1. Introduction

To write the essay you will need to view Joseph L. Badaracco’s Defining Moments: A Framework for Moral Decisions. The directions for accessing this video are below. You can also read a transcript of the video, which I have added to the appropriate module.

2. Background to Case:

First read the following pages on ethanol pros and cons:

1. Energy Information Administration: https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/biofuels/ethanol-and-the-
   environment.php
3. Yale Environment 360: https://e360.yale.edu/features/the_case_against_ethanol_bad_for_environment

Next, read the following fact pattern and use it to guide your response.

3. Prompt:

You are the Chief Design Engineer for Homestar Rider Auto Company, an automobile manufacturer based out of Iowa City, Iowa. Homestar Rider is a publicly traded company, and is one of the five biggest auto manufacturers in the world.

Your newest vehicle, the Trogdor B35, will be released to the market in 2020. This roadster, with its awesome styling and reasonable price point, is already projected to be the top selling vehicle in the United States in 2020. The question is, what kind of fuel should it burn?

Your engineering group tells you that the Trogdor B35 can be built to run upon pure gasoline only (no ethanol), a 15% ethanol blend, or an 85% ethanol blend. Because the Trogdor B35 is projected to be such a high-selling automobile, it is expected to have a substantial impact on sales of ethanol-blend fuel, no matter which option you choose. (For the purposes of this paper, assume that the Trogdor B35 can run only on the fuel type you choose – it is not a “flex fuel” vehicle like many on the road today).

Various industry groups and lobbyists would like to influence your choice. The Corn Bureau, a powerful statewide political group, would like you to make the Trogdor B35 run on the 85% ethanol blend, as they believe it will help Iowa farmers by providing higher demand for corn crops. Save Our Streams, an Iowa nonprofit, would rather see you produce an electric car. But since you can’t do that. SOS wants you to make the Trogdor B35 run only on pure gasoline. They believe corn overproduction endangers the environment, contributing to soil runoff and poor water quality for Iowans.

Your marketing team did exhaustive research on the topic, and pulled together three papers which they thought represented a good spectrum of views on the topic (see above). Use these papers (and any legitimate outside sources* you wish) to make your decision.

Your decision will be released in the form of an essay, set forth in greater detail below, explaining which fuel source the Trogdor B35 will use, and your reasoning behind making that choice.

* Examples of legitimate sources: Newspapers with print circulation (e.g., Des Moines Register, Wall Street Journal), published scholarly articles (try Google Scholar), books, state or federal government websites or publications.

Examples of NOT legitimate sources: web-only news sources (e.g., Breitbart, Huffington Post), Wikipedia, Facebook posts, Twitter, web pages published by individuals or advocacy groups.
Your assignment is to write a persuasive essay to the CEO of Homestar Rider stating 1) whether the Trogdoor B35 should be built to run on pure gasoline, a 15% ethanol blend, or an 85% ethanol blend, 2) your reasoning for doing so, and 3) explaining the ethical issues the company should consider in making this decision.

4. Structure and Format:

Use the following steps to assist you in structuring your answer (although you should not write the essay as just answers to the series of questions below). Your essay should have a clearly articulated thesis and effective claim statements for paragraph topic sentences in which you develop your position.

- What is the ethical issue or problem?
- What are the critical facts related to your decision?
- What are possible solutions/actions/responses?
- Who will be affected by your decision? (Who are the stakeholders?)
- What is the effect of the likely solutions/actions/responses on the stakeholders?
- What is your decision? How do you propose to justify your decision based on Badaracco's four Frameworks for a Decision (i.e., best net/net, individual rights, messages sent about character, and what will work in the world as it is) and your own primary ethical values?
- What makes your decision "ethical"?

Your essay should be written in paragraph form, with indented paragraphs and no headings or bulleted points. Essays should be between 3 – 4 double-spaced pages (one-inch margins, page numbers and 12-point font). Essays longer than 4.5 pages will not be eligible for the competition.

You may write in first-person or third-person prose. There is no one required citation style, but your style should be professional and consistent. MLA or APA styles are recommended. Please cite all outside sources used, including a "works cited" page if necessary. You do not need to cite Badaracco's speech or course slides (unless you quote verbatim, in which case you must cite appropriately).

All Tippie undergraduates are eligible for the contest. Essays should be submitted to the appropriate dropbox folder on ICON. Your essay will be evaluated for originality/plagiarism through turitin.com. You must cite all sources that you use, particularly where you quote text directly.

Thanks to the generosity of Mary and Dempsey Prappas, monetary awards will be given to the students whose essays are considered by the essay contest external review judges to be top-ranked. [The amounts are to be determined by UPO and the Frank Center, and are to be credited toward the winners’ U-bills assuming they are continuing students at the UI.]