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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/559/2021_2022_GMAT_E5_86_99_E4_BD_9C_c89_559305.htm The following is an excerpt from a memo written by the head of a governmental department.

“ Neither stronger ethics regulations nor stronger enforcement mechanisms are necessary to ensure ethical behavior by companies doing business with this department. We already have a code of ethics that companies doing business with this department are urged to abide by, and virtually all of these companies have agreed to follow it. We also know that the code is relevant to the current business environment because it was approved within the last year, and in direct response to specific violations committed by companies with which we were then working not in abstract anticipation of potential violations, as so many such codes are. ” Discuss how well reasoned... etc. In this argument, the head of a government department concludes that the department does not need to strengthen either its ethics regulations or its enforcement mechanisms in order to encourage ethical behavior by companies with which it does business. The first reason given is that businesses have agreed to follow the department ’ s existing code of ethics. The second reason is that the existing code is relevant to the current business environment. This argument is unacceptable for several reasons. The sole support for the claim that stronger enforcement mechanisms are unnecessary comes from the assumption that companies will simply keep their promises to follow the existing

code. But, since the department head clearly refers to rules violations by these same businesses within the past year, his faith in their word is obviously misplaced. Moreover, it is commonly understood that effective rules carry with them methods of enforcement and penalties for violations. To show that a strengthened code is unnecessary, the department head claims that the existing code of ethics is relevant. In partial clarification of the vague term “ relevant, ” we are told that the existing code was approved in direct response to violations occurring in the past year. If the full significance of being relevant is that the code responds to last year ’ s violations, then the department head must assume that those violations will be representative of all the kinds of ethics problems that concern the department. This is unlikely. In addition, thinking so produces an oddly short-sighted idea of relevance. Such a narrow conception of the relevance of an ethics code points up its weakness. The strength of an ethics code lies in its capacity to cover many different instances of the general kinds of behavior thought to be unethical to cover not only last year ’ s specific violations, but those of previous years and years to come. Yet this author explicitly rejects a comprehensive code, preferring the existing code because it is “ relevant ” and “ not in abstract anticipation of potential violations. ” In sum, this argument is naive, vague and poorly reasoned. The department head has not given careful thought to the connection between rules and their enforcement, to what makes an ethics code relevant, or to how comprehensiveness strengthens a code. In the final analysis, he adopts a backwards view that a history of violations should

determine rules of ethics, rather than the other way around. 100Test
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