

What would you do



What Would You Do? The purpose of this paper is to write a response to the question in the "What Would You Do?" given a certain situation. The format that this paper will utilize is to first identify the scenario, then I will outline how I would react in the given scenario. This will be achieved through first identifying the ethical issue, and then I will examine some externalities, view this situation under a number of ethical theories then explain my ultimate decision.

The scenario involves me being relegated to the role of a civil servant that has to present a budget to the city council. A friend had advised me that he had on occasion included a line item into his budget called a "Radio" item that would in essence make a lot of noise and attract attention but could be "unplugged" easily. He said that after the council focused all its attention on that item and it was finally removed, everything else would be approved with little question.

The initial dilemma revolves around whether or not I would use some sort of 'smoke and mirrors' strategy to pass a budget that I personally believe to be sound. Or do I prepare a budget to the best of my ability and let it come under exceptional scrutiny. What this translates to is that I could examine this scenario from either an egoist perspective in which I would act in accordance with what I personally believe is in my own self interest or if I should view this situation under a utilitarian perspective in which I should choose the solution that brings the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

There are a number of externalities to consider in this situation. One major concern is the decision making process of the town council. If it is the case that they are reasonable decision makers than it would be that I would

possibly act differently if they are a group of vindictive or corrupt people. Secondly, special consideration must be made on the special conditions or items that I am placing in my own budget. For example, there may be a budget requirement that I believe is necessary for the effective running of a government bureau. If it is unlikely that a council will approve of this budgetary requirement, I may be persuaded to use some underhanded methods (Such as utilizing aggressive sales tactics) to educate the council of the benefits of this line item.

Special consideration must be afforded to the idea that there may be some regulatory board that oversees my actions and if I were to use a 'Radio' tactic it may be that there are some serious legal ramifications that need to be addressed. One final externality consideration would be the scenario in which somebody the committee approved the 'radio' expenditure. What this would translate to is a complete waste of taxpayer money on something controversial and potentially completely unnecessary.

The next major consideration would be to view this from a consequentiality ethical theory. If I were to examine this scenario using ethics of duties, I would operate under the assumption that all beings are rational and have respect for consistency, universality as well as respect for human dignity. Under this assumption it would be wildly inappropriate to use a 'radio' item in my budget. Using a virtue ethics perspective I would have to make sure that my main objective would be to shelter the taxpayers and the public from excessive government over expenditures.

With this information in hand I can now identify the decision that I will make. Ultimately I would not use some sort of 'Radio' strategy in effort to push through a budget. This decision was based on a number of factors. Firstly, if it

is the case that I cannot convince my contemporaries that the true budget that I have proposed is not worthy of passing than perhaps I should reevaluate the entire proposal. However, if it is the case that the city council does not consist of reasonable people than from this perspective I would simply have to work harder to convince the council members that my budget is valid.

The next contributing factor that led me to make this decision is based on the fact that moralistically, the use of a 'radio' tactic represents a serious underhanded technique and as such pursuing this action would be unfair to the public. Moreover, it can be the case that I could be called out on using this technique, which could have serious long term negative repercussions for my credibility and reputation.

One additional contributing factor for my decision is the consideration that as a civil servant I would want to bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people. If I am not putting forward my most honest and best budget that I would theoretically be doing a great disservice to the public. Secondly as I highlighter earlier, it may be the case that the budget could go through with the 'radio' line item which would cost the public more money than is necessary.

The final consideration for why I would make this decision is the fact that this action may represent only the beginning of a slippery slope of other city hall infractions. If I begin to use underhanded techniques like this with ease, it may be that I be willing to bribe officials, or misrepresent expenditures. This represents a serious long terms risk to my credibility.

In conclusion it is my belief that the best decision is to simply put my best work forward and to avoid using a radio strategy because even though it

may be an easy technique of getting budget approved it may do a serious disservice to the public and could harm my credibility.