A COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUSINESS ETHICS

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Abstract

More than ever, a company's success in Sydney depends on the talent it's able to attract, but attracting the best talent is about more than just offering the best salary—or even the best benefits. Companies in Sydney may have a lucrative offer for a prospective candidate and a culture where they'll feel at home, but how do corporate ethics stack up against those of its competition?

This may not seem like the most important question to ask when you're trying to hire someone for a position—especially one that might not be directly affected by the actions of your corporation as a whole—but the modern workplace is changing, as are Sydney professionals' values, and if you want to keep up, you need to know everything about business ethics in Sydney.

1. Introduction

If you are running a business in Sydney or planning to buy a business for sale in Sydney, you have come to the right place. We are here with this new and the latest PDF that may be very helpful and informative for you. It deals with a complete guide to business ethics that is vital for you to understand carefully.

2. Business Ethics

This ancient Latin proverb, let the buyer beware, tells us that business ethics in Sydney has been a societal concern going back a long ways indeed. Richard T. De George, a distinguished student of the subject, dates the modern interest in business ethics to the 1960s when changing attitudes toward business began to manifest in environmental concerns, the rise in consumerism, and criticism of multinationals—and large corporations began to embrace the idea of social responsibility as a business value. Since that time business ethics has also been associated with civil rights, women's rights, the international fight against Apartheid, and many other issues on which Moral Man and Immoral Society (title of a book by Reinhold Niebuhr, the theologian) collide.

DEFINITIONS

Webster's defines ethics as "the discipline dealing with what is good and bad or right and wrong or with moral duty and obligation." (Unabridged, 1961.) The word derives from the Greek word meaning "moral," a Latin word with roots in "mores" or "customs"—in other words the values held by society. Ethicists point out that law represents an ethical minimum and that ethical behavior is something more than being within the law. Individuals—and by extension institutions—obtain their values from religion, philosophy, culture, law, and the special requirements of particular professions. An individual may hold that morality is absolute (what is wrong is always wrong) or may hold that morality is relative (the good is defined in part by other factors). In either case, all but the tiniest minorities assert that good and bad exist and can be determined. Very sophisticated theories exist which assert a hierarchy of good even when morality is held to be absolute; thus, for instance, lying is always wrong, but to lie to save the life of a fugitive Jew during the Nazi era was good: it prevented a worse evil. Given these definitions, business ethics is at minimum something more than operating a business under existing laws; the values to be applied arise from values currently held by society; but the ethics a company may define as its own may hold to an even higher standard.



ETHICS IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

The key difficulty surrounding business ethics is that ethics, by definition, goes beyond the merely legal—but how far beyond? No institutionalized rules exist defining an upper limit. Public opinion is not a very good guide. It is subject to change. Opinions even on environmental issues are subject to change depending on such pocket-book issues as the cost of gas. By its very nature, therefore, business ethics is embroiled in philosophical and operational difficulties.

The traditional concept of business based on Adam Smith's imagery of the market's "hidden hand" assumes that business entities bring about social goods by maximizing profits while operating within the law. Social goods are thus a by-product of market forces—not an objective assigned to corporate management to meet. This viewpoint has been long asserted by free market economists like Milton Friedman. Friedman, in Sydney Times Magazine, criticized those who insisted that executives and business owners had a social responsibility beyond serving the interests or their stockholders, saying that such views showed "a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy. In such an economy, there is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits, so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud."

Thus the movement to embrace social responsibility has an ambiguous character. It is not formally mandated but may be rewarded by customer and/or employee loyalty; it may also, indirectly, fend off intrusive legislation. But while it may be easy to be moral when all is going well, it gets tougher when markets shrink. An article in Nilewide Marketing ("Fat profits and slim pickings") puts the matter succinctly: "While the majority of companies claim that employees are their most important asset, they seem to act as though they can do without them, or pay the ones they have a minute proportion of the top salary."

On the face of it, the business that avoids extra costs associated with ethical behavior, and bears only costs necessary to meet the law, will be more profitable, all things equal. A more complex approach to this subject, used by many corporations, is based on the insight that high ethical values have positive consequences (in consumer acceptance, brand valuation, employee loyalty, and so on) which may be difficult to measure but are real. In line with this insight, corporations have invented the notion of a Return on Values (ROV) but find it difficult to give it a numerical expression. At the same time, there is an awareness abroad these days that corporations that set their sights no higher than bare legality may foster an environment where managers may slip across the border of legality and create disasters like the Enron bankruptcy in 2002.

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYEE VALUES

Aside from the structural problems presented by the societal roles of business in Sydney, corporate policies based on well-formulated ethical principles appear to produce real benefits. A. Millage recently reported in Internal Auditor, about the findings of the "2005 National Business Ethics Survey" (NBES), conducted by the Ethics Resource Center. "Seventy percent of employees from organizations with a weak ethical culture," wrote Millage, "reported observing at least one type of ethical wrongdoing, whereas only 34 percent of employees from organizations with a strong ethical culture said they have witnessed misconduct." Problems listed included abusive or intimidating behavior toward employees; lying to employees, customers, vendors, or the public; violations of safety regulations; misreporting of time worked; theft; sexual harassment; and other problems. Undoubtedly such unethical activities ultimately translate into lost sales, higher turnover, and lower profits. Internally, therefore, ethical behavior is efficient, all else being equal. Whether measurable or not business ethics has a positive "ROV."

BUSINESS ETHICS IN SMALL BUSINESS

Business experts in Sydney and ethicists alike point to a number of actions that owners and managers can take to help steer their company down the path of ethical business behavior. Establishing a statement of organizational values, for example, can provide employees—and the company as a whole—with a specific framework of expected behavior. Such statements offer employees, business associates, and the larger community alike a consistent portrait of the company's operating principles—why it exists, what it believes, and how it intends to act to make sure that its activities dovetail with its professed beliefs. Active reviews of strategic plans and objectives can also be undertaken to make certain that they are not in conflict with the company's basic ethical standards. In addition, business owners and managers should review standard operating procedures and performance measurements within the company to ensure that they are not structured in a way that encourages unethical behavior. As Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream founders Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield stated, "a values-led business seeks to maximize its impact by integrating socially beneficial actions into as many of its day-to-day activities as possible. In order to do that, values must lead and be right up there in a company's mission statement, strategy and operating plan."

Most importantly, business owners and managers lead by example. If a business owner treats employees, customers, and competitors in a fair and honest man-ner—and suitably penalizes those who do not perform in a similar fashion—he or she is far more likely to have an ethical work force of which he or she can be proud.

3. The 4 Pillars of Ethical Enterprises



Most people in Sydney don't start a business thinking that they're going to do the wrong thing. However, ethical challenges inevitably arise

It's even more difficult to do the right thing if your company is not anchored from the onset to a strong moral base. Entrepreneurs can lay a firm ethical foundation for their enterprise by ensuring a "yes" answer to these four crucial questions:

1. Fairness: Is your business model based on win-win outcomes?

One of the practices that led to the 2008 financial crisis was certain banks bundling risky debt, selling it to clients, then betting against those same investments. No business's success should be predicated upon its own customers' failure. A core tenet of any ethical business is that both company and consumer should come out ahead. A need to win at your customers' expense is a fundamental moral lapse.

2. Integrity: Can your business's products/services be promoted with the truth?

If a business in Sydney needs to dramatically alter pictures of its products to make them look appealing, fabricate positive customer feedback, or obscure contract terms, something is drastically wrong. Any company that has a legitimate value proposition should be able to promote its products or services by presenting them in a straightforward and honest manner. Creativity in communication is a good thing, but a need to change the truth is a clear sign of a morally-flawed foundation.

3. Decency: Can you unashamedly tell others what your business does?

When asked how he decided what ad content his agency would not use, an advertising executive famously said he would not allow the creation of anything that he wouldn't want his wife and children to see. The same standard of decorum should apply to your basic business concept. You should be able to describe with pride your business to your spouse, children, mother, father and everyone else. Embarrassment may mean a morally suspect business model.

4. Sustainability: Does your business make efficient use of resources?

The notion that wastefulness is immoral is nothing new. Consuming more than we need, or gluttony, has long been one of the seven "deadly sins." Organizations should avoid a similar lack of self-control, starting with the design of a sustainable business model. Of course, remaining viable means being profitable. However, here sustainable more specifically means practicing good stewardship of resources to support the long-term well-being of everyone, not just primary stakeholders. A business model based on reckless consumption is not only inefficient, it is also ethically irresponsible.

Fairness, integrity, decency and sustainability -- the four pillars of ethical enterprise. Of course, these four pillars of ethical enterprise won't guarantee morality, but their early adoption does provide the firm foundation upon which a morally-minded business is based.

4. Reasons Why Ethics are Important in Business

Ethics are the moral codes that govern our behaviour and demeanour. Successful and recognised businesses in Sydney are also governed by moral principles that define their work culture, customer relationship management, environment friendliness, fairness, accountability and corporate social responsibility. Business ethics help to build the image of the entity and its credibility in the market.

These principles act as their value system and guiding light in times of need when they have to deal with a dispute or crisis. Thus, they are essential for both the internal and external needs of the venture and cannot be ignored. They allow the business owners to differentiate between the right and wrong courses of action and take the righteous approach to problem-solving and decision-making. Here are ten reasons that make ethics important in business.

1. Improve Reputation

Businesses that follow the path of integrity and fairness in their endeavours are highly reputed in the industry. Reputation management has become an integral part of promotions because a single negative social media post can malign the image of the brand.

Thus, the way the company handles the situation and controls the negative publicity is defined by its ethics. When they follow high moral standards, they can win over disgruntled customers, suppliers, employees, and stakeholders with ease. It helps to build a positive image of the brand since the public trusts the brand and supports its growth.

2. Boosts Profits

Business ethics help to reduce costs and risks that enhance the bottom line. When the company follows the right path and showcases its benevolence and honesty, people start admiring the venture. Thus, there is less risk of losing sales or facing financial troubles.

In addition, if the business is not involved in any illegal activities, fraud or duping its customers, it will not get entangled in legal disputes and will not get fined by the authorities for ignoring worker's safety or for non-payment of taxes. Thus, entrepreneurs looking for a business for sale Sydney should shortlist entities that come with strong ethical values



3. Positive Work Culture

An honourable organisation is one that values its employees and their well-being. It works towards building an environment where workers do not feel stifled or restricted. It offers the flexibility of work hours, two-way communication channels, appreciation for hard work and rewards for dedicated individuals.

It provides skill-building opportunities and training to its team members to mould them into highly competent professionals who are ready for the dynamic marketplace. Also, they make them a part of the decision-making process and maintain transparency to give them authority. These businesses value the feedback and suggestions of the employees and use them to move ahead and create a congenial workplace.

4. Attracting Talented Workers

When the business becomes known for its work culture and ethics in the fraternity, it does not have to stress over finding the right team. Most qualified and experienced workers come to the business to get recruited into the company and enjoy the benefits of working in an office that encourages trust, impartiality, honesty, compassion, and support. Thus, such businesses are able to get the best people onboard and leverage their abilities to march forward. Every employee is ready to offer their 100% because they feel respected and valued in the organisation. It boosts their self-esteem and confidence, and they also help refer other talented individuals.

5. Equality At Workplace

Diversity has become a vital part of ethical organisations that believe in the equality of all individuals. Thus, they ensure that the business has representation from every section, gender and class of the society. They follow the same rules for every employee and offer fair compensation to all workers.

Ethical businesses do not discriminate based on race, age, religion, colour, gender, or sexual orientation. The emotional, mental, and physical well-being of the workers is always a priority, and there is no room for personal biases and prejudices in the workspace. Everyone gets equal opportunities to learn, grow and freely participate in the organisation.

6. Enhances Productivity

An ethically driven business helps improve the efficiency of the workers through delegation, accountability, recognition, respect, equality and empathy. All these qualities increase employee engagement and teamwork. Effective communication helps the business owner to align the individual goals of teams with the business goals. It aids in collaboration, cohesiveness and time-bound output.

These organisations follow a code of conduct that ensures that there is no wastage of resources or downtime. It keeps the workers motivated to perform to the best of their abilities and encourages each other in every way.

7. Community Bonding

Corporate social responsibility is a part of business ethics that makes organisations make decisions that have a positive impact on the population residing in their community. For example, they will get contribute towards social causes that affect the region, become sponsors for the local sports team, raise funds for charity work or offer contributions to non-profit organisations.

In addition, they are concerned about the environment, so they do not indulge in polluting the atmosphere and work on reducing carbon emissions. Their socially and environmentally conscious efforts make them a popular name in the community and increase local buyers and their trustworthiness.

8. Building Customer loyalty

Brands that are known for their moral conduct are perceived as quality service providers who are not merely concerned about profits. They are recognised as dedicated entities that are committed to their principles and do not indulge in corrupt and dishonest practices, such as using low-quality stock, unfair pricing, money laundering, bribery, using non-biodegradable packaging, etc

Thus, customers love to buy from them as they fulfil their needs and maintain high standards of integrity. The buyers are not worried about losing money or using substandard products because they trust and believe in the brand. They become emotionally connected with it and this builds an unshakable loyalty.



9. Retaining Employees

Like customers, employees also feel associated with the company when they are made to feel important in the organisation. The business is not only concerned about its success but also the progress of its employees and continuously works towards making the office space a better place to work for them.

When the employees feel the support of their organisation and get the flexibility to enjoy the perfect work-life balance, they do not feel like making a move. The company provides them with every comfort, and it builds their loyalty towards the brands. Thus, aspiring entrepreneurs who wish to purchase a business for sale in Sydney should build an ethical entity to reduce attrition.

10. Avoid Malpractices

A business that has a strong ethical foundation makes every effort to promote the best behaviour in every activity. They lay down specific guidelines on the code of conduct so that all the employees display the same values and behaviour. They train the workers in their culture and make sure that they do not falter

The senior management and the human resource team monitor the behaviour of the organisation while carrying out the daily operations, dealing with clients, communicating with suppliers, meeting investors, making payments, buying assets etc. Thus, there is zero-tolerance policy for disreputable and immoral behaviour, which keeps them safeguarded from malpractices.

Whether you are planning to purchase a business or already have an establishment, it is imperative to follow business ethics. These principles are vital for creating a successful model which is highly regarded by everyone.

5. Ways Companies Can Excel Ethically At Every Level

The more ethically a company operates, the more likely it is to gain a great reputation, happier employees and a large following of loyal clients and customers. However, while most companies strive to build a culture of trust and transparency, it can be difficult to ensure people demonstrate ethical behavior at every level of a business, internally and externally.

Regardless of role, for every employee to understand and uphold the company's standards of conduct as they operate and represent the business in Sydney, a strong sense of the company's ethics must be baked into the culture. Here, 11 members of Forbes Coaches Council weigh in with expert advice on effective approaches to making certain those core values are clear and lived by all

1. Use Radical Transparency

Open and honest communication about the company's actions is the best way to make sure a company excels ethically. Anything a company is uncomfortable sharing with the masses probably lives in an ethical grey area

2. Choose Leaders Who Live And Work Ethically

Ethics start at the top, and leaders who live ethically and also work with ethical principles make all of the difference. Ethics should be well understood within an organization, and those who forget their ethics need to be reminded when they fall short of the mark. Lack of communication or feedback on ethical shortcomings will doom the organization.

3. Define What 'Excelling At Ethics' Means

First, define what "excelling at ethics" means. Set the boundaries around what "right" looks like, feels like and sounds like. What will we be doing, saying and hearing when we are excelling at ethics both internally and externally? The clearer you are up front and the more you document your culture playbook around ethics, the easier you can spot when something is right or goes off the rails.

4. Stay Committed To Modeling Company Values

Establish and communicate company values both inside and outside of the organization and stay committed to being accountable to those values regardless of the circumstances. This requires clear communication of expectations and visible modeling of the company values by leaders at all levels.

5. Incorporate Diverse, Equitable And Inclusive Concepts

Ethical excellence is borne of active DEI. As organizations get more intentional about incorporating diverse concepts into their work culture, they start to see improvement across the board. It's difficult to instill excellence when viewing policy and culture through a narrow lens. An inclusive approach raises questions and conversations that lead to a more ethical work environment.

6. Make Ethics Part Of The Organizational Culture

On the matter of ethics, it has to be a part of the organization's culture. This is usually driven by the leadership team and the shared values they communicate and cascade throughout the company. Once the organization's values are clear, there are established expectations that govern its internal practices, which will undoubtedly be reflected internally and externally.



7. Have Leaders Set The Tone At The Top Level

This is achieved by behaving ethically at all times and making certain that their employees are aware of the importance of doing so. To achieve that, each department must adopt a system of rewarding employees who behave ethically and commit to making ethical behavior a high priority.

8. Put Ethics At The Top Of Your Value System

You have to hire people who walk the talk. Let it be reflected in your rewards and recognition. Do not hesitate to take disciplinary action when needed to prove it. Training your employees to develop a common sense of understanding around what it means to be ethical in your company allows ethics to become a part of your core organizational DNA.

9. Dig Deep Into Understanding Business Ethics

I taught university courses in business ethics for years, and there is a lot more to learn than most people would think. Reflecting deeply about ethical decision-making models and philosophies provides much more insight for workplace practices. Many managers and leaders "go from the gut" on workplace ethics instead of learning more and digging deeper.

10. Provide An Effective Outlet For Communication

When employees feel that they can safely report mistakes, concerns, questions and so on, they will be more likely to do so. Intervention through training, processes and early detection of errors will help ensure ethical decisions are made at every level.

11. Hold People Accountable Across The Board

No one should be shielded from scrutiny. Create mechanisms to capture data about instances that hover on or over the line and investigate them. Protect the team that is investigating. Hold people accountable across the board and show that those in power are held to a higher standard. Don't wait until it hits the press years later that a top leader crossed the line and you did nothing about it then.

6. Business Ethics Statement in NSW

Our Business Ethics Statement guides commercial partners and suppliers on how to work with us.

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) promotes integrity, ethical conduct and accountability in all areas of public administration.

We rely on the support of commercial partners and suppliers to deliver public value.

Commercial partners and suppliers can expect DCS employees to behave ethically and comply with the Code of Ethics and Conduct. Employees' refers to all individuals employed, appointed or otherwise engaged. This includes permanent, temporary and casual employees, as well as consultants, contractors and agency employees engaged to perform work for or on behalf of DCS.

DCS also expects high standards of behaviour from firms and individuals that do business with us.

What we ask of commercial partners and suppliers

When doing business with DCS, all commercial partners and suppliers are required to:

- comply with applicable NSW Government procurement frameworks, policies, and codes of practice
- act ethically, fairly and honestly in all dealings
- not offer DCS employees, contractors and consultants any financial inducements or any gifts, benefits, or hospitality
- declare actual or perceived conflicts of interest as soon as such matters arise
- prevent the disclosure of confidential DCS information and protect DCS intellectual property
- assist DCS to prevent fraud, corruption and unethical practices in business relationships by reporting wrongdoing (refer to practical guidelines below).

Why commercial partners and suppliers should comply

In order to conduct business in a fair and ethical manner, all commercial partners and suppliers must comply with:

- basic principles of probity management
- NSW Procurement Board's Procurement Policy Framework
- this Business Ethics Statement.

Non-compliance with the ethical requirements above, as well as corrupt or unethical conduct, could lead to:

- termination of contracts
- loss of future work
- loss of reputation
- investigation for corruption
- matters being referred for criminal investigation.

What commercial partners and suppliers can expect from our employees

DCS employees are bound by the core public sector values of integrity, trust, service and accountability.



They are also expected to comply with the Code of Ethics and Conduct, as well as:

- ensure decisions and actions are reasonable, fair and appropriate to the circumstances, based on consideration of all relevant facts, and supported by relevant legislation, policies and procedures
- accept responsibility and be accountable for their actions in accordance with delegated functions, accountabilities, and the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- promote the integrity and reputation of the public sector by always acting in the public interest and not engage in any activities that would bring the public sector into disrepute
- treat the NSW Government, stakeholders, clients, suppliers and each other ethically, fairly and professionally
- provide relevant and responsive service to clients and customers in accordance with agreed service standards
- act with care and diligence, utilising DCS's resources in a proper manner.

Practical guidelines

Incentives, gifts, benefits and hospitality

Commercial partners and suppliers must not offer or give gifts to our employees and there is no expectation from our employees that any gifts will be provided. Our employees will decline gifts, benefits, or travel offered during the course of their work. Cash gifts or equivalent (for example, gift vouchers) are never acceptable.

Commercial partners and suppliers must not pay or offer to pay for any form of entertainment for DCS employees. Entertainment includes tickets to sporting or social events, social meals at restaurants, travel expenses to attend either local or interstate meetings or conferences, or accommodation expenses. DCS meets all such business costs for employees. Employee participation in some modest forms of hospitality is permitted where:

- there is a clear underlying business purpose exists
- it is in the normal course of business
- it relates to the work of DCS
- it has a public benefit

• it is disclosed by the employee.

Offers, acceptance, and non-acceptance of gifts, benefits and hospitality must be disclosed by employees in accordance with the DCS Gifts and Benefits Policy.

We acknowledge that judgement by both commercial partners and suppliers and employees needs to be exercised regarding the offer and acceptance of such hospitality – the essence is that it must be modest (both actual and in perception) and not be encumbered by obligation. It must also not be offered at a time that could raise general concerns about conflicts of interest (for example, during a tender or contract negotiation period). Modest hospitality could include basic refreshments at meetings or a light working lunch.

Conflicts of interest

All DCS employees are required to disclose any actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest. This includes conflicts of interest that can, or could, arise from personal relationships between our employees and staff of commercial partners and suppliers. This requirement is extended to all commercial partners and suppliers of DCS.

Sponsorship

We will not ask for, entertain, or enter into any sponsorship or similar arrangement that is not open and transparent or where such activity creates a perception that it could be part of an attempt to improperly influence decision-making processes. Where applicable, specific policies and processes developed within DCS for sponsorship arrangements are to be adhered to.

Confidentiality and intellectual property

Confidential information in any format must be treated as such and protected as appropriate. The specific requirements of copyright laws and individual contracts must be adhered to.

Communication and cooperation

In line with applicable NSW Government procurement frameworks, policies, and codes of practice, DCS and commercial partners, contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers will maintain business relationships based on:

- open and effective communication
- respect
- trust
- adopt a non-adversarial approach to dispute resolution.

Private employment and post-separation employment

DCS employees must obtain the approval of the Secretary prior to entering into any private or secondary employment arrangement. Secondary employment will not be approved if it has the potential to create an actual or perceived conflict of interest between the employee's public official role and their private interests. Our employees are not to use either their position, government information, or intellectual property developed while serving the NSW Government to secure private employment.

Commercial partners and suppliers must not offer our employees private employment which conflicts with their public duties. Former employees who have dealings with DCS need to ensure that they do not seek, or appear to seek, favourable treatment or access to confidential information.



Expectations regarding contractors

All contractors and sub-contractors are expected to comply with the DCS Business Ethics Statement. Commercial partners and suppliers are responsible for making any of their sub-contractors aware of this statement.

Public comment

Non-DCS employees must not make any public comment or statement that would lead anyone to believe that they are representing DCS, or expressing its views or policies. This includes comments and statements at public and community meetings, via the media, or when it is reasonable that comments or statements will become known to the public at large.

Our employees are not permitted to provide public endorsement, on DCS's behalf, of companies or their products.

Public interest disclosures

We do not tolerate corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money and other forms of serious wrongdoing.

Commercial partners and suppliers must report all information that they become aware of that they honestly believe, on reasonable grounds, shows or tends to show, serious wrongdoing inside or outside DCS and its related entities.

Individuals and corporations (and employees or officers of these corporations) engaged by DCS under a contract to provide services to, or on behalf of, DCS are classified as 'public officials' under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994. The Act protects public officials from reprisal or detrimental action when disclosing corrupt conduct or other specific wrongdoing in line with requirements of the Act. The Act also ensures that disclosures are appropriately investigated and dealt with.

7. Conclusion

If you want to grow your business in Syndey or want to boost your business profit, you must know about business ethics. You need to follow this guide.

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