Experiential Activity
Cinematic Movie Critique: How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days
INTRODUCTION

How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days is a cinematic comedy about Andie Anderson (Kate Hudson), the “how to” writer for a trendy magazine called Composure, and Benjamin Barry (Matthew McConaughey) who works at an advertising agency. This comedy takes place in New York City. It is surrounded by the plot that Andie is writing a column titled How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days about all the things girls do to drive away guys. Benjamin has an agenda of his own. He has a bet with his manager at his agency that he must make a woman (Andie) fall in love with him in 10 days. If he succeeds he will get the big diamond account he has been waiting for, if not the usual women advertisers at his agency get to keep the big account.

THE BUSINESS WORLD

The business world is portrayed at Composure Magazine and also at Benjamin’s ad agency.

At Composure the business world is seen as a relaxed, Zen place where taking your shoes off during meetings is standard. During the first staff meeting at Composure all employees are asked to take off their shoes and relax, and share their feelings with each other. I assume they think this allows creativity to thrive. Also, Andie asks her boss if she can write an article on world hunger, but her boss refuses and says she must write about what Composure’s readers expect to hear, and after she works her way up she will be able to write about whatever she wants. So at Composure, business is seen as relaxed and creative, but also a place where you must pay your due diligence to make it to the top and gain complete creative freedom.
At Benjamin’s ad agency business is portrayed in a slightly different light. The fact that Benjamin and his boss have a bet going that will decide who gets the big diamond account makes the advertising industry seem reckless. This bet situation also makes the advertising industry seem very competitive, which is fairly accurate. Advertising in my opinion is very competitive in regard to what firm gets a big companies business, but in the movie it is also seen as competitive within the agency, between employees.

Overall I would say that the business world is seen as positive in this movie. It is seen as competitive yet relaxed. The advertising industry in particular is seen as irresponsible and uncontrolled.

BUSINESS/MARKETING ETHICS DILEMMAS

Dilemma One

Andie’s boss falsely led her to believe she would get a promotion.

A. Briefly describe how the issue was portrayed.

Andie asked her boss if she could write an article unrelated to what Composure usually prints. Her boss said no, but said that if she wrote this article and impressed her enough she would be able to write about whatever she wanted. Andie’s boss was very impressed with her performance on the article “How to lose a guy in 10 days”, but when Andie asked again if she could begin to write her articles independent of her boss’s opinion, she again said no. I see this as a dilemma because it happens all too often in the business world. Managers often make promises about promotions and such to people, sometimes promising the same position to more than one person. This has actually
happened to me personally at a previous job and the issue was never resolved because I felt I couldn’t do anything in my defense.

B. How was the issue resolved, if at all?

Andie decided to leave her job and move away to another city where she was offered a similar position but with the added bonus of the freedom to write whatever she wanted.

C. How should the issue have been resolved in your opinion? What would you have done in that situation?

I think that Andie’s boss should have given her the promotion that she was promised. It is hard to hold someone to his or her word if you do not have any paper contract. In that situation I would have asked for the promotion offer in writing. If that would not be possible I would have done the same thing Andie did. I wouldn’t want to work with people that lie and deceive to get better performance out of their employees.

Dilemma Two

Benjamin’s ad agency allowed there to be a bet to earn the big diamond account.

A. Briefly describe how the issue was portrayed.

As discussed earlier, Benjamin’s role in the movie is based around his bet with his manager to make Andie fall in love with him in 10 days. If he succeeds he will get to work on the big diamond account. I don’t see this as ethical in any way. I feel that it is careless and has the potential for the agency to lose the business of the diamond account
if things go wrong. I don’t think ad agencies should place bets to see what employee gets to work on what account. I think the person with the most interest and experience, who is best fit, should work with that account.

B. How was the issue resolved, if at all?

Benjamin ended up making Andie fall in love with him, and he fell in love with her, so he should have gotten the diamond account. His boss realizes that Andie actually does love Benjamin so he says that he will get the diamond account, but the movie doesn’t go on to tell if he actually does get the account.

C. How should the issue have been resolved in your opinion? What would you have done in that situation?

In this situation I don’t think there should have been a bet in the first place. Like I stated earlier, I think whoever is best fit to work on an account should; a bet should not determine that.

Dilemma Three

Andie is asked to go into the field (real world) and find a guy to date for 10 days.

A. Briefly describe how the issue was portrayed.

In order for Andie to successfully complete her column she had to go out and find a guy to date and torture for 10 days. She finds Benjamin at a bar, goes back to his place to start to lead him on, and then leaves. The next day Benjamin realizes she forgot her purse in his apartment. Andie purposefully left Nicks tickets in her purse so he would
find them and be enticed to ask if he can attend the game with her. This is just one example of the things she had to do in order to complete her column. I don’t think this is ethical at all. In the movie Andie seems to have a slight problem with doing these things to Benjamin. You can tell that she feels slightly uncomfortable, and is publicly humiliated by her assignment. If an employee is asked to do these sorts of things, especially while not even at work, I think it is unnecessary and unethical.

B. How was the issue resolved, if at all?

The issue wasn’t really resolved. Andie completed her assignment and ended up driving Benjamin away. At the end of the movie they eventually “fall in love”.

C. How should the issue have been resolved in your opinion? What would you have done in that situation?

If I worked at a magazine and had to write a realistic article like this, I would make it up instead of going out into the real world and using my personal free time and jeopardizing my personal life for it. I would have refused to meeting a real person and going through the actual 10 days. This assignment could also be very dangerous if Andie would have gone home with a serial killer.

Other Ethical Dilemmas

Andie’s coworker poses as a couple’s therapist. Andie and Benjamin attend the therapist to try work out their issues they are having due to Andie’s craziness. Benjamin is not aware that the “therapist” is one of Andie’s coworkers and pays her $400 for their
session. Andie’s coworker keeps the money. This is obviously unethical and probably even illegal.

**WHAT I LEARNED OVERALL**

It is very easy to listen to your manager/supervisor and do what they tell you. The things that people ask you to do are not always ethical or safe. It can be difficult to stand up to a superior and refuse an assignment or blow the whistle on unethical activity, but in most cases this is the best alternative to public humiliation. Obviously the situations in this movie are not realistic, but all pose a realistic threat that could be avoided or resolved.