

Case question #30



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a. Ethics, responsibility and duty are intertwined and ethical dilemmas may haunt a person under stressful conditions. Ethics means to be able to discriminate between the right and the wrong and have the courage to stick to the right no matter the consequences. If Ayer did nothing he would not be making an ethical decision. Whistle blowing becomes necessary when employee and management relationship lacks professionalism. It is his responsibility to bring it to the notice of the seniors. Whistle blowing for professional organizations becomes essential to maintain professional ethics and protect the public (Kaplan & Kleiner, 2000). Whistle blowing is good because it exposes corruption and malpractices, which could harm the society. If Ayer does nothing he is causing harm to the society, to himself, because he would keep feeling guilty and also to the organization because the management may not be aware at which level such things are happening.

b. If Ayer complained there is every chance that manufacturing would stop and many would lose their jobs. Whistle blowing is a complex social phenomenon. While it exposes corruption in the society or the organization, it can be bad because it amounts to breach of trust. A whistle blower has to take into account three elements before taking the decision to whistle blow - dissent, loyalty and accusation (Rocha & Kleiner, 2005). The natural instinct of the person in witnessing a wrong doing is to report about the action. What holds back the person is the fear – the consequences that may arise out his action. Ayer should carefully assess the situation, discuss it with colleagues and bring it to the notice of the management in such a way that it causes the least harm to the society or the organization or to his colleagues. His motive for whistle blowing is not malicious or vested with personal interests. Ayer

would not be making an ethical decision if he did nothing simply because his colleagues would lose jobs.

c. If Ayer blows the whistle on the firm by releasing the information to the news paper and the television networks, it would have repercussions both on the firm and on Ayer. At the time of employment, usually employees have to sign a ' non-disclosure agreement' which binds them and holds them back from revealing secrets of the company to the public. At the same time, public interest demands that a professional must be an ethical person (Camerer, 1996). Whistle blowing would also amount to disloyalty to the organization. Hence the person reels under the agony of indecision. Again, confidentiality and loyalty towards the organization cannot be more important than the duty towards the society. According to Qusqus and Kleiner (2001) no law can bind a person to keep silent against offenders and an employee has a higher responsibility towards the society. His action would also affect his own position in the company and he could lose his job. He may have to face hostility and he also risks termination from the society at large which would affect his chances of another employment.

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