Business Ethics Taxonomy

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Abstract

This paper constitutes a taxonomy of ten business ethics theories to include utilitarianism, deontology, consequentialism, intuitionism, virtue ethics, Confucianism, humanism, metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. Each theory is synopsized by description and critique, and an example of the theory in practiced is illustrated.
(1) Utilitarianism

Description of Theory

British philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill developed the philosophy of utilitarianism, which is the belief in "the greatest good for the greatest number of people” (Six Ethical Properties, ¶ 3). The Greek philosopher, Plato, is often credited with the first accounting of utilitarianism in his writing, the Republic (Is Plato’s republic, 1937). In utilitarianism, various consequences of an act are imagined, and the outcome that helps the most people is the best choice under the circumstances. He wrote about this philosophy in 1776 and later in "As a social scientist, Bentham was an empiricist who advocated the use of quantitative methods in social observation and the development of a value free language devoid of emotional and ambiguous terms" (Martin, 1997, ¶5). "In the spring of 1776, in his first substantial (though anonymous) publication, A Fragment on Government, Jeremy Bentham affirms in that the guiding light of legislators must not be the will of the superior (the sovereign), or abstract appeals to such notions as contract, but rather to the principle of utility. The principle of "utility" applied to legislation, according to Bentham, requires that the "greatest happiness" principle be the guiding light and the proper test of any proposed law is its utility to that end"(Martin, 1997, 18). "To a utilitarian, the choice that yields the greatest benefit to the most people is the choice that is ethically correct” (Rainbow, 2002).

Scholarly Critique

"The most widely repeated retributivist argument against the utilitarian theory of punishment is that utilitarianism permits punishment of the innocent. While defenders of utilitarianism have shown that a publicly announced policy of punishing the innocent is
unlikely to serve utility, critics have insisted that utilitarianism morally obliges officials to deceive the public by framing the innocent...Utilitarianism was not so much a philosophical theory as a rhetorical practice, understood as a transparent language of analysis and argument for use in political deliberation” (Binder & Smith, 2000, ¶1 and 3).

Practical Application of Theory

Sandin (2009) discussed the conflict of corporate ethics when the business is in a crisis situation and how management may use utilitarian as ad hoc (for the particular end or case at hand without consideration of wider application, Webster's Dictionary Online), to justify the position taken during the crisis. He discussed the approaches of Gerber and McDonald's as the 2 corporations faced crises and concluded "Two relevant virtues for crisis managers seem to be honesty and courage. Second, virtue (and caring) approaches are potentially better suited to dealing with a problem that is likely to be prevalent in crisis management – the temptation of ad hoc utilitarianism" (p. 115).

References


(2) Deontology

*Description of Theory*

“The non-Consequentialist theory of deontology is derived from the writings of German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant stated that a universal law should provide the basis for each act, and that the intent was of more importance than the outcome. Deontology is a duty-based ethical stance, where one's actions are based on what is morally correct, irrespective of the consequences” (Pieper, 2009, p. 319).

“Deontology's core principle is that the concept of duty is at the foundation of morality. Ideas such as duty, obligation, and responsibility are uniquely moral ones—indeed, the most uniquely and clearly moral ones. Doing one's duty is central in deontological ethics"
(Orend, 2007, p. 471). The deontological theory states that people should adhere to their obligations and duties when analyzing an ethical dilemma. This means that a person will follow his or her obligations to another individual or society because upholding one's duty is what is considered ethically correct (1,2). For instance, a deontologist will always keep his promises to a friend and will follow the law. A person who follows this theory will produce very consistent decisions since they will be based on the individual's set duties" (Rainbow, 2002).

Scholarly Critique

Although deontology contains many positive attributes, it also contains its fair number of flaws. One weakness of this theory is that there is no rationale or logical basis for deciding an individual's duties. For instance, businessman may decide that it is his duty to always be on time to meetings. Although this appears to be a noble duty we do not know why the person chose to make this his duty. Perhaps the reason that he has to be at the meeting on time is that he always has to sit in the same chair. A similar scenario unearths two other faults of deontology including the fact that sometimes a person's duties conflict, and that deontology is not concerned with the welfare of others. For instance, if the deontologist who must be on time to meetings is running late, how is he supposed to drive? Is the deontologist supposed to speed, breaking his duty to society to uphold the law, or is the deontologist supposed to arrive at his meeting late, breaking his duty to be on time? This scenario of conflicting obligations does not lead us to a clear ethically correct resolution nor does it protect the welfare of others from the deontologist's decision. Since deontology is not based on the context of each situation, it
does not provide any guidance when one enters a complex situation in which there are conflicting obligations” (Pieper, 2009, p. 319-321)

**Practical Application of Theory**

Pieper (2009) discussed the ethical position of using children for the purposes of clinical research. The question she posed was “Is a child’s assent to participate in research that does not have the potential to directly benefit the child ethically mandated?” (p. 319). She concluded that although having children consent would be the preferred scenario, a more utilitarian approach is currently used in medicine where the common good outweighs the ethical rights of children.

**References**


(3) Consequentialism

**Description of Theory**

*Consequentialism* is an ethical doctrine according to which a fact is good only if it has good consequences. G.E.M. Anscombe, an English philosopher, is credited with coining the term. Consequentialism is a form of teleology. The New World Encyclopedia
defines the Greek word telos as a “goal, end, or purpose, and teleology is the study of
goals, ends and purposes” (New World Encyclopedia, 2008, ¶ 1). “According to
Aristotle…all plants exist for the sake of animals, and all other animals exist for the sake
of man. The war of human beings against the wild beasts for the sake of acquisition, the
subjugation of the irrational and depraved, who are intended by nature to be governed,
therefore, is naturally just” (Wang, 2009, p. 317).

Consequentialist moral systems are usually differentiated into act-
consequentialism and rule-consequentialism. “Act-consequentialism argues that the
morality of any action is dependent upon its consequences. Thus, the most moral action is
the one which leads to the best consequences…Rule-consequentialism argues that
focusing only on the consequences of the action in question can lead people to
committing outrageous actions when they foresee good consequences. Thus, rule-
consequentialists add the following provision: imagine that an action were to become a
general rule - if the following of such a rule would result in bad consequences, then it
should be avoided even if it would lead to good consequences in this one instance. This
has very obvious similarities to Kant's categorical imperative, a deontological moral
principle” (Teleology and ethics, ¶ 6).

Scholarly Critique

Richardson (2008) wrote of the philosopher, Francis Kamm. Kamm, a theorist of
non-consequential ethics, found a weakness in the theory of consequentialism-
innviolability, or that life is sacred. There is a moral dilemma that arises when one
considers that what may have good outcomes for the self may ultimately violate the
morality of hurting others. “One cannot justify harming someone, or involving him without his consent in a project that foreseeably will harm him, on the grounds that doing so is causally necessary to producing the greater good; however, one can justify doing these things on the grounds that doing so is causally necessary to sustaining the greater good or at least a component thereof that is working itself out. Direct, harmful side-effects, too, cannot be justified by the greater good unless they result from a component of the greater good that is working itself out (or are the effect of things we do that have a tighter than causal relationship with such a budding component of the greater good). Indirect, harmful side-effects are easier to justify” (Kamm in Richardson, p. 84).

Practical Application of Theory

Wohlgemuth (2008) explained the growth and civil conduct of the global free market as having a base in teleological ethics and consequentialism. “The universal rules of just conduct that guarantee free movement and open competition and prevent discriminatory state intervention” (p. 84) are some ethical decisions based in the theories of an mean to an end. Wohlgemuth (2008) used consequentialism as a way to explain the effects of neo-liberalism in the development of the globalization and privatization of capitalism. “It was the neo-liberal idea to put fairness-norms or universally applicable rules of just behavior between an unqualified "input-based" ethics and an unqualified "output-based" ethical consequentialism (p. 69). Wohlgemuth explained that neo-liberalism was not a product of the 1980’s push of capitalism of leaders like Reagan and Thatcher, but started before WWI. “The task, as they saw it, was to safeguard ethical values such as individual dignity, liberty and responsibility, inter-individual justice and
global peace. To defend these "old" classical liberal values, a "new" political programme and economic order - a new definition of state-market-relations - was deemed necessary’ (p. 72).

References


(4) Intuitionism

Description of Theory

“Intuitionism says that "good" is an indefinable notion. The basic moral truths are objective; they hold independently of what anyone may think or feel. We should pick out our moral principles by following our basic moral intuitions” (Gensler, 2006). “In the 17th and 18th centuries, intuitionism was defended by Ralph Cudworth, Henry More
(1614–87), Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), and Richard Price (1723–91); in the 20th century its supporters included H.A Prichard (1871–1947), G.E. Moore, and David Ross. G. E. Moore (1873-1954) is most often credited with modern intuitionist thought. Intuitionists have differed over the kinds of moral truths that are amenable to direct apprehension. For example, whereas Moore thought that it is self-evident that certain things are morally valuable, Ross thought that we know immediately that it is our duty to do acts of a certain type” (Intuitionism, Britannica, 2009).

Scholarly Critique

Thilly (2001) offered a criticism of intuitionism. One, the cognicent mind is made up of more than just perception of morality; it has other components such as emotion and impulsiveness that cannot be discounted. Two, if everyone inherently knew what was moral then everyone’s moral would be the same, which is not true. Morality is not a given, like space or time. Three, the innateness of consciousness cannot be proven: right and wrong are abstract conditions. Just because one thinks does not mean one can make abstract connections. Four, one cannot prove that moral judgments are universally innate (such as stealing or murder is wrong); they may just be the products of universally prevalent conditions. Five, it might be that the societal repercussions of universal morality are universal and more likely to control the expression of universal morals. For example, most societies disapprove of stealing and rebuke thieves. This can be translated into inherent feelings that stealing is wrong (Thilly, 2001, pp. 85-91)

Practical Application of Theory

Mathematics can be correlated with intuitionism. “Brouwer devoted a large part of his life to the development of mathematics on this new basis. Although intuitionism
has never replaced classical mathematics as the standard view on mathematics, it has always attracted a great deal of attention and is still widely studied today…Intuitionism is a philosophy of mathematics that was introduced by the Dutch mathematician L.E.J. Brouwer (1881–1966). Intuitionism is based on the idea that mathematics is a creation of the mind. The truth of a mathematical statement can only be conceived via a mental construction that proves it to be true, and the communication between mathematicians only serves as a means to create the same mental process in different minds”.

References

(5) Virtue Ethics

Description of Theory

“Virtue ethicists, such as Aristotle, believe that human beings must live their lives trying to develop their faculties to the fullest extent…There are many virtues, and a moral person is one who develops them and consistently displays them over time. The ancient
Greeks listed four "cardinal virtues"-namely, wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice—and Christian teaching is well known for its recommendation of faith, hope, charity, and love….Of course, we have many faculties to develop: intellectual, physical, social, moral, and so on. What does it mean to develop one's moral capacity to the fullest? It is to pursue ethical excellence, which is displayed by the virtues (hence "virtue ethics"). What are the virtues? They are the freely chosen character traits that we praise in others. We praise them because: (1) they are difficult to develop; (2) they are corrective of natural deficiencies (for example, industriousness is corrective of our tendency to be lazy); and (3) they are beneficial both to self and society” (Orend, 2007).

Scholarly Critique

Some scholars do not believe virtue ethics contains the necessary components of an ethical philosophy. “The biggest criticism of Virtue Ethics is that it doesn't give clear guidance on how to act in specific circumstances. It cannot tell us what the law should be about abortion, euthanasia, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis etc. It gives no clear answer to questions such as 'Is the environment intrinsically valuable?’” (Criticisms, 2008, ¶ 1).

Anderson (2008) further stated, “Critics have been skeptical about the claim that virtue is its own reward” (Anderson, p. 427). She critiqued Oliver Goldsmith’s (1799) book, *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Anderson’s claim is that virtue is not driven by inherent codes of morality; that the virtuous act is rewarded, promoting continued virtue.

Practical Application of Theory

Gillet and Hankey (2005) attempted to make a connection between reading literature and the development of personal character traits, among which resides virtue.
The attempted to prove that “that there is a close, indeed conceptual, relationship between right living and good living and that the type of character which results from cultivating the virtues is a character conducive to getting the best out of the situations that life throws in our way, whereas the vicious character reveals itself by causing strife, harm, and even tragedy” (Gillet & Hankey, p. 269)

References


(6) Confucianism

Description of Theory

K'ung Fu Tzu (Confucius) (Cole, 2009), was born in 550 B.C. and considered one of the greatest Eastern philosophers (Zukeran, 1996-2009). “Confucianism, as its founder taught, is not a religion in the traditional sense. It is an ethical code…Three key principles are emphasized in Confucius' teachings: the principles of Li, Jen and Chun-Tzu. The term Li [can be translated as] propriety, reverence, courtesy, ritual or the ideal
standard of conduct. It is what Confucius believed to be the ideal standard of religious, moral, and social conduct… the Principle of Jen is the fundamental virtue of Confucian teaching. Jen is the virtue of goodness and benevolence. It is expressed through recognition of value and concern for others, no matter their rank or class. In the Analects, Confucius summarizes the principle of Jen in this statement, often called The Silver Rule: "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you." (Analects 15:23) Li provides the structure for social interaction. Jen makes it a moral system. The third important concept is Chun-Tzu, the idea of the true gentleman. It is the man who lives according to the highest ethical standards. The gentleman displays five virtues: self-respect, generosity, sincerity, persistence, and benevolence. His relationships are described as the following: as a son, he is always loyal; as a father, he is just and kind; as an official, he is loyal and faithful; as a husband, he is righteous and just; and as a friend, he is faithful and tactful.

If all men would live by the principles of Li and Jen and strive to the character of the true gentleman, justice and harmony would rule the empire” (Zukeran, The Ethics of Confucius, ¶ 1-4).

Wang (2009) said of Confucianism, “in contrast to the abstract and absolute power of law and reason ingrained in the ancient Greek path of justice, the ancient Chinese understanding of justice, as evidenced by the root meanings of the Chinese word yi, is characterized by a unique emphasis on human affection and the dignity of the individual. With constant attention to the congruity and complementarity between binary opposites, between yin and yang, the early Confucian teaching represented and
recovered a primordial Chinese way of justice that, in the very enactment of the hierarchical structure necessary for the function of a political order, softened and reconciled the repulsive conflict and tension between social dichotomies. It promised a harmony and a coalescence of different individuals in a society that does not rely primarily on the authoritative commands of a rational governing structure, but on the love and compassion of the human heart” (p. 321).

Scholarly Critique

Chan (2007) examined the relevance of Confucianism and contemporary business ethics. Confucian Ethics provides interesting parallels with contemporary Western-oriented Business Ethics. At the same, it diverges from contemporary Business Ethics in some significant ways. Upon an examination of philosophical texts as well as empirical studies, it is argued that Confucian Ethics is able to provide some unique philosophical and intellectual perspectives in order to forge a richer understanding and analysis of the field of contemporary Business Ethics (p. 347).

Practical Application of Theory

Inoguchi and Fujii (2009) studied citizens of modern day Japan based on Confucian ethics of religios, moral and social conduct. They made several interesting observations of modern Japan. “Being female, being married, having a higher education, and having a larger household income are associated with higher levels of quality of life. The older respondents tend to experience the feelings of achievement in the largest proportion… we found that those who live global and socially connected lives tend to experience greater quality of life” (pp. 258-259).

References


(7) Humanism

*Description of Theory*

Humanists theorize that ethics are an inherent part of the human condition; that reason and intelligence structure the ways people set values and conclude what is right or wrong. “Natural law theorists …believe that humans would arrive by reason alone at standards of conduct that ultimately derive from a divine being or another ultimate source such as nature” (Kubasek, Brennan, & Browne, p. 231). Huang (2009) offered a further explanation. “Ideally, humanists are continually open to new ideas and new information, and refuse to be shackled by beliefs that remain outside the realm of testability. Humanists understand that the human experience, critical thinking, and reason are the best tools available as we seek to interpret our reality” (p. 35).

*Scholarly Critique*
According to Wolenski (), there are two main criticisms of humanism. “Humanism tends to be highly valued but it also happens to be criticized” (¶ 9). The first criticism being the notion that is humanism really necessary to define. Heidegger was a proponent of insisting that humanism was nor necessary on the grounds that “traditional ontology had not been able to properly embrace the phenomenon of human existence and human dignity (Wolenski, ¶ 9). The second argument came from father J.M. Bocheński. “Bocheński considered humanism to be the most wide-spread contemporary superstition” (Wolenski, ¶ 9).

Practical Application of Theory

In its 1993 exhibit on the Vatican Library, the Library of Congress stated that the Renaissance applied ethical principles of humanism. “The great intellectual movement of Renaissance Italy was humanism. The humanists believed that the Greek and Latin classics contained both all the lessons one needed to lead a moral and effective life and the best models for a powerful Latin style. They developed a new, rigorous kind of classical scholarship, with which they corrected and tried to understand the works of the Greeks and Romans, which seemed so vital to them. Both the republican elites of Florence and Venice and the ruling families of Milan, Ferrara, and Urbino hired humanists to teach their children classical morality and to write elegant, classical letters, histories, and propaganda” (Humanism, 2002, ¶ 1).

References

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(8) Metaethics

*Description of Theory*

“*Metaethics* investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves” (Fieser, 2006, ¶ 1). Bloomfield (2006) identified two truths of metaethics. “The two dogmas at issue are the Humean dogma that ‘‘is’ statements do not imply ‘ought’ statements’’ and the Kantian dogma that ‘‘ought’ statements imply ‘can’’ statements” (p. 439). Pettit (2008) offered ten assumptions of metaethical philosophies. “(1) Domain: Moral predications predicate thin values of rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness, and thick values and disvalues such as fairness and kindness, cruelty and inequity. Thin values do not have descriptive connotations, but thick values do. (2) Status: Moral predications are matters on which people agree and disagree in apparently the same way that they agree and disagree on matters of belief. (3) Independence: The properties predicated are not properties of our subjective reactions,
and are not relative to a variable frame. They are intuitively objective. (4) Internalism: To predicate rightness (wrongness) of an option is to be disposed (not) to choose it, without reliance on any independent desire to do right (avoid wrong). (5) Justifiability: A right option and only a right option is justifiable. There is no ground for resentment or indignation by others, and no ground for guilt on our own part. (6) Grounding: A right option normally has rightness-making properties involving thick values; a wrong option has wrongness-making properties involving thick disvalues. (7) Supervenience: No difference in moral predication is defensible unless there is a nonmoral difference between the items of which the moral property is predicated. (8) Universal supervenience: The nonmoral differences that support differences in moral predication do not privilege particular times, places, or persons in their particularity, only universal, replicable properties. (9) Accessible supervenience: The nonmoral features that are of moral significance are accessible to reflection. People's moral competence will be put in question to the extent that they prove unable to cite the features that shape their moral judgments. (10) Paradigms: There are certain independently fixed paradigms of right and wrong options on which people broadly agree (p. 3).

Scholarly Critique

Anderson (2008) posed several critical questions when examining the metaethics of biomedical research, contending that ethics cannot be separated from the action. “While some of these questions are considered in disparate fields-medical ethics and bioethics, military and journalistic ethics—there are few integrated, systematic discussions of them… May medical researchers withhold facts from clinical test subjects? Can they use embryos? Is it permissible for intelligence agents to torture those they interrogate?
May journalists hide their true identities and infiltrate closed communities to write exposés? Is there a truth for humanities scholars to seek, and, if so, can they avoid pushing political agendas?” (p. 52)

**Practical Application of Theory**

Kaldis (2005) examined examination of institutionalized health care and the metaethics it is built upon in the Western world. “Respect for human beings does not mean, for Kant, that we respect them simply because they are vulnerable, prone to pain nor because they are rational enough to set themselves ends or any odd goals. Respect is owed to humanity as an embodiment of the moral law” (p. 49)

**References**


(9) Normative Ethics

*Description of Theory*

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines normative ethics as “that part of moral philosophy, or ethics, concerned with criteria of what is morally right and wrong. It includes the formulation of moral rules that have direct implications for what human actions, institutions, and ways of life should be like” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009). Another author goes on to explain, “Normative ethics is the attempt to provide a general theory that tells us how we ought to live. Unlike metaethics, normative ethics does not attempt to tell us what moral properties are, and unlike applied ethics, it does not attempt to tell us what specific things have those properties. Normative ethics just seeks to tell us how we can find out what things have what moral properties, to provide a framework for ethics… There are three types of normative ethical theory--virtue, deontological, and consequentialist--each emphasising one of these elements” (Normative Ethics, ¶ 1). One cannot think of normative ethics (justice, personal rights) without considering the influence of John Rawls (1971) on liberal political philosophy (Fieser, 2009). In short, “normative ethics provides a loose outline theorizing how we should live” (Lennon, 2009). In addition, “The phrase "shoe on the other foot" is a popular adaptation of the veil of ignorance philosophy. Articulated by John Rawls in 1971, it considers all people equal. No one class of people is entitled to advantages over any other. Imagining oneself without knowing the advantages or positions that one brings to a situation results in an attitude of respect for all involved. This philosophy may be one answer to prejudice and discrimination” (Six Ethical Properties, ¶ 7).

*Scholarly Critique*
Hasnas (1998) explained “the three leading normative theories of business ethics are the stockholder, stakeholder, and social contract theories (¶ 4). He went on to argue each of these business theories in his paper, *The normative theories of business ethics: a guide for the perplexed*, 1998. “Strictly speaking, the stockholder theory holds that managers are obligated to follow the (legal) directions of the stockholders, whatever these may be. Hasnas is critical of the stockholder theory because “the stockholders issue no such explicit directives and purchase stock for the sole purpose of maximizing the return on their investment” (Hasnas, 1998).

Hasnas is critical of the stakeholder theory because it asserts that, regardless of “whether stakeholder management leads to improved financial performance, managers should manage the business for the benefit of all stakeholders. According to the normative stakeholder theory, management must give equal consideration to the interests of all stakeholders(FN30) and, when these interests conflict, manage the business so as to attain the optimal balance among them” (Hasnas, 1998).

Hasnas disagrees with the principles of social contract theory of business ethics because he feels it is unrealistic. “It begins by imagining a society in which there are no complex business organizations, i.e., a state of "individual production,” and proceeds by asking what conditions would have to be met for the members of such a society to agree to allow businesses to be formed. Thus, the social contract theory posits an implicit contract between the members of society and businesses in which the members of society grant businesses the right to exist in return for certain specified benefits” (Hasnas, 1998).

*Practical Application of Theory*
Hanfrod (2006) reviewed normative ethical principle that he feels should be applied to health care (bio-ethics). “"Normative elements" include moral principles from moral philosophy and theology, virtues from philosophy and religious traditions, facts and wisdom from supervised clinical experience, psychology and the history of medicine, and additional knowledge from science, phenomenology, and case material studies. These guides develop good professional teaching and practice. Such work focuses understanding and creates relationships of justice for the needy, personally and socially, from hospitals to the total environment (p. 31).” Through continued application of these ethical practices, the best health care can be given to those in need in today’s health care system.

References


(10) Applied Ethics

Description of Theory

Applied ethics is the most practical area of moral philosophy. It seeks to apply normative ethical theories to specific issues, telling what it is right and wrong for us to do. The most interesting debates in applied ethics concern contentious issues such as abortion, animal rights, and punishment (Applied Ethics, ¶ 1-2). Take for example, business ethics. There are human rights issues, corruption and bribery issues, and being socially responsible. Applied ethics would be legislation preventing unethical practices, such as child labor (Youth and Labor, 2009).

Scholarly Critique

According to the authors of Critique of Applied Ethics: Reflections and Recommendations, “the term applied ethics is unhelpful, since it wrongly suggests a contrast with pure ethics, as if the former simply applies the latter. On their view, the
relevant contrast isn't between theory and practice, but between stable areas of morality and controversial areas. Hence the term problematic ethics would have been more accurate, although the authors concede it is too late to change the terminology” (Kimlicka, 1995, ¶ 3).

Practical Application of Theory

Kubasek et al. (2003) suggested four methods managers could employ to ensure the practical application of business. One, create a code of ethics for all to follow. Two, create an office that monitors activities to ensure the ethical content is adhered to. Three, conduct training programs to teach organizational ethics goals. And four, avoid putting employees in situations where their morals may be compromised.

At the University of Florida, we have tried to implement all of the practices above. Nevertheless, ethical issues do arise. Recently, we had a research nurse, who thinking she was attending to research business, may have over-stepped some HIPAA privacy regulations. While business ethics may tend to agree that she did what she did out of loyalty to the company, organizational ethics demands that she be held accountable for crossing moral boundaries.

References


