

# Market research assignment

Business



We want you to be prepared to capture your initial impressions of an ethical dilemma case by writing journal notes. These will include the thoughts and ideas of others in your seminar. This will create a set of baseline notes that you can refer back to during your assignment. You will be able to tell us how working in your seminar teams (from Seminars Two to Six) and using module content has enabled you to be better prepared for future ethical dilemmas that you might encounter in your career.

**Seminar Activity: Ethics in the News** Your tutor will identify some stories in the media that have interesting ethical dimensions. Try to be on time as this will always be right at the beginning of the seminar. You have to find an ethical issue with a dilemma for the decision-maker(s) as your assignment essay. Ethics in the News can be a very useful start to your search! **SEMINAR ONE: CASE STUDY The Case of the Holiday** (based on actual events) This case concerns a young medium sized advertising agency in Germany. It had grown rapidly in the four years since it was founded and had just opened a new office in the US.

The company operates in a highly competitive market in which failure to meet customers' deadlines incurs substantial penalties. Work is almost exclusively project-based, in a high pressure but largely informal environment where names predominate and hierarchy is little in evidence. The company pays well, and its employees are highly skilled, overwhelmingly graduates and equally overwhelmingly young with over 35 year-olds a rarity. Employees work an average of 50 hours a week and when deadlines are tight some arrive as early as 5 a. m. and leave as late as 1 a. . . If there is a personnel 'problem' it usually emerges or leaves voluntarily

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after only two or three years. While there however, involvement and ‘ownership’ of tasks is evident and employees enjoy a culture which emphasizes working hard and playing hard. Much of the employees’ social time is spent, unsurprisingly, with other employees and strong bonds of friendship have developed between staff. The company is privately owned by its two founders who work from their German Head Office. Employees are not represented by a trade union.

Unlike publicly limited and/or government organizations where a variety of stakeholder organizations can be identified and corporate governance may be contested (by shareholders, government, regulatory authorities, consumer associations, trade unions, pressure groups and so on), internal relations here are far clearer and the voices that count are those of management and customers. The incident that forms the focus for this case concerns an Account Executive, Berries, who was due to go on holiday in a month’s time for two weeks at his girlfriend’s home in Hong Kong.

This was an important holiday, especially because Berries only took one weeks holiday throughout the previous year and because his girlfriend See Lana would be returning to Germany immediately after the holiday to continue her studies. This was therefore an opportunity for Berries to meet See Élan’s parents and to experience her environment for the first time. About a month before the holiday Boride’s manager called him in for a meeting and told him the news that one of Boride’s clients had to bring forward their product launch as they had heard that a rival was launching in the week that was originally scheduled.

The new product launch would be in the middle of Boride's holiday period. Work would need to be brought forward on the design of advertisements, campaign roll out, viral marketing, web support and so on. The manager at no point suggested that Berries would face sanctions for taking his holiday, nor was his right to it contested but the manager did say emphasize the importance of the client and the high regard they had for Boride's work. If this launch was a success then they would likely generate further contracts.

After a difficult conversation with See Lana, who told Berries that her parents would be very upset not to meet him for at least another year, Berries cancelled his holiday. The company reimbursed his costs in full. It was only then that Boride's friends from the company found out what had happened. Berries could not believe their reaction. They argued that he was wrong to give up his holiday. His friend Marcus said: " Berries, you are a coward. They had no right to ask you to do this and you were too weak to say no. You have Jeopardized our relationship with See Lana and let us down.

How are any of us going to be able to say no if we are asked to give up our holidays now? You are supposed to be a friend. You have given so much to this company, the least they could do is to get Berries replied: ' I was just trying to do my best. I have been working on that account for a long time so how can I leave it at the end of the project? Don't you understand I have to balance what is right for the company and the client against what is right for everyone else and in this case giving up my holiday is better than letting down the client. So get off my back. Seminar Activity Tasks 1 .

Read the case study carefully. 2. Capture your initial thoughts in some Journal notes (keep them for your assignment). 3. Now use the reflective notes table (overleaf). 4. Identify as many ethical dilemmas as possible in this case. 5. Who had them and why? 6. What viable choices were available to them? 7. Consider what (if any) further information would help you to decide on a dilemma solution. 8. Contribute your thoughts to the seminar plenary discussion led by your tutor. 9. For each dilemma decide whether you agree with the majority in the room. 10. Reflect on whether these decisions are easy.

Post Seminar Activities Complete the reflective Journal on your initial impressions. Keep these notes, and supplement them during other team exercises in the seminars. These notes will be invaluable for your reflection in the assignment. Continue playing Marketing Mayhem (and saving corrections of each level). Directed Reading Crane A and Matter D (2010) Business Ethics PUP Chapters 1 & 2 Suggested Reflective Statement This is just a baseline for you to compare against the next time you look at the case in Seminar Five. This exercise is not assessed, but it will be useful reference material for your assignment.