

Ethics theories



Question Part A Yes, Heinz should break into the store and steal the drug for his wife because, under the teleological and utilitarian approaches to ethics, doing so would produce more benefit than harm and therefore would be the right thing to do. Arguably, his wife's life is worth far more than the profit the druggist would make by selling the drug to Heinz at his stated price. In fact, it can be argued that any human life is worth more than any amount of monetary profit, however large it may be. The teleological approach to ethics is a results-based methodology that considers the extent to which the action in question would maximize a benefit or minimize harm. In this case, there is little question that a theft of the drug would be ethical under a teleological and utilitarian model.

Part B

Depending on the ethical approach chosen, breaking into the store to steal the drug could be considered either right or wrong. As stated above, a teleological analysis would justify the action as being right due to its potential to avoid a great harm, a loss of life, at the expense of some lost profit, which surely cannot weigh as heavily. On the other hand, a more duty-based approach such as deontological would require that the morality of the act itself be considered without regard to its consequences. Deontological ethics maintains that actions themselves have intrinsic moral value, and can be inherently good or bad. Arguably, stealing is wrong even if it ends up having a positive effect, and therefore a deontological analysis would require a determination that the action is wrong. In short, the ends never justify the means under such an analysis.

Question 2

Notifying employees of layoffs via e-mail is the right way because of the

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manner in which the notification was handled in this particular case. Under the deontological approach to ethics, this method of notification might have been considered problematic and insensitive if Radio Shack failed to adequately prepare employees for this method of notification; and if the company failed to follow up in person with each employee being laid off in order to offer support and placement services. However, in this case Radio Shack appears to have exercised great sensitivity in how it prepared employees and supported them after the fact. While the means of communication may not have been ideal for some, it certainly does not rise to the level of being unethical. Further, in looking at the consequences of this notification method under a teleological approach, it cannot be maintained that the laid off employees suffered any measurable harm because of this means of communication that they would not have suffered had a different choice been made.

Question 3

I worked in a previous job with a person who heavily utilized script processing in his new management role. He based his decisions on his context-specific knowledge of common or conventional behavior or actions taken by other, more experienced managers. This led him to often try to shoehorn his decisions to fit contexts that may have been similar but were not exactly the same as those he observed from other managers. The outcome was frequent ineffective decision making that was ill-suited to the entirety of the facts of the situation at hand. He ended up being demoted due to his inability to really analyze and apply unique and customized approaches to the problems he faced. This was the right result because a

manager needs to have analytical ability and avoid making decisions based on rote memory.