here is no marginal benefit from doing so. Considerations of kindness
spathy, for example, are irrelevant. A manager's obligation is to his firm,
employees; and as we have already seen, he has no real choice in the
This firm is to survive. But it is clear that in following this reasoning we
ck at once with a contradiction which can be expressed by asking the
n, What is the manager's duty to himself? If the discharge of his corpo-
rsonalities requires him to run counter to his desired moral character
to violate his own basic self, must he do so? The necessity of profita-
zation provides the answer. If the firm is to survive, the manager's
on must be to it, not to himself. If follows, then, that free enterprise can
the violation of the individual's most basic duties to himself.
firm's well-being, so do its responsible employees. But regardless of their own
their duty is to act as to further the firm's interests. The employee's
his own financial risks, make more and more money, amass more and more.
It is likely that these goals will be severely limited since all the firm's
itors, having the same goals, prevent any single firm from outdist-
the others. But if the firm's policies—so those of its responsible
esses—are not fixed on the main chance, it is bound to fail. Once the firm
he competition, it must abide by the rules of that competition. And all
rules are comprehended by the single rule: Let the maxim of your action
which advances the profitability of your firm. It seems a fair argu-
se a rational being enters into—becomes an employee—of a firm
aside of course his motive for doing so) insofar as he acts as an employee.
m of his action must ignore his own moral interest and regard only his
make his firm as profitable as possible. Assuming profit itself to be desirable
is this all. Rationality demands that vendors rationalize their customers
he highest possible price) and users rationalize their suppliers (buy at the
possible cost). Rationality demands that competitors seek the same
the same resources, the same employees—seek that is, their advantage
sense of others. Given the set of demands engendered by, and insepa-
ner, the universe of economic competition, it therefore becomes a clear
ction for an employee of one firm to act upon the laws generated by
ition and will also that his suppliers, his customers, his competitors, act
benefit from, those laws as well. For he then would be willing that
what they can to negate his will. He would be willing war on himself;
we find that the responsible firm employee must regard co-workers,
, and customers only as means to his firm's advantage; and that he
is mere means to this end. We may conclude that insofar as he is
3 the obligation of his job—doing that for which he draws
sation—a corporate executive (as for example) is foreclosed from acting
his associates (superior, peers, subordinates) out of humane consider-
reciprocity from considering the interests of his suppliers and customers,
ced from benefit acts toward his competitors, or indeed toward whom he has a commercial relationship. He is also thereby fore-
rom acting in accordance with his own moral character. He may, of
perform seeing acts of beneficence or fidelity toward any of these
or toward himself, but in that case the acts would be the end of rational
concerning the death of the (a)

III

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In addition to the general moral consequences of economic competition, we can
identify specific consequences. Some of the more apparent are cataloged below.

1. When any business prize—a sale, a purchase, an order to deliver, a
contract to perform—is sought by two or more firms, the duties both of mutual
aid and of non-maleficence become contradictory. The contradiction of
the duty of mutual aid follows at once from the fact of the competition. The
impossibility of non-maleficence follows almost as immediately. For under
competition there is a winner (or winners), and there is a loser (or losers). Let us
think, for example, of two salesmen competing for a contract. The successful
salesman, if his compensation is by commission, has benefited directly. It is
possible that his life's prospects have been enhanced. If he is a good salesman,
that is, a frequent winner, they will have been. But by winning he has hurt his
competitor. The loser may suffer real psychic pain, and through loss of pros-
spective income and damaged expectations, real physical injury as well. But all
this is of no matter to the winner. For merely by entering the competition he has
willed that his competitors be injured.

2. The obligation to tell the truth is contradicted by the requirements of
commercial negotiation! We see this by noting that if there is to be negotiation,
rather than a fixed or coerced price, there must be room for negotiation—call it
a negotiating range. The range is defined by the highest price the buyer will pay
and the lowest the seller will accept. Within those limits a deal can be struck.
Now one or the other must make a statement, else the negotiation could not
begin. The statement, however, must be misleading. If the buyer reveals the
highest price he is willing to pay (the top of the range) the deal will be made at
that figure. Nor can the seller reveal the lowest price he will take. The duty of
either is to make his opposite believe that the top (bottom) of the possible range
is lower (higher) than it really is. And to mislead someone is, of course, to tell
him an untruth or, at the least, let him infer what is not the truth. Truth in
commercial negotiation is a casualty of the responsibility of the participants to
the business entity for whom they work.

3. The duty of respect for others is irrelevant in determining product
choices. At any time, a firm has a limited product transformation function. It
cannot make everything. From those things that it can produce, it will select the
ones that will maximize its profit. Considerations of social benefit or damage
have no place. But ideas of social benefit or damage derive ultimately from the
tree of respect for others. Hence respect for others has no place in the free
market.

Consider the tobacco industry. Surely this is a paradigm example. There
exists substantial respected testimony that blames smoking for significant
numbers of deaths from cancer, heart, and other diseases. Recent articles in The New
York Times report that senior U.S. officials, among them the Surgeon General,
testified before a House subcommittee that, "... Government find-
ings... blame smoking for 340,000 deaths a year and... call it the chief
preventable cause of illness and premature death in the nation". But the To-
bacco Institute fought a proposal for more specific labeling about the dangers
from smoking on cigarette packages and in advertising. The "chairman of the