

Introduction

The decisions leaders make are key in defining who they are and where they stand on critical issues. When tasked with making choices, many seek to make ethical ones, establishing themselves as individuals with values and morals. When individuals find themselves in the position to make decisions, they should first consider some of the guidelines associated with ethical decision-making, and keep these in mind throughout the entire decision-making process.

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/7-guidelines-making-ethical-decisions-19064.html>

Integrity

To make an ethical decision, the decision-maker must feel largely autonomous. If he does not feel free to make the decision himself, but instead feels that he must make a certain choice as a result of outside pressures, he is more likely to make a decision that is unethical. When a decision-maker does not feel he has autonomy, the choice he will likely make will not be his own, but instead one that he is influenced to select. This could perhaps lead him into unethical territory, as whoever is exerting pressure may have a hidden agenda. The decision-maker has to recognize this as the situation, then be guided by his integrity, allowing this to supersede any insecurities he may have about lack of autonomy..

Consideration of Impact

When making decisions, the decision-maker must first consider the impact that her decision will have upon others. By considering the lasting impact of her decision, she can improve her chances of making an ethical decision in which all affected individuals' needs are met to the greatest extent possible.

Legalities

Often laws and regulations must play a part in the decision-making process. If an individual is making a decision with legal ramifications, he must first ensure that he understands the laws and other rules that should necessarily impact his choices, so that the choice he makes is in line with these laws.

Ethics



Nonmaleficence

Some decisions have the ability to cause harm. If an individual is making a decision that could prove harmful to others, she must reconsider and choose the option that is least damaging to others.

Fidelity

If the decision-maker has made a commitment in the past, he must remain faithful to it. If he makes a decision that is contrary to this commitment, this will be likely be perceived as unethical, as he would have essentially gone back on his promise. For example, if he agreed to stick with one supplier for a set period of time, then switches to another before the stated time period has elapsed, the ethics of his decision may be called into question.

Fairness

Decision-makers should put effort into not allowing bias to influence their decisions. If, for instance, an individual allows her feelings for a particular person or group of people to influence her decisions, her decision may not be an ethical one.

Input Receiving

Generally, ethics dictates that decision-makers should take the wants and needs of others into consideration when making decisions. For optimal ethical decision-making, decision-makers should give others a voice and consider the concerns or needs expressed before arriving at an ultimate decision.