BUSINESS

SUPPLIER SILENCE

FACILITATION GUIDE

Overview

These caselets are narrative accounts designed to stimulate dialogue about the virtues that shape professional life. They differ importantly from the ethical case studies most faculty and students encounter in professional training. Rather than presenting a moral dilemma to be resolved, each caselet illustrates the presence—or absence—of a particular virtue as it operates in everyday practice. The goal is not to reach a verdict on what a character should have done, but to explore what a virtue looks like in action—and what may be at stake when it is absent.

Caselets are organized by virtue and professional context, but many will resonate beyond their primary category. A caselet about curiosity in a business setting may illuminate curiosity in medicine or law. Instructors are encouraged to use caselets flexibly and across disciplines.

General Facilitation Tips

- **Focus on virtue, not verdict.** Keep discussion centered on how the virtue appears (or is absent) in the caselet, not on whether the character made the right call. If the conversation drifts toward "what should they have done?", redirect gently.
- **Start with observation.** Open by asking what students noticed before asking what they think. Grounding early discussion in specific moments from the caselet prevents premature judgment.
- **Use questions as starting points, not a script.** Follow student energy. If a student raises a more generative question than the ones provided, pursue it.
- **Push back on easy agreement.** If the room converges too quickly, the caselet's complexity may not have been fully engaged. Invite students to complicate their own claims and consider opposing readings.
- **Invite connection to professional life.** The richest moments often come when students link the caselet to patterns they've observed or anticipated: "I've seen something like this when . . ."
- **Let silence work.** Resist the urge to fill every pause. Students often need a moment to arrive at their most substantive responses.
- **Close with reflection.** Reserve a few minutes to ask students what will stay with them — a question, an image, an unresolved tension. A sentence or two naming what they now understand about the virtue that they didn't before is a strong closing move.

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Discussion Questions

1. How sure of an issue, like that described in the case, do you need to be before deciding to take action? At what point does choosing not to confirm something become a failure of integrity?
2. What would integrity look like for Maya personally vs. for Horizon Outfitters as a company? When, if at all, does "good business judgment" come into tension with integrity?
3. What role does intention play when acting with integrity?
4. If you were Maya, what would you do in this situation?

Facilitation of this Caselet

Start with the email Maya wishes she could unread. That phrase is the emotional entry point into the caselet and deserves attention before anything else. Ask students what it reveals about Maya's character that she cannot set the report aside, and what it would say about a person who could. The caselet is not about someone who stumbles into an ethical dilemma carelessly. It is about someone who understands exactly what the information she has received is asking of her, and who cannot pretend otherwise. That starting point matters for how the rest of the discussion unfolds.

Take each voice in the leadership meeting seriously. The COO, legal counsel, and marketing director are not villains—each of them is making a recognizable and partly defensible argument. The COO is right that the report is unconfirmed. Legal counsel is right that premature disclosure carries real risk. The marketing director is right that the timing is genuinely terrible. Ask students to take each position seriously before critiquing it. The caselet is most useful when students feel the pull of the practical arguments rather than dismissing them as obvious rationalizations.

Sit with the uncertainty at the center of the caselet. The report is careful and qualified using words and phrases like 'possible', 'likely', and 'credible indications'. There are no photographs and no definitive proof. This is not a case where Maya has caught a supplier red-handed. It is a case where she has received credible but incomplete information about something serious. Ask students how much certainty integrity requires before action becomes obligatory, and whether waiting for confirmation is a form of due diligence or a form of avoidance.

Close with the personal versus institutional integrity question. The second discussion question distinguishes between what integrity looks like for Maya personally and for Horizon Outfitters as a company. This is a productive closing move because it asks students to think about whether integrity operates the same way for individuals and institutions, and what Maya's obligations are when those two things point in different directions.

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