

Sam Tibi Personal Case Study

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Learning Outcomes

After studying this case, learners should be able to:

- Find important ethical issues in leadership roles and how they affect people and organizations.
- Think about the different interests of stakeholders in decision-making situations.
- Suggest ethical solutions for dealing with leadership problems.
- Think about how personal values and company culture affect decision-making.

This case helps start discussions about leadership ethics, balancing different responsibilities, and keeping integrity in difficult situations.

Introduction

This case study highlights ethical challenges and dilemmas faced by Sam Tibi in two different leadership roles: first as a Floor Supervisor at Movenpick Hotel in Beirut and later in the banking sector as Head of Business Analysis at First National Bank. Both positions presented conflicts of interest, competing responsibilities, and the need to balance ethical decision-making with organizational demands.

Overview

Scenario 1: Hospitality Sector

Sam Tibi's role as Floor Supervisor at Movenpick Hotel in Beirut involved handling many responsibilities under difficult working conditions. During high season, each room attendant was assigned more than 30 rooms to clean within an eight-hour shift. However, each room needed at least 30 minutes for proper cleaning, which made this task impossible to complete without compromises. Room attendants often worked longer hours, sometimes past

eight hours, just to finish their rooms. However, they received no extra pay for this additional time. They were also forced to lower the cleaning standards to meet the deadlines, as guests needed their rooms ready. During the low season, the management would lay off staff to cut costs, leaving the remaining attendants with a heavy workload.

As their supervisor, Sam had to check and approve each room, ensuring that rooms were marked clean on the computer system so they could be resold. But with high pressure from management and guests, Sam often had to compromise on the standards himself. The room attendants, frustrated by this unfair workload and lack of extra pay, complained daily to Sam. Many were upset and argued regularly, but, with limited job options in Lebanon, they had to tolerate these difficult conditions. Management, meanwhile, showed no willingness to listen or improve the work environment, putting Sam in a challenging position between guests, attendants, and management.

These issues align with the findings of Khairy and Elzek et al. (2023), who highlighted that tourism seasonality has a strong impact on employees' intention to leave. The shifts between high and low seasons increase job insecurity and dissatisfaction, as reflected in Sam's experience. Additionally, Johnson (2020) emphasizes that organizations must develop effective corporate strategies and ensure their proper implementation to maintain ethical and operational standards. At Movenpick Hotel, the lack of proactive management undermined these goals, leaving employees unsupported and compromising the organization's integrity.

Scenario 2: Banking Sector

In 2005, after seeing no way to change these working conditions, Sam decided to leave the hospitality sector and move to the banking industry. He joined First National Bank as a Product Development Officer in the Marketing Department, where his role was to develop new

products to attract more clients. His commitment and skills quickly earned him a promotion to Head of Business Analysis in the Branch Management Department. Here, his main responsibility was to grow deposits and lending, which required careful study of banking trends and client needs.

But Sam soon grew concerned about the bank's involvement in lending to the Lebanese government. First National Bank, like many other banks, provided large loans to the government, especially in U.S. dollars, to help keep the Lebanese pound fixed against the dollar. This strategy relied on attracting foreign deposits, which paid high interest rates, to cover the country's trade deficit. Sam noticed that this heavy dependence on foreign currency and high interest was unsustainable and could endanger depositors' funds if the government could not pay back the loans.

Sam shared his concerns with his colleagues and even spoke to top management, warning them of a possible future financial collapse if the bank kept following this strategy. Unfortunately, his warnings were ignored. In 2009, feeling that he could not remain part of a system he saw as risky, Sam decided to leave the bank. He later saw his predictions come true when, in 2019, Lebanon's financial system started to collapse, and the economy continues to struggle today, as the currency keeps losing value and the financial crisis deepens.

Johnson (2020) says that mission and vision statements should guide how organizations act by showing their values and ethics. If these statements are done well, they help build a strong base for ethical actions. First National Bank's mission and vision focus on giving excellent service and caring for stakeholders, which matches Johnson's idea that ethical organizations should always follow their values. When Sam Tibi worked at First National Bank, he warned about Lebanon's financial problems and the risks of lending in foreign currency to the

government. His warnings showed that the bank's actions were not matching its values. Johnson (2020) explains that when a company's values and actions do not match, it loses trust from the public. First National Banks's leadership followed the idea that leaders must "walk the talk" (p. 279), meaning they must show their values through their actions. Tibi put the bank's long-term integrity first, even when short-term profits seemed tempting. However, the bank ignored his advice, which shows how weak leadership can hurt an organization's values and goals.

Scenario 3: Business Education

After banking, Sam decided to enter the field of business education, where he could use his knowledge and experience to help students understand the world of business, accounting and economics. In 2009, he left Lebanon to work abroad in education. Over the past 15 years, Sam built a solid reputation as a dedicated educator, achieving a 100% pass rate for all his students. His students excelled in regular assessments and standard exams like AP Microeconomics and AP Macroeconomics, a result of his structured lessons and commitment to their success. Through these years, Sam also built strong relationships with all stakeholders in each institution he served, whether administrators, parents, or students, creating a positive learning environment that supported students' growth and achievements.

Case Problems

Ethical Issues in the Hospitality Sector

What could Sam have done differently to support the attendants while meeting the demands of management and guests?

How should management balance cost-cutting with fair treatment of employees?

Ethical Issues in the Banking Sector

Should Sam have done more to raise awareness about unsustainable banking practices?

What responsibility does an employee have in dealing with systemic risks in an organization?

General Ethical Reflection

How do personal values affect decision-making when ethical compromises are needed?

How can individuals stay ethical as leaders despite pressures from the system?

Reference

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- Khairy, H., Elzek, Y., Saeed, A., & Hashad, M. (2023). The impact of tourism seasonality on employees' entrepreneurship intention and intention to leave in Egyptian tourism and hospitality industry: The moderating role of internal corporate social responsibility. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure.*, 12(1), 171-189. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_12_12_1_171-189.pdf

Appendix A: First National Bank Mission and Vision Statements

Mission

We will strive to provide efficient and exceptional service to customers by exercising a prudent risk culture to ensure that our corporate objectives are met, in the interests of our customers, shareholders and staff.

Vision

We are a financial institution with outstanding values and integrity. Our objective is to provide and satisfy the needs of our local and regional markets, with the intention of becoming a leading international financial institution by positively contributing to the development of the region's economy.