

Describe a
professional situation
that you would define
as an ethical dilemma
def...



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The paper " Ethical Dilemma and Ethical Conflict Resolution" is a spectacular example of a case study on management. In my present job function, I lead a sales and service team responsible for meeting my organizations' business objectives in a region of the United States of America. The performance of the team prior to my taking over was average. In an attempt to prove my capabilities as a team leader, I decided to enhance the performance of the team as a whole. With this objective in mind, I decided to analyze the individual performance of each member of the team to understand individual strengths and weaknesses.

The Ethical Dilemma:

My analysis showed me that the top performer of the sales team displayed the least capacity to retain customers, and so I decided to probe deeper to ascertain the reason for this. This sales executive had an extremely good personality, and winning ways with anybody he dealt with. He was also extremely knowledgeable about his products and very smart. I found that his methods of boosting his sales performance were to convince his customers to use the most expensive of our range, and not what was really needed and useful to them. The consequence of this was that customers were paying a lot, and not getting what they wanted, leading to customer dissatisfaction, and the inability to retain them. A dilemma is having to make a difficult choice of the alternatives available in a given situation. The nature of the dilemma makes it an ethical dilemma, as in this case it was a choice of doing what was right professionally, and facing the consequences, or allowing wrong to continue, and with no fear of consequences. In either case, the decision taken would mean facing unpleasantness. (1)

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The Ethical Conflict:

The ethical conflict here was between the temptation to allow and encourage the use of any means to promote my self-interest of the increased volume of sales, letting the end justify the means, and my professional responsibilities and commitment to my customers. On one side was the temptation to encourage this sales executive to continue with the same sales strategy, and encourage the other members of the sales team to follow his example, and thereby boost the sales of the team, and my performance. On the other side was the professional ethics requirement of giving my customers the best option from my range of products to satisfy their requirements. This could lead to a drop in sales, and my performance in the eyes of the organization. Here I was caught between my own personal interests and the interests of my customers. In addition, was the requirement of the right development of a staff placed under my guidance. (2)

Resolution of the Ethical Conflict:

I called my top sales performer and spent time discussing the issue at hand with him in all openness and frankness. I showed him clearly the customers he was unable to retain, as a result of the unethical tactics used by him in boosting his sales performance figures. Naturally, there were objections from his side in that he was doing a good job at promoting the products of the company, which also resulted in higher incentives for him. To overcome these objections, I told him that I would show him the means to perform better and that too in a manner that would be beneficial to his customers too. The only thing that he needed was patience.

I encouraged him to sell products to the customers that were suited to their

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needs. This meant that he needed to curb his practice of looking at the volume of sale involved, and concentrate on the needs of the customer, and build relationships. Initially, it was difficult for him and me, but I coaxed him along. His sales volumes fell, and so did my performance, which got me letters of unhappiness on my progress from my management. I did not let this discourage me. Gradually his sales volumes increased, and by working on the other members of the sales team I was able to restore sales volumes to their original levels. In the long run, my top sales performer's sales volume got to be better than what it ever was. This was because he was able to retain customers. The extra business that came in by retaining customers, coupled with his natural ability to sell removed any loss in sales volume that had occurred due to the changed tactics of concentrating on customer needs. He became more respected in the marketplace, and in the team. The improvement in sales volumes by my team brought me back in good esteem with the management. Today I find myself happily placed having removed an ethical issue involving a member of my team, and developing him in the right direction.

Lesson Learnt:

Ethical dilemmas will always be part of business activities. Running away from it does not provide any solution and would only make matters worse. It is better to face it head-on, and deal with it in an open and honest manner, and make the right choice, even if the more unpleasant one. There may be immediate difficulties faced, as a result of this approach, but in the long run, the benefits far outweigh these initial difficulties.