

the same as everyone else." In response, Weston pointed out that NewCom wanted to guarantee that its employees had safe, high-quality housing that was in keeping with the image that the company wanted to project. Wilson's housing arrangements were "unseemly," she said, and not in keeping with his professional standing. Moreover, they reflected poorly on the company. To this, Wilson Mutambara retorted: "I'm not just a NewCom employee; I'm also a Rambian. It's not unsafe for me to live in this neighborhood, and it's insulting to be told that the area I grew up in is 'unseemly' or inappropriate for a company employee."

Barbara Weston pointed out that the monthly receipts he submitted had been falsified. "Yes," he admitted, "but that's common practice in Rambia. Nobody thinks twice about it." However, she pressed the point, arguing that he had a duty to NewCom, which he had violated. As the discussion continued, Mutambara became less confident and more and more distraught. Finally, on the verge of tears, he pleaded, "Barbara, you just don't understand what's expected of me as a Rambian or the pressure I'm under. I save every penny I have to pay school fees for eight nieces and nephews. I owe it to my family to try to

give those children the same chance I had. My relatives would never understand my living in a big house instead of helping them. I'm just doing what I have to do."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did Wilson Mutambara act wrongly? Explain why or why not. Assess each of the arguments he gives in his own defense. What other courses of action were open to him? What would you have done in his place?
2. Was Dale Garman right to confirm the information he had received and to report the matter? Was it morally required of him to do so?
3. What should Barbara Weston and NewCom do? Should Wilson be ordered to move out of Old Town and into more appropriate housing? Should he be terminated for having falsified his housing receipts? If not, should he be punished in some other way?
4. Is NewCom unfairly imposing its own ethnocentric values on Wilson Mutambara? Is the company's housing policy fair and reasonable? Is it culturally biased?



CASE 10.5

Ethically Dubious Conduct

BRENDA FRANKLIN HAS WORKED AT ALLIED Tech for nearly eight years. It's a large company, but she likes it and enjoys the friendly work environment. When she tacked her list onto the bulletin board outside her office, she didn't intend to make things less friendly. In fact, she didn't expect her list to attract much attention at all.

It had all started the week before when she joined a group of coworkers for their weekly lunch get-together, where they always talked about all sorts of things. This time they had gotten into a long political discussion, with several people at the table

going on at great length about dishonesty, conflicts of interest, and shady dealings among politicians and corporate leaders. "If this country is going to get on the right track, we need people whose integrity is above reproach," Harry Benton had said to nods of approval around the table, followed by a further round of complaints about corruption and corner-cutting by the powerful.

Brenda hadn't said much at the time, but she thought she sniffed a whiff of hypocrisy. Later that night, after pondering the group's discussion, she typed up her list of "Ethically Dubious Employee Conduct." The next day she posted it outside her door.



picturelibrary/Alamy

Are open-plan work premises likely to prevent employee theft?

Harry Benton was the first one to stick his head in the office. "My, my, aren't we smug?" was all he said before he disappeared. Later that morning, her friend Karen dropped by. "You don't really think it's immoral to take a pad of paper home, do you?" she asked. Brenda said no, but she didn't think one could just take it for granted that it was okay to take company property. She and Karen chatted more about the list. On and off that week, almost everyone she spoke with alluded to the list or commented on some of its items. They didn't object to her posting it, although they seemed to think it was a little strange. One day outside the building, however, an employee she knew only by sight asked Brenda sarcastically whether she was planning on turning people in for "moral violations." Brenda ignored him.

Now she was anticipating her group's weekly lunch. She had little doubt about what the topic of discussion would be, as she again glanced over her list:

Ethically Dubious Employee Conduct

1. Taking office supplies home for your personal use.
2. Using the telephone for personal, long-distance phone calls.
3. Making personal copies on the office machine.
4. Charging the postage on your personal mail to the company.

5. Making nonbusiness trips in a company car.
6. On a company business trip: staying in the most expensive hotel, taking taxis when you could walk, including wine as food on your expense tab, taking your spouse along at company expense.
7. Using your office computer to shop online, trade stocks, view pornography, or e-mail friends on company time.
8. Calling in sick when you need personal time.
9. Taking half the afternoon off when you're supposedly on business outside the office.
10. Directing company business to vendors who are friends or relatives.
11. Providing preferential service to corporate customers who have taken you out to lunch.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Review each item on Brenda's list and assess the conduct in question. Do you find it morally acceptable, morally unacceptable, or somewhere in between? Explain.
2. Examine Brenda's list from both the utilitarian and the Kantian perspectives. What arguments can be given for and against the conduct on her list? Is the rightness or wrongness of some items a matter of degree? Can an

action (such as taking a pad of paper) be both trivial and wrong?

3. Someone might argue that some of the things listed as ethically dubious are really employee entitlements. Assess this contention.
4. How would you respond to the argument that if the company doesn't do anything to stop the conduct on Brenda's list, then it has only itself to blame? What about the argument that none of the things on the list is wrong unless the company has an explicit rule against it?
5. What obligations do employees have to their employers? Do companies have moral rights that employees can

violate? What moral difference, if any, is there between taking something that belongs to an individual and taking something that belongs to a company?

6. What, if anything, can we learn about an employee's character based on whether he or she does or does not do the things on Brenda's list? Would you admire someone who scrupulously avoids doing any of these ethically dubious things, or would you think the person is a prig?
7. What should Brenda do when she finds a fellow employee engaging in what she considers ethically dubious conduct?



READING 10.1

Does It Make Sense to Be a Loyal Employee?

JUAN M. ELEGIDO

Although employee loyalty is a familiar and frequently discussed notion, many people doubt that it makes sense in today's fluid and competitive economic system. However, Juan M. Elegido, professor of business ethics and vice-chancellor of Pan-Atlantic University in Lagos, Nigeria, believes that young managers are wrong to dismiss loyalty to the company as of little or no importance. After carefully defining employee loyalty, Professor Elegido argues that it can be highly valuable to the employee. In a variety of ways, loyalty to one's employer can help one live a more fulfilling life. Loyalty has limits and comes in degrees; it may also involve risks. But under the right conditions, a loyal commitment to one's employer can make one's life significantly richer.

Introduction

It has become commonplace that the old implied employment contract under which employers offered employment for life in return for the employees' undivided attention and devotion is dead. Supposedly, modern economic conditions put

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a premium on employer flexibility and employee mobility and have rendered that implied contract unviable. . . . However that may be, . . . many young managers do not think of their relationship to their current or future employers in terms of loyalty. Much of the motivation for my writing this article stems from my belief that these young managers are missing something potentially important for their lives when they so casually dismiss the possibility of a loyal relationship with their employers. . . .