

Family Plans Teaching Notes

What Are the Relevant Facts?

1. Barbara has already received the unofficial offer of the controller's position in the new firm.
2. Barbara has significant family issues that will require her absence from work and may significantly impact her work performance.

What Are the Ethical Issues?

1. How much privacy is an individual allowed?
2. At what point is Barbara obligated to reveal her pregnancy to the company?
3. If Barbara reveals her personal responsibilities, will a different controller be chosen?

Who Are the Primary Stakeholders?

- Barbara
- Sam
- The newly merged company
- Barbara's parents
- Barbara's unborn child

What Are the Possible Alternatives?

1. Keep quiet until after the merger and the official announcement of the controller's position.
2. Talk to the new management about the parental issues and the pregnancy.

What Are the Ethics of the Alternatives?

- Ask questions based on a "utilitarian" perspective (costs and benefits).
 1. What possible alternative would provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number?

2. How would costs be measured in this case? What are the potential costs (a) to Barbara, (b) to Sam, and (c) to the other stakeholders?
3. Do the benefits outweigh the costs to Barbara? To the other stakeholders?

- Ask questions based on a "rights" perspective.

1. What are Barbara's rights to privacy, as related to personal plans?
2. Does the corporation have any rights to information in this case?

- Ask questions based on a "justice" perspective (benefits and burdens).

1. Which alternatives distribute the benefits and burdens most fairly among the stakeholders?
2. Which stakeholder(s) will possibly benefit the most from the situation?
3. Which stakeholder(s) will possibly bear the greatest burden from the situation?

What Are the Practical Constraints?

1. Only one controller is needed for the new company.
2. Family responsibilities will require Barbara to be absent within the next year.

What Actions Should Be Taken?

1. What should Barbara do?
2. If you were management and Barbara chose to confide in you, what would you do?