

Unified tobacco - business and ethics

Business



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Utilitarianism, being a classic example of Ethic of Duty, takes into consideration selfishness and greed to prove that the general good may be a product of an “ethical pursuit of selfish needs” (“Virtue” 2006). A Duty Ethicist decides and acts on things basing on what is the right thing for him to do. He is bound to perform things basing on his duties as a member of a community. A Duty Ethicist acknowledges that it his responsibility to help protect the common interest of the people.

A Virtue Ethicist, meanwhile, focuses on what makes a good person. His decisions are based on his definition of right and good. And in Socialism, the ethic of virtue is expressed through the concept that the fulfillment of a human is in helping others (“Ethics” 2006).

As such, both Ethicists’ most probable way to handle this conflict is to find ways to communicate to the protest groups the positive side of the tobacco business, despite its evident disadvantages to the community, but under different premises.

I. A Duty Ethicist’s argument

Unified Tobacco sells a product that is known to be harmful to everyone’s health. The hazard of smoking is plain and simple: it causes ailments that potentially lead to death, not just to the users themselves but also to those who are considered passive smokers. The issues of the protesters are actually valid. However, to address these concerns, the government has already established various resolutions to regulate the use of cigarettes, particularly in public places. Furthermore, the government and other concerned groups are involved in various massive campaigns to promote information regarding the disadvantages of using this product. Man always

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has a choice of whether or not to patronize cigarette smoking. Even the manufacturers themselves warn the public of the dangers of smoking through their tagline “ cigarette smoking is dangerous to one’s health”. However, on the other side, the tobacco industry helps bring jobs to the community. It employs hundreds of people and gives them livelihood. Further, it greatly contributes to the community’s economy. The industry supports the development of the community through its tax returns and through company-initiated activities that aim at promoting social welfare and cater to community needs. In the end, the tobacco industry largely contributes to the community’s economy despite the nature of its product.

II. A Virtue Ethicist’s argument

As it makes one a good person to be of assistance to the community in general and to participate in the pursuit of common good, a Virtue Ethicist’s action plan is to facilitate the increase of the company’s drive to promote awareness on the use of cigarette smoking. Of course, this is not to discourage the sales of the product, but instead, to instill to everyone, most particularly the smokers the responsibilities attached to patronizing the product. Each person has his own free will to decide whether a particular product is beneficial to him and to other people surrounding him. However, a more massive information campaign would help him decide whether this product suits him or not.

Furthermore, the information campaign would also be in reference to the fact that despite the hazards of smoking, the cigarette manufacturing industry contributes much to the community’s economy. Should Unified Tobacco close down, its hundreds of employees also belonging to the same community would lose their jobs – something that would not be beneficial to

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the community since its unemployment rate would definitely increase. In addition, the government would lose a portion of its income from the company's tax returns. This is also something that would affect the community since their budget for further development would consequently decrease.

Works Cited

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