

Applying EGAD! Strategy to Solve Ethical Dilemmas

Ethical questions can be answered and solved by application of EGAD strategy. EGAD is an acronym, which is built from **E**thical issue - **G**eneration of alternatives – **A**nalysis – **D**ecision making (Egad! is also a mild version and old synonym of “Surprise!”).

An ethical dilemma occurs when an action results in a conflict existing between stakeholders. For example, when someone is doing something, the consequences can impact both society and his or her employer. In this case, an ethical dilemma exists: Does the person need to fix his or her action in favor of society or in the favor of his or her employer? The solution- from a simplistic approach- is taking action to resolve the issue in favor of the stakeholder in higher ethical hierarchy, which is here Society. When it's less obvious which stakeholder deserves resolution in its favour, a more logical way to identify the best course of action is applying EGAD strategy.

EGAD is a four-step procedure, which can be used to resolve the dilemma:

- **STEP 1: E - ETHICAL ISSUES**
- **STEP 2: G - GENERATION OF ALTERNATIVES**
- **STEP 3: A - ANALYSIS**
- **STEP 4: D - DECISION**

Step 1: Clearly define the dilemma and the conflicting stakeholders. For example, if one stakeholder is the safety manager at a hotel, and he feels his salary is not high enough, remaining silent could impact his and the hotel's reputation (because he couldn't possibly be doing his job very well if disgruntled). He must also consider the safety of the hotel's guests as his clients. Here he needs to list these three groups (himself, the hotel and the hotel guests) as the impacted parties.

Step 2: Generate alternatives to resolve the dilemma. By nature, ethical dilemmas don't have a simple, single solution. Therefore, the different solutions

should be listed. For example, in the case mentioned above, the safety manager's solution could involve speaking to management and asking for a salary increase; accepting the low payment, but ignoring some of his duties at work; sharing his unhappiness regarding his low salary with hotel guests; or resigning from the job.

Step 3: Analyze alternatives. At this stage, each alternative should be tested to see if it is ethical, legal, and fair or not. Each of the solutions above should be placed in an analysis matrix to examine their impact on the other stakeholders. One technique is for the safety manager to put himself in the shoes of each party: "What would be my feeling if someone did the same thing on me?" Next, each result he has identified should be examined to assign corresponding quantity scores. Quantification of these non-mathematical parameters is not easy. However, scores should be weighed based on two things: the magnitude of the impact and the extent of the impact.

For example the solution involving sharing salary issues with hotel guests may degrade the reputation of the hotel, which may not have a large impact, but would involve a large number of impressionable guests. As a result, this solution could be quantified as the option with the highest impact solution.

Step 4: Making a decision. Now, if the first two steps were completed thoroughly, this should be an easy step. In this step, he only needs to select an alternative solution resulting in the minimum impact. However, in some cases, all the available alternatives could have approximately the same impact, so making a decision may not be so easy. Nevertheless, an alternative should be selected and implemented. In these cases, it may be necessary to take a step back and revisit Steps 2 and 3 to further review the different alternatives. In the worst-case scenario, a less negative alternative must be chosen at the bare minimum.