

Ethical issues in international business essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Preparing to work in a foreign country puts a huge responsibility on the both the individual and the employer. In this situation where Sara Strong met with gender issues on her assignment to Mexico City, the preparation required for such an assignment was apparently not thoroughly researched by either the employer or by Sara.

An international company, such as the Security Bank of the American Continent, is obligated to prepare all employees for foreign assignment by saturating them with the cultural differences they can expect.

Sara became agitated and irritated because she did not understand the role of women in society in Mexico, and this is something that should have been explained to her before she was even allowed to accept the assignment. Because of her reaction to what was unknown to her, she has jeopardized her own chances for advancement. There is no one international moral code which dictates the behavior of individuals working in host countries.

The one which applies here, however, is that Sara should have been given a complete run-down of what the roles of women in Mexico are and how women are perceived. Had she been provided with, or taken the initiative to obtain a handbook of international moral and ethical standards as they pertained to her assignment, she would have known that: "...gender roles are more clearly defined in Mexican than in the United States. Men are expected to be leaders, to protect and provide for the woman. Men are permitted to express their attraction to women through looks and verbal comments." ¹

The bank has made the correct decision by opting to follow the normal customs of the host country, even though this seems unfair to the employee. The business isn't about the employee, it's about the company and in order to maintain a good relationship with our Mexican neighbors, the company must follow the business practices of the host country, even at the expense of an employee.

In the future, it would be wise and highly recommended that not only the company prepare employees for working in a foreign culture, but also that the employee take it upon him or herself to learn as much as possible about that culture. If he or she feels, after company and personal training, that the situation would be too uncomfortable to withstand, then the employee is obligated to request a different assignment. Since Sara was unprepared for what occurred, and showed a lack of professionalism by being offended and allowing her ego to be bruised. She should be removed from the assignment immediately and be more prepared for her next.

Morality requires that a company show its respect for a host country, but also for the employee, who in this case is Sara Strong. These are not incompatible requirements. As stated earlier, proper preparation of Sara before she moved to Mexico could have saved everyone a great deal of embarrassment. And if Sara, knowing the social norms of the country, reacted the same way she did in the described situation,² then the responsibility was on her shoulders. It is the responsibility of the visiting personnel to act as ambassadors when on foreign soil. To be ignorant of local customs is unforgivable in the business world.

WORKS CITED

¹ http://www/isep.org/handbooks/mexico/daily_life.html

² Beauchamp, Tom L., Bowie, Norman, (2005), *Ethical Theory and Business*,
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Publishing, 622-623).