

A roadmap for ethical excellence

Domènec Melé updates and expands his core text on business ethics to offer a practical, people-centered guide to promoting human excellence in organizations.



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Business ethics is a hot topic these days -- in the media, in society at large and in academia. Even businesses themselves are incorporating discussion of ethics into their internal dialogue and governance mechanisms.

So, what is business ethics? Does it involve people as conscious individuals with a sense of morality, companies as organizations, or both? How is it put into practice and how can it be reconciled with market competitiveness?

[Domènec Melé](#), who holds the [IESE Chair of Business Ethics](#), already answered many of these questions in his 2009 textbook [Business Ethics in Action: Managing Human Excellence in Organizations](#).

Now, an updated and expanded second edition presents new cases on issues such as climate change, environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices and immigration, and extends its international reach to Asia, the Middle East and Africa. It also explores current issues such as the purpose and sustainability of the company.

Scandals, model leadership and dilemmas

Each of the book's 13 chapters opens with an introductory case. These include scandals and questionable behavior in companies such as Enron, Lehman brothers, Volkswagen, Siemens and France Télécom, as well as Bernie Madoff's Ponzi scheme. But there are also positive examples of business ethics at work, such as the François Michelin's people-centered vision, Bill George's leadership at Medtronic and AES Corporation's foundational values that continue to have an impact today.

And each chapter closes with a dilemma-based case study -- usually about an SME or a managerial situation that requires a detailed analysis and decisions related to the concepts presented.

More than a textbook

A main challenge of executive education today is introducing ethics in all areas of knowledge across the curricula. Here, Melé offers a textbook that seamlessly integrates ethics into the teaching of other business disciplines.

With the management function as its central theme, the book covers key aspects associated with decision-making, organizational design and managing a company's relationship to society. The practical orientation is meant to be useful to managers, business executives and consultants.

Melé believes that the field of business ethics is not limited to solving moral dilemmas or determining what is acceptable. It should also be oriented "to improving ethical conduct in business and to inspiring excellent practices in organizations, management and corporate governance: practices that favor trust and human quality performance in business relationships."

And Melé argues for a people-centered approach, defending our ability to cultivate the virtues that shape character and promote human flourishing, and the central role of these virtues to good behavior and leadership that instills confidence.

From theory to practice

The book's 13 chapters are grouped into four sections:

- Section one addresses the fundamentals of business ethics, people-centered business ethics and personal moral responsibility, as well as the keys to moral judgment in decision making.
- Section two examines business ethics at the individual and managerial level. These chapters discuss the most frequent immoral behaviors in business and finance; the ethical dimension of the market economy and government intervention and the purpose of the company and its ethical consequences; the proper use of power and ethical issues related to management and corporate governance; and the role of moral character in leadership.
- Section three deals with organizational ethics, delving into the ethical organization of work and sales.
- The fourth section concentrates on social aspects, from corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the company's relationship to society -- including accountability -- to ecological ethics, sustainability and responsibility in a global world.

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