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Philosophy 370

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USAWAY

USAWAY has chosen Clarke Engineering to design a new product for them using only parts that are made in the United States. Companies such as USAWAY have this specification in product design in order to put the “Made in the U.S.” seal on their product. The “Made in the U.S.” seal is an advertising technique used to connect with the people buying the product. Some consumers will feel a sense of satisfaction when purchasing a “Made in the U.S.” product and even choose that product over a foreign made one. Clarke Engineering has put John Budinski, a quality control engineer, in charge of product design. While putting the product together, John notes that one of the suppliers has failed to mention that one of their components has two special bolts that are only made in another country. Unfortunately for John, there is not enough time left in their contract to design a new bolt and he fears that not meeting the deadline can result in unfortunate consequences for Clarke Engineering.

John Budinski has several options to resolve this unfortunate mishap. The foreign made bolts could be used in the product. John had come to the conclusion that the chances of USAWAY discovering the problem are very slim. The bolts themselves are not visible on the surface of the product and Clarke Engineering has been contracted to do any needed repairs. While this solution ensures Clarke Engineering of meeting their deadline, John faces ethical concerns. By not informing USAWAY of the situation, John would be deceiving his client. It is John’s responsibility to withhold Clarke

Engineering's part of the contract and use only American made components in the product he is designing.

Another option John has is to confront USAWAY with the dilemma. John could explain the situation that has arisen and ask USAWAY for an extended deadline date in order to create a new bolt that meets the specifications of the contract. This option would highlight John's professionalism in such that he preformed his job by contacting his client and informing them of the current status of the project.

Fortunately for John, there is a third option. The FTC guidelines on complying with the "Made in the USA" standard apply to products which fit the "all or virtually all" standard. *"All or virtually all" means that all significant parts and processing that go into the product must be of U.S. origin. That is, the product should contain no — or negligible — foreign content.* The two bolts here are likely not to contribute to a significant part of the products overall processing, like knobs and tubing on a barbeque grill, and therefore, the "Made in the U.S." claim is justified. If John explains his situation with the supplier of the part with the bolts to USAWAY and gives a replacement option for the company to swap the bolts if necessary when they become available, John is in a win-win situation. No ethical dilemma for John, Clarke Engineering keeps up there contract, and USAWAY has a "Made in the U.S." product.

John's first option is not ethically satisfying, while the second option is not completely secure for Clarke Engineering. The option John should make is to inform USAWAY of the foreign made bolts, explain the FTC guidelines, and offer a future solution to guarantee that all components involved in the product are of U.S. origin. Only this option satisfies all three parties involved.