



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Use of Slogans in Political Campaigns and Advertisements (adapted from NSPE Case No. 98-6)

Year

1999

Description

Questions arise concerning whether certain slogans are deceptive and misleading or cause dishonor to the engineering profession.

Body

Case One

Alexander is a well-known professional engineer in his community. He decides to run for a political office in his county -- fulfilling what he believes is his obligation to participate in public affairs. He is contemplating using as his slogan the following: "Alexander: Engineering A Better County."

Alexander asks Bernard what he thinks about this slogan. Bernard, a fellow engineer, is worried that this slogan is deceptive and causes dishonor to the engineering profession. Alexander believes that this slogan reflects a proper use of his background. He claims that his competence as an engineer can be utilized to seek public change, particularly change in the county's professional employment

laws.

Should Alexander use this slogan in his campaign?

Are there any relevant factors that Alexander and Bernard didn't think of?

Case Two

Alfred is a sole practitioner in search of a new advertising slogan. He hires Francy, a professional marketing executive, to help him out. Francy suggests that Alfred market himself as "The Everything Engineer" in his promotions.

But Alfred is concerned. This slogan might imply that he can *do everything*; that is, that he is competent as an engineer in all disciplines, contexts and areas. This might be misleading. On the other hand, there are no limits placed on a practitioner's ability to practice several disciplines in several contexts.

Should Alfred use this slogan for his campaign?

Are there any other relevant factors that Alfred did not think of?

Can Alfred market himself as "The Everything Engineer"?

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

Notes

See the original NSPE case at: [Use of Slogans in Political Campaigns - Case No. 98-6](#).

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Parent Collection

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

Topics

Workplace Ethics

Discipline(s)

Engineering

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