Virtues & Character

Question 1

Consider whether the action fits your self-image or the story you would like to tell about your life. The most excellent or virtuous people are usually thought of as those consistently acting with honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, fidelity, integrity, fairness, self-control, prudence etc.

Business people often call this question the Mirror Test. If you do this action, will you be able to look at yourself in the mirror every morning?

Question 2

Ask whether the action will fit the company’s reputation or vision of what it would like to be.

An individual’s actions represent and affect not only him/her but also the firm or organization he/she works in. The image of what the company wants to be will be found in the mission and vision statement, the core values, and the ethics code, as well as in the stories that are told about the heroes and the villains in the firm’s history.

Question 3

Excellence refers to how well the activities of the organization are being done. Each activity, such as producing a product or service, marketing it to customers, financing the organization, accounting and maintaining controls, and so on can be done in the best possible way. Striving for too much perfection in any one of these areas; however, can have an effect on the ability of the firm to do the other activities and generate profits necessary to keep it in operation over the long-term. It the product or service is too perfect for the customer to afford it then the firm will fail.

Overemphasizing success, measured as profitability, can affect the excellence of the firm’s activities, and thereby cause the firm to fail.

Actions that maintain the right balance between excellence and success are therefore the right ones.

Conclusion

Actions that fit your idea of what kind of person you want to be, and with the firm’s idea of what it wants to be, are good actions.