



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Specifying Equipment of Company Owned by Engineer (adapted from NSPE Case No. 98-11)

Year

1999

Description

Lisa is asked to write specifications for a water expansion system. While she is competent to do so, Lisa also owns a company that manufactures and sells such systems. Does this constitute a conflict of interest? If so, how should it be handled?

Body

Lisa is an engineer who is competent to prepare specifications for a water expansion system. Lisa is also the CEO of a company that manufactures and sells water expansion systems. Firm Y asks Lisa to prepare specifications for a water expansion system.

How should Lisa respond to this request? Should she agree to propose the specifications?

If so, should Lisa tell Firm Y about her other professional job? What, if any, information should she give Firm Y?

Lisa decides to prepare the specifications after informing Firm Y that she does, in fact, hold a high position in a water expansion company. As part of her report, she

provided the firm with four other manufacturers that prepare water expansion systems for bidding purposes, and she did not include her company as one of the four specified manufacturers.

Now Firm Y wants to meet with Lisa. They ask her for a bid from her company for the water expansion system.

Should Lisa comply with their request? Why or why not? How should she respond?

[NSPE Code of Ethics](#) An earlier version may have been used in this case.

Notes

See the original NSPE case at: [Specifying Equipment of Company Owned By Engineer - Case No. 98-11](#).

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Open-ended scenario

Parent Collection

Professional Ethics in Engineering Practice: Discussion Cases Based on NSPE BER Cases

Topics

Conflict of Interest

Discipline(s)

Engineering

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