

Overview of the case study an interns dilemma

Profession



The case study elaborates on an ethical dilemma faced by an intern when he was asked to misrepresent himself by contacting competitor companies to obtain sensitive data at his ideal internship.

The protagonist of the study is Mark Yang, an aspiring MBA student who secured employment with a European-based technology security firm at one of their Asia offices. Yang was to be conducting market research for information to help the company determine their market share and other industry information. During his internship, he is persistently asked to represent himself as an HBS student and researcher and omit his position as an intern for the firm which he soon thinks and recognizes to be a planned approach with an agenda of concocting information through misrepresentation. Yang's discomfort brings light to his respect for business and personal ethics. He tries to explore more about the company culture and standards followed and finds out the disconnect between local practice and the company's broader values. While considering his options prudentially, Yang worried about the negative consequences of taking a stand but still ethically decides to call the office head to directly address the issue. To his surprise, the reaction was apologetic and understanding. Yang behaves and reacts to the questionable and unpredictable situation in a rigid manner. He stood his ground and defended his values which made him confident. He realized that his ethical boundaries shape him as a business person and this experience sparked a set of priorities he did not know he had strongly embedded in him.

Apart from his personal learnings and moral insights, he learned some specifics of the industry he worked in, and developed skills in marketing and

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mergers and acquisitions i. e. two exclusive firm departments. The office head was also pleased with the quality of Yang's work, stating that it had added significant value to the company's operations. Yang did not receive an offer to join the Asian office full time because of financial constraints, but he was assured that the company was interested in finding future opportunities for him. The company asked if he was interested in working on a field study during his second year, and the COO contacted Yang to meet and discuss future opportunities. Everything worked out well for Yang in the end and this may have well have been one of those important decisions/behaviors in his early life to which he will look back when he encounters much tougher situations.