**Ethics of Motivation Strategies**

"I n 2001, a Hooters chain in Panama City Beach, Florida, came up with the idea of having a beer-selling contest to motivate its servers to sell as much beer as possible in the month of April. The top-selling waitress from each Hooters in the area had her name entered into a drawing. The waitress whose name was drawn would win the prize. Based on what the managers at each Hooters told their staff, the competing waitresses thought they would be winning a new Toyota automobile. The competition was a success: Most of the Hoo- ters in the area seemed to have increased their sales of beer. Jodee Berry was the winning waitress. On the day she was told she was the winner, she was blindfolded and led to the restaurant parking lot. However, instead of receiving a new Toyota car, she was presented with a Star Wars toy Yoda doll. Inside the restau- rant, the manager and other staff were laughing. Ms. Berry didn’t think it was so funny. She worked hard to win this contest. Her motivation level was high because of the thought of winning a Toyota, not a toy Yoda. So, she sued Gulf Coast Wings, Inc., owners of the restaurant, alleging breach of contract and fraudulent misrepresentation. She was seeking as compensation the cost of a new Toyota car. The case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount. As you read in this chapter, organizations come up with crea- tive ways to try to motivate employees to work harder, work safer, or to cut costs. But the question is: Should there be any limits on the type of motivator that is used? Is it okay to use any motiva- tional strategy just as long as it has the desired results? Another example of creative motivation is the one employed by a manager of one corporation who bought 10 golden bonsai trees and held a “Save a Tree” competition. Each month, the 10 lowest users of paper would receive one of the bonsai trees, which could be displayed for the coming month. It did the trick! Employees were motivated to save paper. Apparently, the bonsai tree had a certain appeal to these employees. Everyone wanted one! In another company, the motivator for working harder was a nice steak dinner at a nice restaurant; the losers of the competition also got to go to the restaurant, but they had to sit at a lousy table and eat beans. After dinner, the winners got to rip the shirts off the back of the losers! This type of motivator, like the Hooters and “Save a Tree” competitions, was also successful. It did what it set out to do: increase sales for the department. 354 CHAPTER A professor at a small college motivates his students by promising $100 to the student who makes the highest test grade. If more than one student has the same grade, they split the $100 between them. There are three tests per semes- ter. So, theoretically, a student could end the semester $300 richer! Another professor at a different college offers gift cards to various stores and restaurants to the top classroom perfor- mers. The thinking behind these motivators is that it will encourage students to study harder. Proponents of such motivation techniques say that com- petition increases motivation, which leads to desired results. Critics say that these types of competition are unethical because they pit employee against employee, encourage cheating or unsafe shortcuts, and can often lead to bullying and the use of fear tactics by some employees against others as a form of intimidating them into losing the competition. They also say that it rewards people for using bad behavior in order to achieve a goal set by the company. It doesn’t motivate them to do better at their job. And finally, it treats people differently and unfairly. What Do You Think? n Although there were some"