



Ethical Imperative: Why Moral Leadership Is Good Business

John Dalla Costa

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Ethics are becoming the defining business issue of our time, affecting corporate profits and credibility, as well as personal security and the sustainability of a global economy. From price-fixing to bribery to toxic-waste dumping, companies around the world are engaging in unethical practices and chalking them up to the cost of doing business. but in an increasingly transparent global economy, where companies are being scrutinized by the media, private watch groups, government, competitors and their own employees, it is just such unethical practices that deplete profits, jeopardize reputations and, in cases like Barings Bank, risk the entire business. By the most conservative estimate, yearly losses due to unethical behavior equal more than the profits of the top forty corporations in North America. Such economic waste and moral loss require more than a PR Band-Aid. But how does a company and its managers and employees begin to encode an ethical construct into its bottom-line strategies and daily practices? In the *Ethical Imperative*, John Dalla Costa outlines the process for incorporating, teaching and reinforcing ethical principles to the direct benefit of customers, shareholders, employees and profits. Drawing from the fields of management, theology and the behavioral sciences, Dalla Costa makes clear why corporate ethics must be a fundamental component of any business. He provides a working practical model that business people can use to establish their own “Ethical Orientation” and outlines a new, forward-thinking “global ethic for the global economy” based on respect, honesty, fairness, justice and environmental responsibility. Case examples from a wide variety of industries are used to illustrate the workings of this ethical framework and help managers customize the model to serve the needs and priorities of their own business. As managers and consumers, many people are concerned about such issues as sweatshops, global warming and discrimination in the workplace, and are struggling to integrate their beliefs into their jobs, companies and purchases. The *Ethical Imperative* links these personal values to business performance. It is a compelling and useful “must-read” for executives and managers, employees and policy-makers, environmentalists, consumers and anyone who possesses an interest and concern over current ethical issues.

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