

Sticky Fingers Teaching Notes

What Are the Relevant Facts?

1. A watch has been stolen.
2. Todd, a jewelry salesman, was the only person observed handling the watch.
3. Todd has failed a lie-detector test.
4. Susan notes that Todd's application and sworn bonding form are not consistent.
5. Susan would not have noticed the irregularities on Todd's application had it not been for Mike's suggestion

What Are the Ethical Issues?

1. What are the typically appropriate grounds for terminating an employee who is suspected of theft?
2. If an employer has very strong circumstantial evidence that an employee is guilty of theft but the evidence is not conclusive, is it ethical to terminate the employee on the basis of factors that were not themselves the real reason for the termination?
3. What are the moral rights of employees suspected of theft?

Who Are the Primary Stakeholders?

- Susan
- Mike
- Todd
- All employees in the store
- All stockholders of the company

What Are the Possible Alternatives?

1. Fire Todd based on the discrepancies in his application and bonding form.
2. Do nothing.

What Are the Ethics of the Alternatives?

1. Ask questions based on a "utilitarian" perspective. For example:
2. What benefits and costs will each alternative impose on the various stakeholders?
3. What are the probable long-range benefits and costs of each of the alternatives?

4. Are there adequate ways of measuring the benefits and costs imposed on the stakeholders?

- Ask questions based on a "rights" perspective. For example:

1. What rights do employees have? Do employees have a right to know when they are suspected of a crime? Do they have a right to "due process" in an employment situation? Do they have a right to know the real reason why they are terminated?

2. What are the rights of employers? Do they have a right to protect themselves by firing employees when there is some probability that they may be responsible for theft?

3. What are the rights of the other stakeholders in the situation? Which alternative promises to best respect the rights of the stakeholders?

- Ask questions based on a "justice" perspective. For example:

1. What burdens would be placed on Todd if he is not told the real reason for his termination? What burden would be placed on the employer if Todd is told the real reason for his termination? Which of these two ways of distributing burdens is most fair?

2. If Todd is terminated, who benefits and who is burdened? Who benefits and who is burdened if Todd is not eliminated? Which distribution of benefits and burdens is most fair?

3. If Susan fires Todd for a paperwork technicality, should she follow suit and check the other members of the jewelry department? Of the store?

4. If Todd really did steal the watch, is it fair for him to be able to continue his employment?

What Are the Practical

TEXT MISSING