

The Virtues of Ethics and Volkswagen

The main purpose of having a code of ethics to follow is a set standard of practices to either keep people in check, define the boundary of what is ethically acceptable, and to have written guidelines to hold people accountable if they break the code.

When I am faced with an ethical situation, personally I go about making decisions by asking others around me what is acceptable versus too far. For example, I was pen testing my network (WiFi cracking) and I got curious about the networks around me so I asked a few friends and they all decided it would be out of scope and unethical for me to test their networks as well. Typically, if I have any reservations about the project or idea I will ask a few others and it will most likely be considered unethical.

The case study for my group was Volkswagen having an alternative mode to detect and pass emissions testing. We considered this unethical because not only were they skirting the law but they were also purposefully adding further pollution to the planet. This was a unanimous decision that what Volkswagen did was unethical. The most ethical decision would have been go back to the drawing boards and re-engineer the engine to be more environmentally friendly even if it meant decreased profits.

For the three virtues of ethics, I chose honesty, integrity, and fidelity. I chose these specific ones because Volkswagen broke all three of them. Volkswagen was dishonest to the inspectors, the public, and the whole world. Their integrity was shattered as well as their public image as being a law-abiding company. Volkswagen's fidelity was also questioned since they purposefully lied to numerous parties. The others are less relevant such as charity responsibility, and self-discipline. Charity is hard to define within the context of falsifying emissions tests.

Responsibility is relevant however I feel it encompasses honesty and integrity so the individual two are more important. Self-discipline was also violated since they could not control their greediness however I believe lacking integrity, honesty, and fidelity outweigh lacking self-discipline. I am unable to think of another ethical virtue that could apply to my case study because the most important ones, in my opinion, have already been listed.