

# INTEGRITY AS A GOVERNING ETHIC: STRATEGIES FOR ETHICS MANAGEMENT

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## Abstract

An integrity strategy is characterized by a conception of ethics as a driving force of an enterprise. Ethical values shape the search for opportunities, the design of organizational systems, and the decision-making process used by individuals and groups. They provide a common frame of reference and serve as a unifying force across different functions, lines of business, and employee groups. Organizational ethics helps define what a company is and what it stands for. Integrity is one of the most important and frequently cited virtue terms. It is also perhaps the most perplexing. For example, while it is sometimes used virtually synonymously with 'moral,' we also at times distinguish acting morally from acting with integrity. Integrity refers to a quality of a person's character; however, there are other uses of the term. When it is applied to objects, integrity refers to the wholeness, intactness or purity of a thing/institution—meanings that are sometimes carried over when it is applied to people. Integrity is also attributed to various parts or aspects of a person's life. We speak of attributes such as professional, intellectual and artistic integrity. This study examines various strategies and tools to run business and to do management in an enterprise.

**Keywords:** Integrity, Business Ethics, Management, Moral

## INTRODUCTION

The term "integrity" has its roots in French and Latin (14<sup>th</sup> century). Originally, the term was used meaning "innocence, blamelessness; chastity, purity" derived from Old French *intégrité* or directly from Latin *integritatem* (nominative *integritas*) "soundness, wholeness, completeness", figuratively "purity, correctness, blamelessness" from *integer* "whole". The first known use in English is from the year 1450.

Ethical standards exist in every profession. Integrity is a key element of what every profession considers appropriate ethical behavior. In professional and/or business relationships, integrity is a much sought after trait. Certainly no physician would hire a coder lacking integrity, just as no patient would likely choose a physician lacking integrity. Similarly, coders appreciate working with co-workers and for employers who exhibit integrity. Although it is not difficult to understand the importance of integrity in business relationships (as well as personal ones), it is sometimes difficult to determine what integrity actually is. Honesty, truthfulness, honor, dependability, and trustworthiness are all traits of those with integrity; as is upholding a moral standard of conduct in both professional and personal endeavors. Standards governing professional conduct include knowing how you present yourself, your work ethic, and how you communicate with others. Integrity requires strong moral principles: good character, honor, and honesty. Honesty is fairly cut and dry, but "good character" and "honor" are more obtuse qualities. Managers must acknowledge their role in shaping organizational ethics and seize this opportunity to create a climate that can strengthen the relationships and reputations on which their companies' success depends. Executives who ignore ethics run the risk of personal and corporate liability in today's increasingly tough legal environment. In addition, they deprive their organizations of the benefits available under new federal guidelines for sentencing organizations convicted of wrong doing. These sentencing guidelines recognize for the first time the organizational and managerial roots of unlawful conduct and base fines partly on the extent to which companies have taken steps to prevent that misconduct.

**Ethical management** is based on two main principles: the human being and the organization, two very important notions in companies and deeply linked. Let's take the example of the hospital sector: organization is particularly important in this environment, as are human relations. Only **respect and exchange** between employees can ensure good organization and efficient and ethical patient management. What is ethical management and what is at stake? How can an ethical management plan be implemented in a company? In this new article, we take a look at these questions.

These approaches must promote the well-being of the company's organization, but also of its employees. The objective of ethical management is to build cooperation, encourage **team cohesion**, but also recognition

between employees and their superiors. It is a management approach in the broadest sense of the term, in which additional virtuous notions are integrated, such as morality, justice, virtue and respect.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was underpinned by the Social learning theory advanced by Bandura (1977) and suggests that leaders influence their employees through the modelling of processes that involve the transition of values, attitudes, and behaviours. This makes the employees to learn more on what to do, and additionally what not to do, through watching their pioneers conduct and its outcomes. In this manner, moral leaders are probably going to be models by excellence of their relegated part, their status and accomplishment in the organisation, and their energy to influence the results of employees. Nevertheless, pioneers who take part in untrustworthy practices in association make a setting supporting parallel aberrance, which lead to employees observing and imitate the inappropriate conduct from the leader.

For effective ethical leadership workers can likewise figure out how to be moral by watching pioneers who stand up for doing what is correct, particularly if the pioneers are effective in doing moral direct. Treviño (1992) stressed that social learning suggestion in associations like teach sends capable flags about the estimation of authoritative standards and pioneers' ability to remain behind them. This suggests representatives who are rehearsing the best thing anticipate that unfortunate behaviour will be rebuffed brutally, and they are frustrated on the off chance that it is most certainly not.

The social learning theory argues that leaders have authority of energy to remunerate and rebuff. This makes representatives to give careful consideration and copy pioneers' conduct, and they will do what is remunerated and abstain from doing what is rebuffed in the association. In this way, prizes and disciplines ought not be immediate but rather additionally can be adapted vicariously by watching how others in the association are remunerated and restrained (Yukl, 2002). This means that social learning theory support that leaders need ethical conduct of employees in organization. This incorporates that managerial urge to give an appropriate case of what is in store in moral activities so as to have others comprehend what this will resemble. A pioneer need to give a case of what they need to see will enhance the origination of moral practices for the other managers.

(Beck & Orr, 1970). Scholars suggest that ethics is the study of morality in terms of what is good, bad, right, and wrong and is an explicit philosophical reflection on moral beliefs and practices (Hinman, 2002). What is 'good' and what is 'right' have delineating characteristics that differentiate the various classical ethical theories. For example, "what is 'good' is thought to be noble and valuable; in contrast, what is 'right' is characterized as obligatory and related to personal duty" (Ross, 1939:10). The study of ethics can further be explained as being concerned with the morality and practice of the foundation of human behaviors (Lehmann, 1963) as it relates to "human conduct, voluntary or involuntary action, and having a choice" (Beck and Orr, 1970). Ethics is the integrity measure, which evaluates the values, norms and rules that constitute the base for individual and social relationships, from a moral perspective (Smith and Smith, 2002). It consists of choosing the good over the bad, the right over the wrong and the fair over the unfair. It makes claims about what ought to be done or what ought not to be done (Carse, 1999). Integrity implies not merely honesty but fair dealing and truthfulness (CAJEC, 1992).

## STRATEGIES & TOOLS TO REVEAL ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Codes of Conduct

"Codes of conduct specify actions in the workplace and codes of ethics are general guides to decisions about those actions, codes of conduct contain examples of appropriate behavior to be meaningful. It found that codes of conduct are increasingly sophisticated and focused at lower levels in companies. Departments frequently have their own codes. Be careful, though. An organization could be sued for breach of contract if its practices are not in accord with its policies. That's why legal departments should review codes of conduct and other ethics policies. Also, that's why it's critical for organizations to review their policies at least once a year to ensure they are in accordance with laws and regulations.

### Develop Policies and Procedures

Update policies and procedures to produce behaviors preferred from the code of conduct, including, e.g., personnel, job descriptions, performance appraisal forms, management-by-objectives expectations, standard forms, checklists, budget report formats, and other relevant control instruments to ensure conformance to the code of conduct. In doing so, try to avoid creating ethical dilemmas such as conflicts-of-interest or infringing on employee's individual rights.

### Provide Training

Training essentially useless all staff members are trained about what it is, how it works and their roles in it. The nature of the system may invite suspicion if not handled openly and honestly. In addition, no matter how

fair and up-to-date is a set of policies, the legal system will often interpret employee behavior (rather than written policies) as de facto policy. Therefore, all staff must be aware of and act in full accordance with policies and procedures. This full accordance requires training about policies and procedures.

### **Customer Value Strategy**

Ethical standards in business are built off of a customer focus and commitment to providing value to its customers. When an organization is committed to improving the lives of its customers, it would be when there is a violation of that trust that would cause concern from a strategic perspective.

### **Practice transparency**

Transparency in business is much more than an occasional sneak peek into office life. It's a building block of your professional reputation. It also determines if clients are going to trust your expertise and want to do business with you.

### **Have the Right Mechanism**

Proper mechanisms should be in place to deal with the complicated ethical issues in the day-to-day business realities. Also, have a grievance policy for employees to use to settle conflicts with managers and employees.

#### **Integrity in management practices**

Management practices are the underlying foundation for organizational integrity. An integrity-based approach to ethics management combines a concern for the law with an emphasis on managerial responsibility for ethical behavior. Though integrity strategies may vary in design and scope, all strive to define companies' guiding values, aspirations, and patterns of thought and conduct. When integrated into the day-to-day operations of an organization, such strategies can help prevent damaging ethical lapses while tapping into powerful human impulses for moral thought and action. Then an ethical framework becomes no longer a burdensome constraint within which companies must operate, but the governing ethos of an organization.

A strategy based on integrity holds organizations to a more robust standard. While compliance is rooted in avoiding legal sanctions, organizational integrity is based on the concept of self-governance in accordance with a set of guiding principles. From the perspective of integrity, the task of ethics management is to define and give life to an organization's guiding values, to create an environment that supports ethically sound behavior, and to instill a sense of shared accountability among employees. The need to obey the law is viewed as a positive aspect of organizational life, rather than an unwelcome constraint imposed by external authorities.

Many integrity initiatives have structural features common to compliance-based initiatives: a code of conduct, training in relevant areas of law, mechanisms for reporting and investigating potential misconduct, and audits and controls to insure that laws and company standards are being met. In addition, if suitably designed, an integrity-based initiative can establish a foundation for seeking the legal benefits that are available under the sentencing guidelines should criminal wrongdoing occur. (See the insert "The Hallmarks of an Effective Integrity Strategy.")

Whether it is a commitment to good customer service or fair employment practices, a businesses' reputation can be tarnished by unresolved service or product issues. Additionally, employees observe how leadership resolves issues and follows up on promises made. Organizations that operate with integrity do so intentionally and make it part of its everyday practices so that it becomes part of the culture. This climate of honesty and trust helps orient new employees to understand that operating with integrity is simply "the way things are done around here".

Organizations choose to make integrity an important part of cultural expectations. This focus sends a message to employees and customers that the priority is a sustainable success over short-term opportunism

If you expect your employees to act with integrity when dealing with clients, they first need to understand and share the values of your business. In order to do that, you should create and maintain a culture of integrity that penetrates every level of your company. Communicate and explain your work ethic from the moment of hiring. Set a good example through ethical leadership. Be open to internal feedback and invite discussion. Implement a code of ethics so your employees can refer to it when needed.

Ethics in management is the responsibility of every manager. For several reasons, upholding ethical standards is important. You will build a healthier atmosphere.

Thus, do something positive by taking steps to encourage ethical management in your workplace. It will boost your brand image, and make you feel good. Above all, it helps you to make sensible decisions

Depending on the size of the organization, certain roles may prove useful in managing ethics in the workplace. These can be full-time roles or part-time functions assumed by someone already in the organization.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite its clear benefits, business integrity and ethics have traditionally been left outside the formal management processes. In the last decades, there has been increasing pressure on companies, from the top and the bottom, to create effective business integrity and ethics programs All stakeholders such as employees,

customers, shareholders, business partners and civil society expect even higher standards of integrity and ethical business conduct. Focusing on rules and regulations alone will often fall short of meeting these higher expectations of ethical business practices. An effective business integrity and ethics programme, therefore, goes beyond pure compliance and aims to foster a culture of integrity. Such a programme can include internal, external and collective measures. Running your business with integrity won't always be easy. It'll put you in many uncomfortable situations and sometimes even cost money. But it's well worth it. Integrity will help you win the trust of your clients, build better partnerships and keep your employees (and yourself) happy. You can't afford not to have it.

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