

Ethics in Media

Ethical decisions are rarely easy. Media professionals should make every effort to abide by the truth, to treat other people equitably, to keep promises, to cause as little overall harm as possible, and to do what they truly feel is right. Here are a few examples of situations that involve ethical decision making.

1. You are the Program Director at a rap/hip-hop station in Chicago. Eminem has just released a new album. The lyrics to one popular song (getting major airplay in other parts of the country) include anti-homosexual statements. These include suggestions that AIDS is God's curse on homosexuals and that all homosexuals should be sent to Afghanistan. Later in the song, Eminem sings that he has beaten up homosexuals before and that doing so is fun. What do you?

2. You are a salesperson for radio station KICK. Last month you sold a large package of ads to the Goody Food Restaurant. This earned you the largest commission you've ever had. You want Goody Food to buy an even more lucrative package of ads, but the manager is stalling because she doesn't think the ads she bought have done much good. You hit on an idea. You could call some of your friends and have them make reservations at Goody Food, making sure to mention that they heard an ad on KICK. You could then call the manager and ask again if she wants the ads. Of course, your friends could later cancel their reservations, but not until you had the ad deal signed. Should you do this?

3. As a news reporter, you are covering the death of a famous rock star that died under mysterious circumstances. The other members of the rock group, who probably know how the rock star actually died, will not talk to reporters. The news director at your station suggests you pose as someone from the coroner's office and see if you can get rock group members to talk to you. How would you react to this suggestion?