

Case 7: In Confidence

Danilo has been unhappy in his current job. He feels that advancement opportunities are very limited and, if they exist at all, will be too far in the future. Over the past year, he has thought very hard about alternatives. Three months ago, Danilo made the decision to actively look for better opportunities, though he has kept this secret from his employer. In the meantime, he has continued to perform well in his current position.

Danilo's manager, Cindy, thinks highly of Danilo and believes he has great potential to develop as a colleague and future manager. Both to recognize Danilo's potential and to enrich his skills, Cindy signs him up for an out-of-town, weeklong seminar at substantial cost to the company.

Danilo has had several interviews with a high-performing company for a position that closely fits with his career aspirations. A recent phone discussion with this company indicated a very strong interest in hiring Danilo. While no formal offer has yet been made, based upon this conversation he is highly confident that a formal offer will be extended within the next 48 hours. However, the details of the offer are unknown.

The seminar is in two days. Travel, lodging and some meals are all part of the cost of sending Danilo to the seminar. Theoretically, another colleague could be sent in Danilo's place, and such a colleague would be available. While the cost of the seminar is non-refundable, there is still time to cancel the plane tickets and lodging arrangements. Danilo is trying to decide whether to confide in Cindy so that other arrangements can be made.

Study Questions:

1. Should Danilo tell Cindy about his other job prospects? Does the fact that he isn't sure he will be offered the new job — and that he isn't sure how Cindy would respond to the news — ethically relevant here?
2. If Danilo does tell Cindy about his new job prospects, how should Cindy respond?
3. Is it ethical for employers to treat their employees differently because they know they are looking for other jobs? Is it ethical for employees to look for other jobs without informing their current employers? How do these two questions relate to one another?

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