

Explain the utilitarian and deontological aspects of informational privacy for em...

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Patricia Dunn, placed number 17 on FORBES list of most powerful women, landed herself four felony counts by making unethically chivalrous decisions. Patricia Dunn, once a chairwoman on the board of Hewlett-Packard, a position she held from February 2005 until September 2006. Her tenure was cut short on October 4, 2006 as she was charged with four felony counts for her role in a spying scandal.

Five months later on March 14, 2007, California Supreme Court judge Ray Cunningham dropped criminal charges against her in the “ interest of justice” on all four felony counts: fraudulent use of wire, radio or television transmissions; taking, copying, and using computer data without authorization. (A&E Television Networks 2011) She broke the golden rule of honor by teaming up and taking unethical measures to seek out a “ leaker. She claims she had no idea “ pretexting” (the practice of deceiving individuals into surrendering personal information for fraudulent purposes) could involve identity misrepresentation.

In addition, she testified that she believed personal phone records could be obtained through legal methods. Showing morerespectto her peers by giving them the benefit of the doubt would have been a more Utilitarianistic direction. Had she openly expressed the concern with HP’s long term strategy being public, it may have been resolved just that simply. SO, where does this leave Patty Dunns ethical reasoning? Her utilitarianism reasoning does not showhappinessfor the greater number. Her deontological reasoning held a lot to be desired by failing to ensure laws and regulations were standard.

Ultimately, it appears that Patricia Dunn did not have a strategy or plan of attack. BODY In Patty Dunn's case it seems she failed to implement either deontological or utilitarianism reasoning. Had she followed a more utilitarian mission she would have been more focused on appeasing the masses. Her course would have had to include a morally correct course of action that was in the best interest for the company as a whole, and it did not. Therefore, her system of ethics judged by its consequences is neither utilitarianism nor that of deontological reasoning.

Patty Dunn should have approached the board from the get go. By not doing this, she followed a questionable trail of illegal activity Her utopiandreamsof maintaining discretion of HP'sgoalsand even her " in-house" attempt at corralling the leaker are seemingly understandable. However her tact andfailureto use common ethical business practices will be discussed in detail here. She had to have at least had an inkling that what she was about to embark upon was sensitive. Not only sensitive but dangerous! Dangerous in that cautions should always preface any actions involving personal information.

Patricia Dunn is too smart to successfully play dumb. Utilitarianism reasoning does not care whether the benefits are produced by lies, manipulation, or coercion. (Issues in Ethics V2 N1 Winter 1989) Patricia Dunn did not use utilitarianism aspects of information privacy for the employer. Instead it appears they were used more so as her personal vendetta. Patricia Dunn's case seems to be believable until Felony count #1, overt act #9. Which reads, "...Patricia Dunn on or about February 24, 2006, requested a

comprehensive summary of the resources and techniques used in the investigation. (State of California, 2006) This is the crucial moment where she could have stopped the investigation and saved her career. Our ability to measure and to predict the benefits and harms resulting from a course of action or a moral rule is dubious, to say the least. Perhaps the greatest difficulty with utilitarianism is that it fails to take into account considerations of justice. (Issues in Ethics V2 N1 Winter 1989) On the contrary, had Patricia Dunn taken a more Deontological approach she would have ensured that right decisions were being made dutifully throughout the investigation.

In example, Patty Dunn could have taken several different courses of actions: a) Speaking with each board member, one by one, not only as a peer but also as a HP concerned board member b) Hire an adjudicator or a go-between to question and observe members of the board in gaining a working knowledge of recent events c) Approach/explain/question as a group with honesty at the forefront (like therapy) Had she considered a more deontological approach, her moral compass would have at least led her with legal decision making.

Her obligation to duty would have referred to regulation and law guidance versus the hush hush beat around the bush technique. In fact, had she prefaced her investigation with a more strategic baseline of rules and regulations governing acts of pretexting or obtaining personal information, she may have discovered a more deontological method for discovery. A more deontological reasoning here would have verified and sought legal

counsel for the information collected. It was her steadfast dedication to the mystery that took over.

Yes Patricia Dunn should have been forced to resign. She failed as a professional to respect her fellow board members. Tom Perkins had been agitating to vote her out for some time. This says a lot because even prior to this act of inappropriateness she was trouble. And I don't say this because Tom Perkins and Patty Dunn did not share business ideals. Success is not dependent on compatible personalities. One of my bosses had us complete a Merrill-Reid quiz, which categorizes his staff (including me) into their personality types: * Driver * Expressive Amiable * Analytical The results show these four personality traits on a grid, and your answers created your greater and weaker abilities as a box on the chart. Also were tips on communicating with each personality. Some employees, their box was solely in the " analytical" section, others their box would cover into two or more areas of chart and some (like mine) shared all four categories equally. The Colonel went on to explain that in the past he has chosen people from this so that he gets the many perspectives from the different personalities.

He laughingly explained that it is okay to be in one category and how everyone has strengths and the point is that by placing the certain personalities into position, we can accomplish more. The moral here is the focus. In the paper, Tom Perkins noted early on with two memories of Patty Dunn's off track focus on " little things. " This could have been just the idiosyncrasy that results from such a trait. A solution would be for companies

of this size implementing a professional development program that meets periodically keeping ethics and its formalities at the forefront.