

EML 4551
Ethics and Senior Design Organization
Department of Mechanical Engineering
Florida International University
Miami, Florida 33174

ENGINEERING ETHICS & GLOBAL LEARNING

Case Study for Class Discussion

Gifts to Foreign Officials

Facts:

Richard Roe, P.E., is president and chief executive officer of an engineering firm which has done overseas assignments in various parts of the world. The firm is negotiating for a contract in a foreign country in which it has not worked previously. Roe is advised by a high-ranking government official of that country that it is established practice for those awarded contracts to make personal gifts to the governmental officials who are authorized to award the contracts, and that such practice is legal in that country. Roe is further advised that while the condition is not to be included in the contract, his failure to make the gifts will result in no further work being awarded to the firm and to expect poor cooperation in performing the first contract. He is further told that other firms have adhered to the local practice in regard to such gifts.

Question:

Would it be ethical for Roe to accept the contract and make the gifts as described?

If it is unethical, under which conditions would the case be ethical?

Consider this case under the following conditions and discuss whether your answers will be the same or you need to modify them:

1. Roe lives in the USA and is an American
2. He is a Mexican living in Mexico
3. Roe is an Arab living in Cairo, Egypt
4. He is a Japanese citizen living in Japan

Discuss the role of culture and traditions on ethics and ethical values.

Discuss ways to uphold professional ethical values in different countries and cultures to make them globally accepted and practiced.