



Two Minute Challenge: Game Reviews

You are an intern for an independent video game development company. Your supervisor asks you to write and post under your own name rave reviews for games that are made by your company, regardless of what you think about the games. These reviews will be visible on various websites to people who are considering purchasing the games. When you object to using your own name, your boss tells you just to make up a new screen name and use that. What should you do?

Based on a dilemma submitted by a former MBA student

Issues

Deception:
misleading people
reading the views

Violating your own
standards of conduct

Advancement in
company

Company Reputation

Your reputation in
cyberspace

Applicable personnel
rules

Applicable/
developing legal/
standards

Rules and Regulations

Review website ground rules for
posting / disclosing identity and
conflicts of interest

Review regulations on reviews/
testing from the publishers of the
reviews

Company code of conduct

Federal rules and regulations, e.g.,
FTC

Questions

Will readers of the website assume that
this kind of thing is going on and
discount reviews?

How will this look if it a story on this
appears in the Wall St. Journal?

If this review inflation is discovered,
how will it affect the company's
reputation? Your reputation?

What will be the consequences for you
if you say "I do not want to do it"?

Is the situation different because you
are an intern, rather than a full-time
employee?

What do you think of my boss, who
has asked me to lie using my name, or
"just" to use another name?





Resources

Your boss
Another company employee
Company code of conduct

Options

Ask your boss if there is anything else you can do instead of this project; suggest you might be better at other tasks

Trusted Friends/Family
People who do the same job at another company
The company helpline
A mentor
Fellow interns

Post positive reviews of company games
Post balanced reviews
Don't post about games you cannot say something positive about
Try to persuade boss that sincere reviews are more persuasive

Websites on what to do when you are being asked to do something unethical at work

Show your boss the recent FTC action against company bloggers misrepresenting themselves

Takeaway Lessons:

1.) Deception. Do you intend for another person to be deceived? Is another person deceived? If the answers to those two questions are “yes,” the chances are high that what you’re doing is deceptive—a lie.

2.) Your reputation. Your boss has asked you to use your own name for posting reviews. Digital footprints last a long time—these reviews will be archived and available to search engines for a long time. How do you feel about having your name associated forever with things you do not think are true? Does that matter to you?

3.) Application of regulatory standards. <https://www.seyfarth.com/news-insights/ftc-takes-action-against-employee-bloggers.html>

