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FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Gifts From a Supplier

Author(s)

[Michael Pritchard](#)

Year

1992

Description

Scott Bennett is the engineer assigned to deal with vendors who supply needed parts to the Upscale Company. Larry Newman, sales representative from one of Upscale's regular vendors, offers Scott a chance at a good deal on a condo.

Abstract

This case is one of thirty-two cases which address a wide range of ethical issues that can arise in engineering practice provided by the Center For the Study of Ethics in Society, Western Michigan University.

Body

I

Scott Bennett is the engineer assigned to deal with vendors who supply needed parts to the Upscale Company. Larry Newman, sales representative from one of Upscale's regular vendors, plays in the same golf league as Scott. One evening they go off in the same foursome. Sometime during the round Scott mentions that he is really looking forward to vacationing in Florida next month. Larry says his uncle owns a condo in Florida that he rents out during the months he and his family are up north. Larry offers to see if the condo is available next month -- assuring Scott that the rental cost would be quite moderate. What should Scott say?

II

Larry tells Scott he can rent his uncle's condo for \$100 a week. "My uncle," Larry says, "gets nervous when he rents to total strangers. He likes to have reliable people stay in his condo; the condo is paid for, and my uncle isn't interested in making money on it -- he just wants a little help meeting basic operating expenses and the taxes." Scott accepts the offer and begins making plans for his vacation. Just before leaving, an Upscale vice president sends out a new policy statement that says, among other things: "Accepting incentives from vendors is strictly prohibited". What should Scott do?

Notes

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Contributors

[Michael Pritchard](#)

Editor(s)

[Michael Pritchard](#)

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