Integrating Coverage of Ethics into the Curriculum

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You do not need to be an ethicist to integrate ethics into your classes

(Pass this on to the naysayers)
Foundation is Key

• With the right foundation, ethics can be integrated into your courses
• My (undergraduate) foundation has three components:
  1. A textbook that integrates ethics into every chapter
  2. Video cases from leadershipinfocus.net
  3. Youtube
Start the Discussion on Day 1

• Add ethics coverage into the syllabus
  – Include ethics in the “Course Objectives”
• This may lead to blank stares!
• Concrete examples help clarify things
  – I use the Ford Pinto

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The Pinto Discussion

• 11 Pintos were subjected to rear-end crash tests
  – 8 standard equipment Pintos exploded
  – The 3 surviving Pintos were modified to prevent explosions

• After a cost ($137.5 million) – benefit ($49.5 million) analysis, Ford decides to produce the Pinto with the faulty design
  – Was this legal?
    • According to the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard...Yes
  – Was this ethical?
Not All Ethical Dilemmas Are Created Equal

• Choose discussion topics carefully
• The Pinto example generates great discussion
• Be prepared for other topics to flop:
  – The role of tattoos in hiring decisions
  – Is goal setting manipulation
  – You must be in a non-platonic relationship
• Always be on the lookout for additional material (e.g., attend a Bill Daniels Teaching Business Ethics Workshop)
Devil’s Advocacy

• Some *seemingly* straight-forward dilemmas are not so simple

N R Narayana Murthy

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Infosys Example

• Infosys wants to purchase 14 acres of land to expand a campus
• A government official wants a $7,000 bribe, otherwise the purchase price will be inflated by $140,000
  – What do you do?
  – Infosys pays the extra $140,000 rather than the $7,000 bribe
Infosys Example

“You’re not going to mess with this company because this company is not going to compromise on it’s value system.”

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Infosys Example

“The corrupt person would say there is no point in wasting my time on these people because there is no return on investment. I’d rather go with somebody else.”

N R Narayana Murthy
Infosys Example

“There is no value system which is free. It always means you will have to pay a certain price for your convictions and belief.”

N R Narayana Murthy
Infosys Example

• Seems straight forward...right?
• It may cost you financially, but you should always do the right thing
  – The devil’s advocate says, “Yes, but the year this incident occurred, Infosys had revenues of just over $4,000,000,000”
• Students without $4 Billion tend to reassess the situation and the discussion continues
Hurdles to Integration

• “You can’t teach ethics”
• “Are these discussions going to be on the exams”
• A “profit-first” mentality
• TIME (inside and outside the classroom)
  – Integration is just that...integration
Has The Integration of Ethics Impacted My Students?

- **YES**
- Fall 2010 textbook example provides me with *some* empirical evidence
- My Org. Behavior course received free textbooks for a class test
- 41 of 44 textbooks were returned
- The buy-back price of the book was $80
  - $3,280

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Has The Integration of Ethics Impacted My Students?

• *Anecdotal evidence:*
  “…our discussions in class made me realize that not everyone has the same point of view. Just because I think my point of view is ethical and reasonable, doesn’t mean that others will think the same way. That is something very important that I will remember and consider whenever I am put in a management / leadership role.”
Thank You

Questions and/or Comments?