



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

# **Misrepresentation of a Business Relationship (adapted from NSPE Case No. 96-1)**

## **Year**

1999

## **Description**

An engineer brings another engineer to a business meeting without first discussing business conditions with her.

## **Body**

Becky is a consulting engineer. She is the first to respond to a notice in the newsletter of a local chapter of engineering society asking for volunteers to help organize a consultant's referral network. Belinda, a society officer, asks Becky to help organize the network.

Later, Belinda asks Becky if she would look at an engineering assignment. Becky goes to Belinda's office expecting to get the particulars of a referral. But instead, Belinda accompanies Becky to the potential client's office without prior discussion of the arrangement. In the middle of the client's description of the engineering problem, the client asks about the contractual relationship. Belinda replies that Becky will subcontract to her on the project.

Was it ethical for Belinda to indicate that she will subcontract to Becky on the project, without having discussed this with Becky first?

What were Belinda's and Becky's ethical obligations under the circumstances?

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

## **Notes**

See the original NSPE case at: [Misrepresentation of a Business Relationship - Case No. 96-1](#).

## **Rights**

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## **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

## **Parent Collection**

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

## **Topics**

Collaboration

Bidding Process

Workplace Ethics

Engineer/Client Relationships

## **Discipline(s)**

Engineering

## **Publisher**

Online Ethics Center

Authoring Institution

National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE)