The New York Times

LETTER

Personal Values vs. Corporate Interests

A reader discusses the conflicts that can arise when an action benefits a company's bottom line but is not in society's interest.

Dec. 20, 2018

To the Editor:

Re "Turning Tyranny Into a Client" (front page, Dec. 16):

One may be dismayed but should not be surprised to learn the extent of McKinsey & Company's work for authoritarian governments around the world. The pressures of corporate leadership often narrow managers' perspectives and ask them to set aside personal values in favor of corporate interests. As private individuals, few would take the same misleading or deceptive actions that some are willing to undertake to ensure profits and protect bonuses.

The role of corporations in our society is a divisive question that dictates approaches to gun violence, poverty, health insurance, environmental protection, campaign finance, worker rights and economic justice, and on and on. The question is: How can we respect the precepts of private enterprise for its inarguable benefits without subordinating our pressing social and human needs?

John Aram
Brookline, Mass.
The writer is a retired professor of management policy at Case Western Reserve University.

A version of this article appears in print on Dec. 21, 2018, Section A, Page 26 of the New York edition with the headline: Personal vs. Corporate