Ethical Implications of Overstating Typical Consumer’s Product Usage Rate

Bruce A. Huhmann, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Marketing
Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Chair
NMSU Department of Marketing

Background Material:


Discussion Questions:

According to Rebecca Hamilton and her colleagues, marketers might be tempted to emphasize that a product or service is typically used frequently, to increase consumer usage or make the product appear indispensable. However, overstating normal product usage can backfire, which would decrease interest in and purchase of the product. Which of the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Principles would overstating typical consumer product usage violate?

If you were a brand manager and found out that others in your organization were overstating the product usage frequency of typical consumers in marketing communications (e.g., advertising, website, or social media), what action would you take? Why?