

Short Shorts Teaching Notes

What Are the Relevant Facts?

1. Lucy is a waitress at a beach restaurant where she was told to wear jeans and a restaurant T-shirt when she was hired.
2. Don, the owner, needs new campaigns to increase restaurant business during the winter months.
3. Don chooses revealing uniforms for the waitresses to draw more male customers to the restaurant.
4. Lucy objects to wearing the new uniforms and is receiving unwanted advances from customers since the uniform change.

What Are the Ethical Issues?

1. Could this be a sexual harassment issue?
2. Should waitresses be forced to wear uniforms that make them feel uncomfortable in front of customers?
3. Should customers be allowed to harass the waitresses?
4. Is it discrimination if male waiters continue to wear the original uniform?

Who Are the Primary Stakeholders?

- Lucy
- Don
- Other waiters
- Other customers

What Are the Possible Alternatives?

1. Let Lucy wear her original uniform. Also allow the other waitresses to return to the original uniform.
2. Fire Lucy because she won't wear the new skimpy uniform.
3. Develop other promotional strategies that do not exploit workers.
4. Lucy could bring harassment and/or discrimination charges against Don and the Sandtrap.

What Are the Ethics of the Alternatives?

- Ask questions based on a "utilitarian" perspective (costs and benefits). For example:
 1. Which possible alternative would provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number?

2. How would costs be measured in this situation? How much value should be placed on increasing sales at the expense of the safety and well-being of the waitresses?
3. Which alternative will allow the organization to retain competent waitresses? To attract customers?

- Ask questions based on a "rights" perspective. For example:

1. What does each employee have a right to expect with regard to dress?
2. Which alternative would you want if you were a waitress?

- Ask questions based on a "justice" perspective (benefits and burdens). For example:

1. Which alternative distributes the benefits and burdens most fairly among the employees? The stakeholders?
2. Which stakeholders carry the greatest burden if Don does nothing?
3. Are waiters given different treatment than waitresses in regard to the uniform because of their sex? Is there discrimination at the Sandtrap?

What Are the Practical Constraints?

1. The new uniform is not the same as the original work attire. Since Don changed uniforms, Lucy has the right to complain.
2. None of the waiters should take customer abuse, especially if the tight-fitting blouses and short shorts are provoking the situation.
3. The restaurant has treated male and female wait personnel differently.

What Actions Should Be Taken?

1. What actions should Lucy take?
2. Which alternative would you choose if you were in her position? Why would you nuke that choice?
3. What ethical theories (utilitarian, rights, justice) make the most sense to you as they relate to this situation?