit exceeded the cost even if the value of life used was accepted and left unchanged. (safety exchange, 2009)