Resolving Ethical Dilemmas
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Employees make decisions at all levels of a company, whether at the top, on the front line or anywhere in between. Every employee in an organization is exposed to the risk of facing an ethical dilemma at some point, and some ethical decisions can be more challenging to fully understand than others. Knowing how to resolve ethical dilemmas in the workplace can increase your decision-making effectiveness while keeping you and your company on the right side of the law and public sentiment.

Step 1
Consult your company's code of ethics for formal guidance. This simple act may be able to resolve your dilemma immediately, depending on how comprehensive and specific your company’s ethics statement is. Your code of ethics can provide a backdrop on which to weigh the pros and cons of business decisions, giving you a clearer picture of which decision is more in line with the company's ethical commitments.

Step 2
Share your dilemma with your supervisor to take advantage of her experience. Front-line employees can face a number of ethical dilemmas in their jobs, such as deciding whether to give out a refund that does not specifically adhere to company policies or whether to report suspicions of internal theft which cannot be proven. Taking ethical questions to supervisors can keep employees out of trouble in addition to resolving conflicts.

Step 3
Discuss your dilemma with other executives if you are at the top of your organization. Executives and company owners make some of the farthest-reaching decisions in any organization, adding weight and additional challenges to ethical dilemmas. As an executive, it is important to show your competence at solving problems on your own, but there is nothing wrong with asking for help from time to time. Other executive team members should appreciate your commitment to making the right decision and should be able to provide unique insights into your problem.
**Step 4**

Speak with peers and colleagues from other companies if you can do so without divulging company secrets. If you are a sole proprietor, you may not have any other top-level managers to consult with. Seek out someone you trust from a business networking group, a previous employer or your college years to gain insight from others. Consider speaking with friends from diverse cultural backgrounds to gain an even wider range of insights.

**Step 5**

Read past news articles about other companies faced with your specific dilemma. Determine how others have dealt with your challenge before and take note of the outcome of their decisions. News outlets like to cover certain large company decisions, such as laying off workers, endorsing political candidates and bending accounting rules, which can have ethical impacts in society. Reading what happened to others after making their decisions can give you a glimpse into what to expect if you make a similar decision.