

In the “Who’s the Boss?” article, the CEO of Whole Foods Market goes against the ethical policies of being transparent, trustworthy, and discrete in personal opinion. This case describes the CEO of Whole Foods Market, Mr. Mackey, posting on Yahoo about his pessimistic thoughts on Wild Oats Market, a company that was possibly merging with Whole Foods. The tricky thing is Mr. Mackey created an account under the name “Rahodeb” where he felt he could speak about his thoughts and catch the attention of his customers and stakeholders. Mr. Mackey definitely took the wrong approach when it came to trying to seek approval from federal agencies and the public. Anyone who read or interacted with these messages from his so-called “Rahodeb” page did not deserve to be deceived in the news they were receiving from what they thought was someone who was genuinely sharing their opinion. Instead, they received information from a man who enjoyed “playing ‘devil’s advocate’ for the sheer fun of arguing.”

What is so interesting about this case is the thought of all the possible time and energy he must have put into this page that ultimately praised his own company but backlashed at the things he did not like as a CEO. I really wonder what his mindset was when creating this page, whether it was to create conversation, allow it to be an open spot for him to preach his thoughts without any retribution or identity, or for his personal entertainment of wanting to stir the pot for the company name. But, at the end of the day, the creation of this page and his comments led them to lose the merger with Wild Oats Markey, losing the company \$565 million and the opportunity to expand in popularity.

As mentioned before, one of the ethical issues that Mr. Mackey went against was transparency for both the company and the followers of the Rahodeb account. In a previous chapter, we read about a case that spoke about blogging etiquette, and transparency was one

main one. Without transparency in a social account like this, there is no way for you to allow yourself to be true to who you are or what your page represents. Mr. Mackey lied about his identity on social media. He used this page as a means of dishonest commenting rather than using it as a way to stay positive and interact with other people who hold similar beliefs. He needed to be more honest regarding his job as CEO of Whole Foods Market. All along, he had this page that ultimately brought attention to the company, whether positive or negative, without, I assume, none of his coworkers knowing what was happening. He put himself in a position that ultimately made him look like a fraud or as if he did not care for the means of the company, even if his initial intentions of creating this page were positive.

Because of the lack of transparency to followers and the outside world, he was faced with jeopardizing another ethical issue, trust. The number one thing when it comes to the success of any company or social media page is trust, whether it be trust between workers and executives, followers and content creators, etc. Being untrustworthy in any situation puts you and your image in a bad light. In this case, Mr. Mackey put the whole Whole Foods Market Corporation and the Rahodeb page in a position where no one believes what you say anymore. People begin to feel deceived because they were lied to by the head of the Rahodeb account and by the head of this enormous market company. He also created unfairness in his followers who were reading and viewing all his comments and opinions, people who probably thought whoever was posting was genuine. The fact that he so openly admitted that he enjoys stirring the pot and playing devil's advocate when sharing his beliefs on the Rahodeb page shows his intentions were never genuine or trustworthy, to begin with.

Lastly, he went against being discrete in his personal opinion. Sometimes, in media, it is best to keep to oneself, especially when it comes to holding such a high position for such a big

company, CEO for Whole Foods perhaps. Keeping to oneself about some issues just keeps a company away from drama or unwanted consequences. In the case of Mr. Mackey, just keeping to himself and not posting on pages at all would not have resulted in his losing the opportunity to merge with another big company and bring money into the Whole Foods corporation. As mentioned before, Mr. Mackey spoke about how some posts represented his beliefs, but what surprised me was the fact that he said sometimes the views expressed stuff he did not believe in, and still, he would post for entertainment. How could that put your company and your reputation in any good light? How could a person who holds such a high position believe it is okay to do this? Or think he would never get caught?

At the end of the day, Mr. Mackey must have realized what he did wrong as he and the company faced the consequences of his actions. After coming out to speak mal of the Federal Trade Commission, he apologized to stakeholders and the public saying that he “made an error in judgment by participating on online message boards” and even went on to ask for forgiveness. This ultimately put him in a really bad position for his personal reputation, as he will no longer be seen as honest, trustworthy, and not at all discrete about his thoughts and actions.

What makes this case so interesting is that fact that everything Mr. Mackey did went completely against the mission-driven goal of the company to be “Dedicating itself to stringent in quality standard...entwining the food chain, human beings, and Mother Earth.” Everything they state on their website was so positive and morally correct, but everything going on behind the scenes with their CEO is ethically incorrect and shines a negative light on the company’s work. Unfortunately, Whole Foods Market's CEO goes against the ethical policies of being transparent, trustworthy, and discrete in personal opinion, and that is all it takes for the company and Mr. Mackey (CEO) to face crucial consequences for going against what is ethically correct.