



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Accepting a Complimentary Seminar Registration (adapted from NSPE Case No. 87-5)

Year

1999

Description

A pipe company invites engineers to a complimentary educational seminar on the use of its products. This could be compared to perks and gifts given to physicians by drug companies.

Body

In an effort to become better known in the engineering community, Marketwise Pipe Manufacturing Company hires Susan, an expert in marketing. Susan suggests that Marketwise offer a complimentary seminar to educate engineers on the current advances in the selection and use of pipe in construction. She suggests that Marketwise extend invitations to several local engineers and that they offer refreshments at the seminar, including a buffet luncheon during the seminar and a cocktail reception immediately following.

If you were an executive at Marketwise, how would you respond to Susan's suggestion?

Suppose that Marketwise takes Susan's suggestion and extends an invitation to Terry, a local engineer who is new to the area. Terry is not sure how to respond to

this invitation. Being new to the area, attending such a seminar will give him the opportunity to meet and network with other engineers. Furthermore, learning more about the selection and use of pipes would be helpful to Terry. On the other hand, Terry knows he will be purchasing pipes at some point in the future and wonders if accepting the invitation might later create a conflict of interest. In addition, Terry wonders if accepting the invitation will amount to a bribe.

How should Terry respond to the invitation?

[NSPE Code of Ethics](#) An earlier version may have been used in this case.

Notes

See the original NSPE case at: [Complimentary Seminar Registration - Case No. 87-5](#).

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Professional Ethics in Engineering Practice: Discussion Cases Based on NSPE BER Cases

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