

15.18: Discussion- Are They Simply Guidelines?

General Discussion Instructions

You are required to post to this discussion THREE TIMES, on THREE DIFFERENT DAYS. Please refer to the Discussion Grading Rubric for details regarding how your performance will be assessed. NOTE: Please be certain to read the entire discussion assignment since in some cases there is more than one question you need to discuss, respond to, or address. Be sure that you have answered the entire question!

Post 1: Initial Post

This posting should be a minimum of one short paragraph and a maximum of two paragraphs. Word totals for this post should be in the 100–200-word range. Whether you agree or disagree, explain why with supporting evidence and concepts from the readings or a related experience. Include a reference, link, or citation when appropriate.

Preparation

As public pressure for corporate accountability and ethical behavior increases, businesses and industries are putting more emphasis on establishing and publicly sharing their codes of ethics with stakeholders. Businesses adopt these to help guide corporate decision-making, but they can be used against them when businesses stray from their stated codes. For instance, Enron's 64-page code of ethics was Exhibit #1 at the trial of its CEO, Ken Lay, after the company imploded. Stuart Gilman, president of the Ethics Resource Center in Washington, D.C., said that, for Enron, "ethics was simply a piece of paper with three Ps—print, post [in the company lunchroom], and then pray that something is actually going to happen."

In order to complete this discussion assignment, you will need to:

1. Select a company that you are familiar with as a customer, employee, or investor.
2. Locate a copy of the company's code of ethics. You can generally find this on their Web site in the "About Us" section of the site. Make sure to get the link/URL for the code of ethics when you are there, because you need to include that link in your initial post.
3. Do some general research about the company you selected regarding possible activities by the company or its leadership that either violates or supports this code of ethics. You will use this information to support the position you take in your initial post.

For Discussion

1. Share the company you selected, the link/URL to the company's code of ethics, and your reason for selecting the company.
2. Based on your reading of the company's code of ethics, and your research into the activities of the company, what grade would you give them for adhering to their code of ethics? Use the same grading scale you are evaluated by: A, B, C, D, F. Provide your reasoning for assigning them the grade you did.
3. Now, consider the industry in which the company operates (e.g., Disney in the entertainment industry). Are there forces at work in that *industry* that makes it easier or harder to be ethical?
4. Are there external factors (public opinion, social norms, attitudes, values) that influence public perception of the company's ethical behavior? For example, even though cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris may conduct its business according to its own code of ethics, some people believe it is unethical for them to make and sell a product that is known to cause cancer.
5. Does a company's adherence or nonadherence to a code of ethics influence your decision to do business with them?

Posts 2 and 3: Respond to Classmates' Posts

Instructions

After you have created your initial post, look over the discussion posts of your classmates and give at least two thoughtful responses to two different classmates (one per classmate) as outlined in the Discussion Grading Rubric.

A response posting should be a minimum of one short paragraph. Word totals for these posts should be in the 75–100-word range. Whether you agree or disagree, explain why with supporting evidence and concepts from the readings or a related experience. Include a reference, link, or citation when appropriate. The goal of your response posts is to extend discussions already taking place or pose new possibilities or opinions not previously voiced. Your goal should be to motivate the group discussion and present a creative approach to the topic.

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