a life-saving drug. It improves the quality of patients' lives, but it doesn't extend them.

Dr. Lange, meanwhile, is torn. His company is not a charity, and because CV Therapeutics is small, it can't afford to market ranolazine in countries where few people have enough money to buy it or to set up the distribution systems necessary to give it away. "We're not Merck," he says. "But we're concerned."

Discussion Questions

1. What explains the high price of prescription medicines in the United States? What if anything should be done about it? Do you believe that in the United States drug prices reflect the operation of a fair and competitive market?
2. Given the nature of their product, do pharmaceutical companies have ethical responsibilities that other corporations don't have? In your view, are the large U.S. drug companies good corporate citizens?
3. Are the large drug companies guilty of price gouging or of charging an unfair or exploitative price for their products? In general, what factors should determine the price of drugs? Should Americans be permitted to import drugs from Canada or other countries?
4. Assess the motivations of drug companies that do their testing overseas. Do you think test subjects are being exploited or taken advantage of? Under what circumstances, if any, are companies morally justified in testing overseas?
5. Do drug companies have an obligation to make new drugs available to patients who were involved in their development, either here or overseas? Does the size of the company make a difference? What would you do if you were Dr. Lange? What obligations, ideals, and consequences should he take into account?
6. Is it ethical for companies to decline to sell a useful drug like ranolazine in a poor country because they can make more money marketing it elsewhere?
7. When it comes to life-saving drugs, do pharmaceutical companies have a moral obligation to make them available in poor countries at little or no cost? Explain why or why not. What about effective but non-life-saving drugs like ranolazine?

CASE 6.5

Closing the Deal

Now that she had to, Jean McGuire wasn't sure she could. Not that she didn't understand what to do. Wright Boazman, sales director for Sunrise Land Developers, had made the step clear enough when he described a variety of effective "deal-closing techniques."

As Wright explained it, very often people actually want to buy a lot but suffer at the last minute from self-doubt and uncertainty. The inexperienced salesperson can misinterpret this hesitation as a lack of interest in a property. "But," as Wright pointed out, "in most cases it's just an expression of the normal reservations we all show when the time comes to sign our names on the dotted line."

In Wright's view, the job of a land salesperson was "to help the prospect make the decision to buy." He didn't mean to suggest that salespeople should misrepresent a piece of property or in any way mislead people about what they were purchasing. "Law prohibits this," he pointed out, "and personally I find such behavior repugnant. What I'm talking about is helping them buy a lot that they genuinely want and that you're convinced will be compatible with their needs and interests." For Wright Boazman, salespeople should serve as motivators, people who can provide whatever impulse was needed for prospects to close the deal.

In Wright's experience, one of the most effective closing techniques was what he termed "the other party." It goes something like this.

Suppose someone like Jean McGuire had a hot prospect, someone who was exhibiting

real interest in a lot but who was having trouble deciding. To motivate the prospect into buying, Jean ought to tell the person that she wasn't even sure the lot was still available because a number of other salespeople were showing the same lot, and they could already have closed a deal on it. As Wright put it, "This first ploy generally has the effect of increasing the prospect's interest in the property, and more important to us, in closing the deal pronto."

Next Jean should say something like, "Why don't we go back to the office, and I'll call headquarters to find out the status of the lot?" Wright indicated that such a suggestion ordinarily "whets their appetite" even more. In addition, it turns prospects away from wondering whether they should purchase the land and toward hoping that it's still available.

When they return to the office, Jean should make a call in the presence of the prospect. The call, of course, would not be to "headquarters" but to a private office only yards from where she and the prospect sit. Wright or someone else would receive the call, and Jean should fake a conversation about the property's availability, punctuating her comments with contagious excitement about its desirability. When she hangs up, she should breathe a sigh of relief that the lot's still available—but barely. At any minute, Jean should explain anxiously, the lot could be "green-tagged," meaning that headquarters is expecting a call from another salesperson who's about to close a deal and will remove the lot from open stock. (An effective variation of this, Wright pointed out, would have Jean abruptly excuse herself on hanging up and dart over to another sales representative with whom she'd engage in a heated, although staged, debate about the availability of the property—loud enough, of course, for the prospect to hear. The intended effect, according to Wright, would be to place the prospect in a "now or never" frame of mind.)

When Jean first heard about this and other closing techniques, she felt uneasy. Even though the property was everything it was represented to be and the law allowed purchasers ten days to change their minds after closing a deal, she instinctively objected to the use of psychological manipulation. Nevertheless, Jean never expressed her reservations to anyone, primarily because she didn't want to endanger her job. She desperately needed it owing to the recent death of her husband, which had left her as the sole supporter of herself and three young children. Besides, Jean had convinced herself that she could deal with closures more respectably than Wright and other salespeople might. But the truth was that, after six months of selling land for Sunrise, Jean's sales lagged far behind those of the other sales representatives. Whether she liked it or not, Jean had to admit she was losing a considerable number of sales because she couldn't close. And she couldn't close because, in Wright Boazman's words, she lacked technique. She wasn't using the psychological closing devices that he and others had found so successful.

Now as she drove back to the office with two hot prospects in hand, she wondered what to do.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you disapprove of this sales tactic, or is it a legitimate business technique? How might it be morally defended?
2. Suppose you knew either that the prospect would eventually decide to buy the property anyway or that it would genuinely be in the prospect's interest to buy it. Would that affect your moral assessment of this closing technique? Do customers have any grounds for complaining about this closing technique if the law allows them ten days to change their minds?
3. What ideals, obligations, and effects must Jean consider? What interests and rights of the customer are at stake?
4. What weight should Jean give to self-interest in her deliberations? What do you think she should do? What would you do?
5. What rule, if any, would a rule utilitarian encourage real-estate agents in this situation to follow? What should the realtors' professional code of ethics say about closing techniques?