ETHICS: A CONCEPTUAL AND MANAGERIAL DILEMMA

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“History shows that where ethics and economics come in conflict, victory is always with economics.”
(B. R. Ambedkar)

Abstract. What is ethics? Both in management and marketing we are witnessing a growing tendency to invoke ethics; but, sadly, most of those who touch upon this subject don’t know, nor do they understand the implications deriving from this concept. Thus, it is imperative to understand that ethics in business is not an attribute of the organization, but instead the ethical norms that (should) govern the decisions and actions in business are established and promoted by the people involved in the business.

Keywords: business ethics, ethics survey, managerial ethics.

The ethical dilemma is brought into question (theoretically) whenever ones decisions and actions involve the others by the consequences entailed. Business ethics designates a set of standards used in evaluating the justice or injustice character of personal relationships with others, relationships based on rights and obligations of both parties (Avram Eugen, Cary Cooper, 2008). Ethics in business represents the set of principles and arguments that should govern business conduct, both individually and collectively (Craciun, 2005). The phase “business ethics” is regarded by some as a contradiction in terms, because it joins two distinct approaches: on one hand, the consideration for the others and on the other, the will to maximize ones profits at the expense of others. (Arrizza, 2005)

The communicative openness and transparency is the hallmark of the new paradigm of power; all this thanks to the revolutionary changes brought by the “information age”. Nowadays power is achieved by assuming and fighting an asymmetrical war, thus the main objective is winning the public (because the people become the public) over. For this, a new set of tactics and abilities are required, all under the guide of a new strategy which consistently differs from the classic militaristic approach (specific to the old paradigm) in order to obtain power.

Management practices are no stranger to this asymmetrical war, and marketing management abounds with special tactics that hook the customers and consumers alike. In my book entitled: “The Psychological Implications in Marketing”, I devote a whole chapter to exposing the principal manipulation techniques used by marketers. Of course, winning the minds and hearts of customers as a result of applying manipulation techniques that predetermine customer behavior, is a means to obtain power and ethical claims are at the very heart of it.

Research Results:
This selective survey focuses on perceptions, experiences and attitudes of managers in Cluj (Romania) towards the application of ethics in management, the year 2013. The instrument used was the questionnaire. The research is based on a nonrandomized method, thus sampling was based on accessibility. The sample
investigated was made of 40 subjects, all managers belonging to different enterprises in Cluj County.

Below are some relevant research results:

1) Do you believe that ethics can be applied in management practice?

![Pie chart showing 80% yes and 20% no.]

2) Do you apply ethics in your management practice?

![Pie chart showing 97% yes and 3% no.]

3) From your experience, do you agree that breaking the principles of ethics often facilitates managerial success?

![Pie chart showing 88% no and 12% yes.]

When answering the question “how do you apply ethics in your management practice?” 33 (of the 40 investigated subjects) managers said that by meeting their contractual obligations.
CONCLUSIONS

- The vast majority of the investigated managers believe that ethics can be applied in management practice;
- An overwhelming majority from the investigated managers claim that they apply ethics in their management practice;
- The vast majority of the investigated managers don’t agree that breaking the principles of ethics often facilitates managerial success;
- Most of the investigated managers said that they apply ethics in their management practice by meeting their contractual obligations, which proves a faulty understanding of ethics because the implications of this concept stretch beyond meeting ones contractual obligations.

REFERENCES