Ethical Challenges in Strategic Management

NEW MODELS AND NEW REALITIES THAT ARE TRANSFORMING BUSINESS AND SOCIETIES

The 19th IESE International Symposium on Ethics, Business and Society

Strategic Management entails specifying the organization’s mission, vision and goals, developing policies and plans designed to achieve these objectives, and allocating resources to implement these policies and plans. For this exercise, businesses should look at their strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats in the external environment.

Looking inside, the company needs to define the range of business it plans to pursue, the kind of organization it intends to be and the values it wants to live by. It must also decide on the nature of the financial and non-financial contributions it intends to make for its stakeholders.

In terms of the external environment, businesses are now facing greater challenges. Besides the complexity of an increasingly open and competitive market, demographic and social changes have led to a rise in new values, priorities and expectations that necessarily affect how businesses behave. Companies need to come across as good corporate citizens by repairing any damage to their reputation and facing the risk of the easy fix represented by increased regulation.

Moreover, the global problems faced by our civilization require a coordinated response by all social agents, businesses included. The role played by companies in the origin of these problems may be up for discussion, but what seems indisputable is that these problems are not likely to be solved without participation from business. If companies want to effectively address these social and environmental issues, they will need to innovate in products, processes and business models.

A narrow focus on economic motivation and outcomes may seriously limit the ability of existing strategy models to address these challenges. However, new business models and initiatives have been proposed that go beyond a vision centered on the creation of economic value. Different proposals have emerged from theory and practice to describe companies’ new role in building a better society as well as a new approach that combines the economic efficiency of business with activities that have a social impact.

How can ethics contribute to this debate? How can integrating ethics into strategy provide business with a broader vision and a clearer perspective on its role in society?

- Regarding corporate vision, mission and values, ethics provides a point of reflection on how businesses can contribute to the common good of society. Companies are model social institutions that have to earn their reputation through responsible conduct.

- With regard to business strategy, ethics can play a significant role when proposing new business models to promote a vision of business that goes beyond the economic sphere. Sustainability and social responsibility can act as factors in innovation throughout the value chain.

- At the management level, ethics contributes ideas concerning management’s role and responsibilities. The leadership provided by the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee should not only be demonstrated by ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework, but also by promoting integrity, i.e., upholding the company’s values and actively engaging the company in addressing social problems.

The aim of this Symposium is to reflect on the role of ethics in redefining strategic management in keeping with the challenges of the new millennium. We aim to investigate how ethics can contribute to formulating innovative proposals regarding how companies are designed and managed, and how they take an active part in improving the societies where they operate.
Conceptual papers as well as empirical research, including case studies, are welcome.

A collection of papers will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics*. The selection process will consider the academic quality of the paper and its proximity to the Symposium's general theme.

## TRACKS AND TENTATIVE TOPICS

### 1. Ethics and the Purpose of the Firm

- Vision and mission of the firm
- Mission statements as strategic tools
- Sustainability and the need for change
- Short-term priorities and long-term vision
- Business and the common good
- Business as social change agents
- Ethics and organizational theories

### 2. Ethics in Business Models

- Sustainability, CSR and the redefinition of business models
- Innovation for sustainability
- Opportunities for doing well by doing good
- Shared value strategies
- Social initiatives and social value creation
- Social entrepreneurship
- Hybrid organizations
- Benefit corporations

### 3. Integrating Ethics into Strategy

- Moral values and corporate strategy
- Impact of vision and mission on policies and practices
- Ethics in strategic planning
- The role of ethics in defining a new strategy
- Competitive strategy and sustainability
- Ethical issues concerning short-term strategies
- CSR as a source of competitive advantage
- Cooperative strategy
- Strategic alliances and partnerships
- Strategic responses to social and environmental demands
- Ethics and globalization

### 4. Ethics in Management Decision-making

- Aligning shareholders’ and stakeholders’ interests
- The role of the CEO in designing an ethical organization
- Organizational effectiveness and sustainability
- Ethics in management control and organizational structure
- Congruency between organizational structure and strategy
- Ethics in risk management and reputation
- Situations of conflict and stakeholder engagement
- Fiduciary duties and shareholder activism

### 5. Ethics in the Organizational Culture

- Creating a sense of common purpose across the organization
- Building relational and social capital
- Embedding ethical values across organizations
- Leadership and corporate culture
- Integrity and trust in governance
- The role of the Board in an ethical culture
- Talent development and meaning at work
- Managing organizational learning and organizational change

### 6. Business in Society

- Value creation and stakeholder management
- Legitimacy and corporate citizenship
- Consistency between business vision and mission and CSR strategy
- Building partnerships to create social and economic value
- International standards and global initiatives
- Defining common goals for business in society

## DEADLINES

**JANUARY 25, 2016**

Submission of paper proposals of about 1,000 words explaining the aim, methodology, possible findings, and relevant references.

**FEBRUARY 22, 2016**

Authors are informed if their paper proposal has been accepted.

**MAY 30, 2016**

Deadline for receiving full papers. An abstract of about 250 words should be included. The suggested length for papers is about 7,000 words. Authors interested in submitting their paper for the special issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics* should make this clear on the cover page.

**JULY 18, 2016**

Authors are informed if their paper has been accepted for the review process for publication in the special issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics*.

## DIRECTIONS

The official language of the Symposium is English.

Please send proposals using the paper submission platform at [www.iese.edu/19symposium](http://www.iese.edu/19symposium)

We suggest using Times New Roman 12 point font and a line spacing of 1.5 lines. Place no line between each paragraph. Title pages are not necessary. Employ endnotes, place page numbers in the lower right corner, and use the style guidelines of the *Journal of Business Ethics* for paper style and references.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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## UPDATED INFORMATION

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