

SCENARIO: Your company is currently preparing business plans for the upcoming year. Your supervisor asks you to try to acquire information about one of your competitors, including cost and pricing data and new product plans. What do you do?

PART 1

1. What are **the pressures**? What are the corresponding **risks**?

- **Assuming the competitor is not allowing their information to become public: The immediate pressures are from my supervisor and co-workers in the company. I don't want to disappoint my supervisor because I don't want to risk a negative impact on my performance review and/or lose my job. If I comply, and get caught I will probably lose my job anyways. Myself as an individual and company as a whole could be subject to legal action.**
- **A pressure for our company is to either keep up with our competitors or have an advantage over them in the market. A corresponding risk would be jeopardizing our reputation by obtaining information about the competitor through dishonest means or end up a step behind our competitors in the market.**

2. Identify and define the ethical problem.

- **The ethical issue is an invasion of the competitor's privacy.**
- **The ethical problem also lies in obtaining information without compromising company/personal standards**

3. Who may be affected by this decision and what's at stake with each of them?

- **Myself, the company I work for and the competitor. The competitor has their privacy at stake. My individual job is at stake. My career and resume could be tarnished.**

4. What values are at stake in the decision? What **layer(s) of integrity** apply?

- **Honesty, privacy, integrity. Law, Competitor's privacy clauses (contracts and agreements), Professional Codes of ethics , and Personal Relations with co-workers and supervisor, and Moral values most directly apply.**

5a. List all possible options (good or bad) to resolve this dilemma?

Good Options

- **Resolve situation internally**
 - a. **Find out if competitors info is public or not.**
 - b. **Assuming it is private information, speak with closest co-workers to get their opinions.**
 - c. **Speak with supervisor and confront him with the risks of this situation. Explain that I am not comfortable with this because the company is at risk. Seek an explanation for why I should comply.**
 - d. **If supervisor does not listen move up the ladder**
 - e. **As a last resort, if company wants to violate this as a whole, refuse and quit.**
- **Ask competitor directly for information and see if they comply**
- **Going through previously published business plans, annual reports, and other available documents, to identify a trend and possibly make an estimated prediction of where the competitors might be headed**

Bad Option

- **Comply and get competitor's information possibly through dishonest means**

5b. Which options are the most compelling? Why?

- **The most compelling option is to ask the competitor. If you are still pressured by the supervisor, the way that is ethical and correct is more difficult, but also compelling because it is right.**
- **Going through existing documents and making a prediction, hoping that an obvious trend may be easily observable**

6a. How exactly would you resolve the dilemma?

- **I would ask competitor directly. If they don't want it to be public, I would try and analyze publically available competitor data and analyze it for trends to make predictions. If my supervisor insists on dishonest behavior, I would try and resolve the situation internally through the steps outlined above.**

6b. What values did you rely on to make your decision?

- **Moral values, honesty, respect for privacy**

7. What consequences (if any) does your decision have on the others involved?

- **If the competitor discloses the information, then all parties would be satisfied. If the competitor does not, then my company and my supervisors would not have the information needed.**

8. Is your decision legal? Is it fair to everyone involved? How does this make you feel about yourself?

- **Yes it is legal, I have not done anything wrong. It is fair to my company, the competitor, and the industry. I would feel that I did what was right, no matter what the consequences are.**

PART 2

1. Have your answers to #6 changed? Why or why not? Is there anything you would like to change or add? If so, list those changes below.

- **Our answers to #6 have not changed**

2. List one value that you feel was reinforced by this dilemma:

- **Privacy**

3. List one value that you feel you gained from this discussion:

- **Personal Integrity**