

An ethical dilemma

Family



Running Head: An Ethical Dilemma Due Module Assignment Number An Ethical Dilemma Background I was fortunate enough to have interned at an advertising agency last year and during my internship I also saw how an organization works and what issues one can face as a corporate employee. For the purpose of this assignment I will be discussing an ethical dilemma pertaining to the use of position power. During my internship I was working as an associate with the respective firm. That ensured that I was not restricted to doing the jobs that require absolutely no application rather I was utilized in every capacity that the permanent employees of the organization were. This also included attending meetings where the ad briefs of clients were discussed with the top executives for campaign approvals.

The Dilemma My immediate boss was a very humble and smart person. He had to report to his boss who had to report to the top management. Therefore, as it appears the chain of command was very simple, however the workings were not so simple. We as a team used to brainstorm on the ideas which we could use for potential campaigns, most of which were brought forwards by my immediate boss. He had a knack for very sound ideas and his ideas always seemed to click with almost everyone on the team. Moreover, he even used to rationalize the ideas so meticulously that when they were presented in front of the board they could not help but give their approval for the campaign. There used to be around ten people in the brainstorming meetings, Mr. X (my boss's boss) was not one of those present in these meetings. Once the brainstorming was done and the ideas rationalized, my boss used to tell Mr. X about them and then together we used to go to get the approval of the top management. Mr. X used to be the one presenting and many of the times the ideas were so good that the

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management wanted to know who was behind the ideas and instead of giving the due credit to my boss Mr. X used to take the credit himself. I often used to think about what values he has as a person and that he possesses no conscience. I used to ask my boss why he always kept shut because this was not something that happened once or twice rather it had quite become Mr. X's habit. My boss used to tell me that he finds satisfaction in the work he does and that Mr. X was his boss he could not afford to confront him on this issue since he needed this job and Mr. X could conveniently give him a poor rating in the employee appraisal. I could understand his concerns but I strongly felt that this was unjust, presenting someone else's work as one's own must definitely require a person to either not possess a conscience at all or deliberately turn a deaf ear to it if it exists. This issue is not as trivial as it might appear, it had long-term implications, my boss's salary increments were reduced and those of Mr. X were raised since he appeared to be the above average performer in the team. Moreover, this also had implications for my boss's promotion. I as the Victim Now if I were to put myself in my boss's shoes, the most rational and spontaneous choice that comes to my mind is that of either confronting Mr. X over the issue and asking him to give due credit not only to me but to the entire team that worked days and nights in order to put together the campaign ideas which Mr. X conveniently branded as his own. If that did not seem to work out, then even going up to the top management with the plea seems like a plausible approach to me. Analyzing this situation in the light of the very basic ethical theories, the Machiavellian approach does suggest that Mr. X was making use of manipulative techniques in order to attain his ultimate objectives (Rayburn & Rayburn, 1996.), the Deontological Principle would support raising a voice

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against Mr. X because what he was doing was morally incorrect. The Virtue Theory also supports my decision since obviously there was more vice than virtue involved in what Mr. X was doing (Brown, 2001). To go a little deeper into ethical theories, Kant's Formulations of Universality and Reversibility very aptly describe why something's are morally incorrect and why some are not. If Mr. X were to keep himself in my boss's shoes he would not want his behavior replicated this way, therefore the above mentioned theories do suggest that Mr. X was wrong in what he did (Copp, 2006). I feel it is absolutely essential to take a stand against this because even my loyalty to the organization I am working for should compel me to at least let the management know the undercover realities within their organization.

Applying the Ethical Decision Making Model Gather Facts and Defining the Ethical Issues Involved Before accusing anyone of any sort of an allegation, it is important that a person does his complete homework. I would also first investigate as to whether it is actually the truth that Mr. X deliberately takes credit for others' work and whether it is a habit or something that just happened once or twice. From all the ethical theories highlighted above, it is clearly an ethical issue where the intellectual property rights of the employees were being encroached upon by their supervisor. Identifying Affected Parties, Consequences and Obligations Amongst those affected would include all those people who used to be present in the brainstorming meetings and contributed in whichever way possible towards the execution of the campaign. The consequences of this could be very dire. The employees who put in all their efforts trying to come up with the best of ideas would then feel unmotivated to work for the organization and no good organization would want to let go off valuable human resource. The obligations lie upon <https://assignbuster.com/an-ethical-dilemma/>

all those bearing the brunt and not doing anything about it. When the issue is reported to the top management they would also be obliged to take stringent measures which could include the implementation of a 360 degree feedback and appraisal system. This would make the supervisors mindful of the fact that his subordinates can also raise their concerns regarding him which would be heard. Considering One's Character, Creativity and Gut As stated earlier, a person needs to realize the impact this has on himself and on those around him. My boss had to make the decision of whether to quietly put up with everything or to stand up for his right as well as for the rights of his team. He had to decide whether what he was doing by quietly bearing this was right or wrong. Some creative solution could be decided through a consensus of all the team members in a team meeting. One might be to not let Mr. X take the credit by answering the management's question regarding who was behind the ideas even before Mr. X could. At the end of it all everything boils down to the gut feeling a person has, whether one feels morally obliged or responsible to take a stand or not. This last point of the step by step procedure of ethical decision making falls very much on the lines of deontology (Gill, 2004). Works Cited Brown, C. (2001, April 16). Ethical Theories Compared. Retrieved May 31, 2011, from Trinity University: Copp, D. (2006). Morality and Practical Reason: A Kantian Approach. In S. Darwall, *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical theory* (pp. 282-290). New York: Oxford University Press. Gill, D. W. (2004). Upgrading the Ethical Decision-Making Model for Business. *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*, 23. 4: , 135-151. Rayburn, J. M., & Rayburn, L. G. (1996.). Relationship Between Machiavellianism and Type A Personality and Ethical-Orientation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Volume 15 , 1209-1219.

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