

PR Ethics Scenario- Option 3

PRSA elements: Honesty & Independence

Ian Cohen

As the public relations director for Major League Baseball, this position requires me to protect our corporate image and be viewed positively by the public eye. Earlier today, a malfunction occurred at a New York Mets training facility, which led to untreated wastewater leaking into a nearby river. The incident has already spread across social media platforms through posts from residents and environmental organizations. Although I understand the overall concern about negative press and media, ignoring this situation would directly contradict two key principals of the Public Relations Society of America's Code of Ethics: honesty and independence.

The honesty element of PRSA requires that PR professionals "must adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth." Staying silent on this incident would create an impression that the MLB is hiding something, even though that's not necessarily true. The current media environment produces more destructive outcomes than beneficial effects when a situation like this occurs. If we avoid informing the public, false narratives can be made and harm our public image. I believe remaining silent would only worsen the situation and increase public distrust. A lack of transparency can cause longer-term damage to this organization's reputation that extends far beyond the environmental damage that has occurred.

The independence element states that PR professionals "must provide objective counsel to those they represent and be accountable for their actions." It is my professional obligation to

provide this information to the public, as not explaining the situation could be seen as unethical. I would explain to my boss that the short-term avoidance of media attention through ignoring will result in worse consequences when reporters uncover what has occurred. Being transparent and providing a statement to the public are the first steps in fixing current problems and preventing further issues.

MLB as an organization can gain control of this situation by upholding honesty and independence principles, which will allow us to create our own narrative. In my professional opinion, I believe the league should organize a media conference that brings together MLB operations representatives and environmental organization representatives to demonstrate this form of open communication. This event would show the league's efforts in taking responsibility, as well as addressing the community directly. If my boss still chooses the route of minimizing public attention to the incident, I will prepare a statement that describes the incident and outlines MLB's solution plan and reaffirms the league's dedication to the community. I would handle all media contact through professional communication by delivering the statement and arranging anything that must be done. While this approach avoids unnecessary public attention, it still ensures open communication and transparency. (437 words)

###