Although a Business Practice May Be Legal, Does it Matter That it Isn’t Ethical?

Student Sample of an “A” Paper

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**Introduction**

In business environments, there is much discussion that surrounds ethics and the morals and values of companies. Many times the public has been victimized by practices that are not technically considered illegal, but foster negative effects and outcomes on the parties of the receiving end. There are several recent examples of this type of travesty in the United States such as the National Security Agency’s spying scandal that was exposed by a former NSA contractor, Edward Snowden, in 2013. In reading different articles that provide enlightenment on this topic, readers tap into a world of ethical questioning where a government agency involved in “collecting the phone records of millions of U.S. citizens and mining the data from servers of nine major Internet companies to extract audio, photos, and email,” is exposed (Boerma, 2013). In trying to digest the information concerning this scandal, it may cause U.S. citizens to question, though business or government security practices may be legal, does it matter that it is unethical?

**Findings**

In the wake of 9/11 and an increase that this country has seen in terrorist attacks, the government amped up its effort in security and began to implement different programs and projects designed to protect the American people. Days after the Boston Massacre in 2013, a secret order was issued by the Foreign Intelligence Court forcing companies such as Verizon to turn over all of its call records, for a three month period, consisting of data that made the lives of almost 100 million wireless customers transparent (Black, 2013). This program is called Prism. The program Prism is part of an untargeted order giving the NSA permission to “snoop” on calls and the privacy of the unknowing public without having to suspect anyone of wrongdoing (Black, 2013). In simple terms, the NSA has been able to monitor whoever, whatever, whenever for whichever reason they deem appropriate. This program eventually grew to include data extracted from the servers of nine Internet companies such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft, and Apple (Black, 2013). Justification for being able to log into the privacy of the U.S. population included Barack Obama describing the program as “vital to keeping Americans safe,” and having to make choices between “balancing the privacy and security to protect the nation against terror” (Black, 2013). Were the major efforts taken to protect the United States from terror worth the ethical trade off of U.S. citizens’ freedom being attacked? One NSA employee did not believe so.

Edward Snowden was a disgruntled contractor who witnessed, first-hand, the government using its power to abuse the freedom of its citizens. Prism allowed government officials to “legally” monitor the lives of everyday people without their knowledge. Reaching his breaking point for what he considered to be a violation against the people of this country, Snowden leaked top-secret documents about these actions to the public in an effort to provide awareness to a population believed to have freedom and rights. Snowden highlighted the fact that the NSA invested in the idea that if different interactions of citizens were heavily monitored, it could stop terrorism that has rocked the nation; however, what its investments really succeeded in doing is violating the very rights of the people it has been put in place to protect.

**Conclusion**

* Although the government and its businesses may engage in certain legal practices that they believe are beneficial to the customer or general population, these practices can do major damage over time to the people being serviced.
* In order to protect U.S. citizens from terror, the government effectively implemented a new terror of their own. These practices are legal, but it matters that they are unethical.

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