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Ethical Leadership: Rise Above the Struggle

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Abstract- The purpose of this article is to showcase how leader's beliefs and values and for the dignity and rights of other, is paramount and must be weaved holistically into a leader's life and the organization they work. Showing that ethics is centered around virtuousness of individuals, instance of values and morals an individual or a society deems appropriate has to be the cornerstone of a leader's choices. This paper depicts failures and successes that organization has encountered in regards to their ethical choices. It is hoped that this article will inform leaders on ethics and how to navigate the perpetual waters of ethical behavior.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This issue of ethics must start with leadership. So, the question is how do supervisors, directors, managers, and business owners rise above the struggle and establish themselves as ethical leaders? My view is that it must be done intentionally, by modeling ethical conduct and weaving it holistically into every level of one's life and organization. If a leader knows who he/she is as a leader, he/she must focus on what is right and exemplify to their team that they are there to help, and not to exploit the vulnerabilities of others. This is accomplished by leading with ethical behavior and integrity. This may seem a bit daunting at first, but it is a necessary mean to create a business environment where ethical lapses are the anomaly and not the norm. This should be a living, breathing, foundational way of life that helps center a staff and guide them as they navigate the perpetual whitewater of decision making. In my organization, my focus is to become a proactive ethical leader, championing high ethical conduct and emphasizing prevention. As a leader, one must talk about what positive ethics looks like in practice as often as one talks about what to avoid. Take time to celebrate positive ethical choices and consider the radical step of rewarding employees who are brave enough to admit and learn from their mistakes. As a leader, one must engage stakeholders and embrace responsiveness, diversity, and inclusion. Ethical leadership means constantly acting in a manner that earns trust from my team, empowers employees to do their best work, and builds an office community that values fairness, encouragement and support as much as it does win for our external customers. This consistent commitment to ethics may not be easy, but there are some practical ways as a leader one can integrate ethical conduct into my organization and into my management styles. Leaders must embed social

and moral responsibility into the organization's processes and procedures and understand global boundaries and diverse cultures and how to span them. These tasks require flexibility and learning as a leader is successful in growing, developing, spanning boundaries, creating vertical clearance, and holding dialogue with other organizations. The challenge is engaging in active inquiry. Ethics must be how one, as a leader, think, communicate, build and sustain relationships, use power, and authority, make decisions, and take action with regard to everything interconnected in this report and to engage effectively and reflectively in this maze of interconnection.

II. ETHICAL STORIES OF FAILURES AND SUCCESSES

- a) *Failures*
 - *United Airlines* mission statement is to create an inclusive work environment, characterized by dignity and respect, that empowers every employee to serve the global marketplace and contribute to our success. On April 9, 2017, *Video footage* exploded on the internet showing the face of David Dao's head smacking against an arm rest during an altercation, then his sweater hitching up to his chest to expose his stomach and being dragged down the aisle and off the plane to give access for crew who wanted to get to Louisville to work a flight
 - *Enron's* Kenneth Lay, Jeff Skilling, and other execs, *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlwFO4_SWQ0 Alex Gibney analyze the rise and fall of an infamous corporate conglomerate. Enron grew to become the world's seventh largest publicly-held corporation. The video depicts the lengths to which the company went in order to appear incredibly profitable while hiding their shady business practices and reveals how Lay, Skilling, and other execs managed to keep their riches, while thousands of pensioners saw their loyalty vanish with the loss of their jobs and their retirement funds. Leaders are responsible for creating a culture in which their employees work; in this case, the environment readily enabled unethical and immoral behavior.
- b) *Successes*
 - *Starbucks*. Starbucks is committed to 100% sustainably sourced coffee, and uses a system called C.A.F.E. (Coffee and Farmer Equity



Practices) in order to optimize its sustainable sourcing. C.A.F.E. Practices was introduced in 2004 as a all-inclusive set of social, economic, environmental and quality guidelines that rule how coffee should be ethically sourced. There are four concepts at the heart of Starbucks' C.A.F.E. sourcing system: quality, economic transparency, social responsibility, and environmental leadership. The coffee giant even utilizes a third party agency, SCS Global Services, to verify that its sourcing is ethical. The recognized industry standards are set by Starbucks for ethical sourcing.

- *H&M, The Ethical fashion leader.* H&M", <https://youtu.be/Qd1f2ulzz4c>, has ramped up its sustainability, transparency, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts in recent years. H&M is the world's largest user of organic cotton. But what about the water that is needed for that cotton. The company has been reported to have conserved more than 13.2 million gallons as it streamlined its denim manufacturing. H&M has also published a list of 98.5% of their suppliers' names and addresses on their website, and update it on a quarterly basis. This assures transparency so that each supplier can be held accountable to living up to company standards. One of these goals are 100% recycled or sustainably sourced materials by 2030. H&M is dedicated to moving in the right and more responsible direction focusing on corporate social responsibility at the supplier stage, the environment, and within H&M.

c) *Open Questions*

- What is the biggest ethical challenge facing 2019?
- Are women more ethical than men? Share your thoughts. Are women held to higher ethical standard than men? How?
- How is ethical behavior viewed and managed in different countries and cultures?