

Dilemma Discussion Note

Here are some useful talking points for you to discuss with your people.

Questions to ask:

1. Are there any clear rules in our company that Clyde would need to follow if he worked for us?
2. How would his actions cause others to question his motives or affect his reputation?
3. Who has a right to know the details, and has he let them know?
4. Why do his company gifting rules matter?
5. Can he get proper permission to accept the gift?

Pitfalls to consider:

1. Clyde needs to be careful about the message he might send to the customer, his coworkers, his boss, and others.
2. He might feel like he can't ask anyone in the company for advice without hurting his boss' reputation. He needs to figure out who he can talk to so he get better understand his situation.
3. Turning down the gift might seem like the right thing for Clyde to do, but whatever he does, he needs to make sure he does it in a way that doesn't hurt the customer relationship or needlessly damage his boss' reputation.

The Ending, in Clyde's own words:

"I did keep the flatware set in order to avoid any potential negative repercussions with the vendor or with my boss. I never thanked the vendor or spoke with anybody at work about it, hoping that the vendor may assume I never received it.

"The interesting thing about that decision was that my wife and I never opened up the baby flatware set to use it because we felt so bad every time we saw it. Even though we hadn't asked for the set or even wanted to receive it, the guilt of not sending it back to the vendor stayed with me until we gave it away. We ended up giving that set to a friend who we hoped would get more use of it than we were going to get.

"Ever since deciding to make the fewest ripples by not sending the flatware set back I have wished I would have sent the flatware set back to the vendor. However, that experience has helped guide my actions in the years since."

