

To Spray or Not to Spray Teaching Notes

What Are the Relevant Facts?

1. Robert is in a new, responsible position which will give him excellent experience to further his career.
2. Through research, Robert knows that he can reverse declining sales by offering an aerosol version of Ab-Stain.
3. Robert also knows that hydrocarbons are needed to make an aerosol version of AbStain and that hydrocarbons contribute to increasing ozone in local regions in the troposphere (the area of the atmosphere closest to earth).

What Are the Ethical Issues?

1. Are consumer short-terms wants and needs more important than long-term damage to the atmosphere and to consumers themselves?
2. Should a company follow competition, even though competition is marketing a product which is environmentally unsound and harmful to people's health?

Who Are the Primary Stakeholders?

- Robert Whitney
- Crocodile Cleansers
- Crocodile's present and former consumers, many of whom want an aerosol and are willing to switch to a brand which is often not as effective but is more convenient to use
- Those affected by increased ozone - especially people who are old, young, and/or have respiratory problems

What Are the Possible Alternatives?

1. Offer an aerosol version of Ab-Stain.
2. Offer only the liquid version of Ab-Stain

What Are the Ethics of the Alternatives?

1. Offer an aerosol
 - Utilitarian Perspective:
 1. Both Crocodile Cleansers and its present and former consumers would benefit. Consumers would be able to buy a superior product, in the form they find most convenient. This would result in greater sales for Crocodile. Robert would also benefit, because he would reverse the declining sales trend and impress management with his abilities. Robert would also be harmed, because he feels concern about the ozone.
 2. The earth's ecological environment and, ultimately its population (especially those most at risk) would be harmed by the availability of yet another aerosol spray. One might argue that the addition of one spray would not make a significant difference in causing ozone alerts. This objection can be addressed when considering the categorical imperative.
 3. Because the world's population, the largest stakeholder, is negatively affected, offering an aerosol version of Ab-Stain does not result in the greatest good for the greatest number.
 - Deontological Perspective:
 1. *Categorical Imperative.* What if all products which could be packaged as aerosols were sold as aerosols? Ozone alerts would be even more frequent, and governments would take steps to save the earth's environment. A logical result would be to ban aerosols using hydrocarbons. According to the categorical imperative, the marketing of product in aerosol containers using hydrocarbons is unethical.
 2. *Rights:* By offering an aerosol which uses hydrocarbons, the world population's right to health is violated. According to rights, the use of aerosols is unethical.
 3. *Justice:* Although everyone is harmed, the young, old, and those with respiratory diseases are harmed more than others when ozone reaches dangerous levels in the troposphere. Thus, justice is violated.
 - All principles show that offering an aerosol version of Ab-Stain is unethical.
2. Only offer the liquid version.
 - Utilitarian Perspective:
 1. Crocodile Cleansers and consumers wanting an aerosol version of Ab-Stain will be negatively affected. So will

Robert, because he will have to try another strategy to halt the sales decline. On the other hand, the world's population will not be negatively affected (which translates into a benefit). Also, Robert will feel good that he did the right thing. The greatest good for the greatest number is obtained.

- Deontological Perspective:
 1. *Categorical imperative.* What if no one offered aerosols? Everyone would be better off, in terms of lowering the level of ozone in the troposphere.
 2. *Rights.* One could argue that the consumer's right to choose is violated, because consumers cannot choose Ab-Stain in an aerosol.
 3. *Justice.* Everyone is treated equally--no one is offered Ab-Stain in an aerosol.
- No ethical principles, with the exception of rights, are violated. It could be argued that the

consumer's right to choose an aerosol is a trivial right and should be considered unimportant in comparison to the right of everyone to a safe ecological environment.

What Are the Practical Constraints?

1. The decision is Robert's. However, he is evaluated on the basis of profitability. He may lose his job if he does not reverse the sales decline.

What Actions Should Be Taken?

1. The results of the ethical analysis indicate that, although it may be the most profitable, Robert should not offer an aerosol version of Ab-Stain. Further discussion can turn to other marketing strategies available to Robert. For example, Robert could choose a new target market, the upper-middle class. He could position the product as not only superior in quality but also environmentally safe because it is only offered in liquid form or, if this group prefers, in pump form.