Management and Business Ethics – Part 3

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How to Integrate Business Ethics into Corporate Objectives

To integrate business ethics into corporate objectives, management should provide employees with a clear understanding of the core principle behaviors that constitute being **productive, competitive, profitable, efficient and service/sustainability-minded**. This involves a leader's identification of key moral principles that exemplify the virtues of diligence, resourcefulness/industriousness, stewardship, prudence in handling the relationship between people and objectives and self-forgetfulness /generosity.

How does an ethical leader focus on a concern for productive outputs without deemphasizing people who cause the productivity to occur? A leader should attempt to identify valued management behaviors that exemplify a productive win-win attitude that balances concern for people with productive output. This may involve practices that listen to employee ideas and innovations while determining how they may or why they may not be implemented given present resources. This productivity mindset also involves movement away from a 'how many' to a process focus – *why we are doing the things we do?*

The next business objective that should be incorporated into an ethical code or framework is **competition**. Competitive business people relish the achievement opportunities that our free-enterprise system encourages. The pursuit of a competitive success orientation should translate into a leader's ability to operate in a resourceful and industrious manner. When leaders over-identify with being too competitive, this tends to bring out the worst in them. They may be overly ambitious and risk becoming aggressive and ruthless. For instance, badmouthing the competition can become their focus. Instead, being competitive should mean that management is aware of the company's strengths and weaknesses along with competitive threats and opportunities. A focus on opportunities through innovation is crucial if management is going to expand the market and deliver solutions to customer problems that are truly unique and desirable.

The third corporate objective to be included an ethical framework is **profitability**. It is a given; business leaders must be price and cost-conscious. They must strive to achieve responsible return on investment. In the end, a virtuous concern for profit means that managers are interested not only in making money but practicing stewardship and being thrifty as a means to maximize profits. This can mean minimizing waste, empathizing ongoing proper training of employees along with a focus on continuous improvement.

Unethical business leaders are careless with resources, may practice poor stewardship and can be greedy. They might tend to espouse a "Profit at any cost" mentality and are very opportunistic when it comes to a quest for profitability. They bad mouth the competition at every turn and can believe in spreading negative half-truths while demeaning the competition in order to acquire greater market share. They don't attempt to expand the customer market 'pie' with new innovations. Instead, they try to 'rob' their competitors of their customer base.

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About the Author

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