

Business ethics assignment

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What are the relevant facts? (10 marks) Annie, a copywriter for Laird and Laird (L&L) Advertising, has been assigned to Bud's Best (B) bacon account. Lance Willard is a popular Hollywood movie star, has signed 1 year contract with B bacon for product testimonials (when given by celebrities known as celebrity endorsements). President of L, (Victor) explains to Annie that Victor has signed an affidavit swearing that he is a bona fide user Of B bacon. Although Lance has plenty of personal experience with B bacon, as is legally required for him to give a personal testimonial, and he has always referred B to any other brand of bacon, Lance has recently turned into a vegetarian for the past one month. Lance told Annie that as long as the endorser's comments are based on supportable personal experience, the message cannot be challenged as misleading. Bacon is a food high in cholesterol, which could have contributed to Lance's high cholesterol count and his doctors warning to cut down on high cholesterol foods. Lance was informed by Victor that technically, Lance can discuss in commercials his past enjoyment of B bacon. Lance will only endorse the bacon's quality, value and good taste -He will not issues the health issues involved. Beside the health issues Lance believes that, B bacon is superior along these dimensions compare to other bacon brands. For health reason, Annie has reservations to do the copywriting for commercials using Lance as a celebrity to endorse. As he no longer consumes the product. 2.

What are the dilemmas or ethical issues in this case? (10 marks) It may be misleading to use Lance as a celebrity endorser given that, although in the past he used and preferred the product, he no longer does because he believes it is unhealthy. It may be unethical to promote a product which

potentially poses a health hazard to at least some consumers. Promoting this brand may increase consumption of an unhealthy product by persuading the consumers to shift brand preferences from other products to the advertised product. It is unacceptable to restrict the discussion in the ads to the product's quality, value, and taste while neglecting the health issue (e. G. , should some sort of disclaimer be used). It may amount to incomplete disclosure when the product is proven to be hazardous to consumers' health but only the taste, alee and other qualities are promoted by hiding the hazardous factor. Swearing upon false statement in affidavit is against the law but the conflict arises due to the commercial need Of promoting a product in an advertisement.

On one hand, an advertisement usually does not reveal the negative factors of a product, the artists acting in the advertisement might or might not be the consumers of the product but the law requires them to provide an affidavit confirming that they are the users or consumers of the product. Hence, conflict arises between law, commercial need (nature of the aiming) and honesty on the part of the artist acting in the advertisement. Should a copywriter be obligated to abide by her superior's judgment or his/ her conscience? The reputation and legality of the advertisement by Laird and Laird may be threatened by Lance's vegetarianism. 3. Who are the stakeholders involved? In what way are they affected? (1 0 marks) Below are the Primary Stakeholders. What is the appropriate level of analysis (systemic, corporate, and individual) to use in identifying, the primary stakeholders? Individual Annie Morally wrong for advertising the product may affect public health or sledding the consumer If she were to go against the

superior she may lose her career/job Lance Legally wrong for signing the affidavit and to confirm as bona fide user. Lance should not testify the product that he is no longer consume. Victor can be legally wrong for conspiracy with Lance Systemic Public, The target audience for the advertising campaign for unhealthy product Corporate Laird and Laird The reputation of the company may tarnished for selling the product. American Advertising Federation 4. What are the possible alternatives (course of action) available? (20 marks) Annie could discuss with the company to drop using Lance in this campaign and use someone else who is currently consuming the product. Annie could decline to continue to work on the campaign because it is against her professionalism. Annie could have asked to be reassign to some other account where the product poses no health hazards or morally ethical. Annie could propose another method using Lance which doesn't suggest that Lance has ever personally used the product. Annie could agree to go to work on the campaign as proposed. 5. What are the ethics involved in these alternatives? 20 marks) In order to determine the ethics involved in these alternatives, we should look into the outcome of act/omission by a person involved.

This would lead to questions asked based on a “utilitarian” perspective (costs and benefit): For example: 1. Which possible alternative would provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number? 2. How would costs be measured in this vignette? 3. Do the benefits of being consistent with your personal values outweigh the costs of doing potentially less effective advertising (perhaps without Lance) or of potentially displeasing the client? Ask questions based on a “rights” perspective. For example: What does

each stakeholder have the right to expect? Which alternatives would you not want imposed on you if you were Annie?

Lance? Victor? A member of the target audience? The client? What are Lance's and the client's rights, given that they have signed a contract? Does Annie have a right to protest? Ask questions based on a "justice" perspective (benefits and burdens). For example: Which alternative distributes the benefits and burdens most fairly among the stakeholders? Which stakeholders carry the greatest burden if Annie refuses to work on the campaign as planned? Which alternative(s) demonstrate a fair process? A fair outcome? 6. What are the practical constraints of these alternatives? (20 marks) Annie might not consider disagreeing with her superior to be a viable option from the perspectives of her job at Laird and Laird as well as her career. If Annie declines to go along, probably another copywriter will be assigned to do the campaign anyway. Victor might overrule any decision Annie makes to alter the campaign. Legally, it might be impossible to verify Lana's experience as a bona fide user. 7. What action would you suggest to Annie to take? (10 marks) Annie may continue with the advertisement but with certain precautions in order to ensure that she is within the ethical boundaries.

First, she must ensure that Lance only shares about his past enjoyment of the product as stated by him. This is because Lance is no longer using the product since he has converted into a vegetarian who does not consume the bacon and egg at present. However, getting Lance to sign the affidavit confirming that he is the bona fide user of the product is not only ethically wrong but also legally wrong since it is a false statement. Lance might have

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used the product in the past but as far as the affidavit is concerned, it is a false statement to state that he is a bona fide user of the product because he has actually stopped consuming the product.

Hence, in order to avoid legal battles, Annie should consider about not having Lance to sign the affidavit. If this is not possible, then, I would suggest Annie to put aside her admiration for Lance or for working with him and prioritize her professionalism and remove Lance from this advertisement. Annie must bear in mind that even though an act or mission may be morally correct but if it is legally incorrect, law would prevail when there is a conflict between moral and law. Hence, the alternative for Annie as mentioned above are as follows: a.

To avoid Lance signing the affidavit swearing that he is the bona fide user of the product since he is no longer the user. This is to avoid legally wrong act. B. If the alternative above is not possible, then, Lance should be removed from the advertisement and replaced by someone who is actually a bona fide user of the product even at present. The approach above reflects principles of justice which would look into the CT done to determine the righteousness of the act instead of looking into the outcome as in utilitarian principle.

If the legal requirement does not involve affidavit swearing, it may be acceptable for Annie to apply utilitarianism since the product may benefit a greater number Of people which may outweigh the fact that Lance is no longer consuming the product. However, since the affidavit requirement is a legal matter which may lead to legally wrong act on the part of Lance and

when there is a conflict between law and moral, the former prevails,
application of utilitarian principle might not be appropriate in this case.