

# Ethical decision for business case



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Ethical Decision for Business Case The purpose of this piece is to provide an analytical view on the case study d, Chrysler and Gao Feng: Corporate Responsibility for Religious and Political Freedom in China. The format that will be utilized is to first provide a brief synopsis and then identify the ethical problem through the tension between competing moral obligations facing the business.

The case first identifies that a young employee of the Beijing Jeep an American/Chinese joint venture. Gao is a devout Christian who held an unsanctioned religious candlelight vigil to commemorate the Tiananmen Square massacre. Whilst it is the case that there is a degree of religious freedom in China, all events must be at a state sanctioned religious venue and have the approval of the government. As Gao had no such approval from the government he was arrested and imprisoned for over a month. Upon his release, Gao returned to work however he only had a note from the Chinese police stating that they had held him for three days and had subsequently been released without trial. The quandary lies in the fact that the Chinese partner in the joint venture wanted Gao fired however it is the case that whilst Gao may have violated Chinese religious laws three provisions in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicate that everyone has a right to freedom of thought & religion, wither alone or in community with others. Moreover the charter also indicates that all people have the freedom of opinion & expression and that everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and association. As such moralistically, Gao was not in violation of any of the protocols as enforced by the Chinese government. The case is further complicated insofar as it is the case that if the American firm were to support Gao it is likely that they will loose a very close ally in the Chinese

market and the principle of relationship management in China (Guanxi) is crucial to having a commercial success in the nation.

A number of moral complications are presented in this case. Firstly there is the issue of maximizing shareholder value vs. the moral obligation the company has to protecting their employees. If theoretically, Chrysler were to refuse to fire Gao it is likely that they would loose millions of dollars in capital and ultimately may fail in the Chinese market. If Chrysler were to ally with their Chinese partners and fire Gao, it is likely that they would foster a harmonious relationship with the Chinese Communist party as well as their business partners however they would be violating the human rights of a dedicated employee who was wrongfully imprisoned by a malicious government.

Secondly there is the issue of obligation insofar as it could be argued that by firing Gao the company is only adhering to the laws of the country in which they are operating and as such, Gao is the one who chose to violate the laws of his nation. Philosophically speaking, the inhabitants of a nation agree to give up some freedoms in exchange for certain promises from the government an as such Gao is the one who went outside the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable by Chinese society.

Lastly one could make the argument that Chrysler is not obliged to adhere to all of the laws of China and rather the company should adhere to the laws as declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as such there should be no moral problem with continuing to employ Gao as it is the Chinese Government who is violating the laws and not Gao.