

# Preface to the Fourth Edition

My overarching goal in the fourth edition of this text remains what it was for the first edition: “to provide a clear, concise, and reasonably comprehensive introductory survey of the ethical choices available to us in business.” This book arose from the challenges encountered in my own teaching of business ethics. Over the years I have taught business ethics in many settings and with many formats. I sometimes relied on an anthology of readings, other times I emphasized case studies. I taught business ethics as a lecture course and in a small seminar. Most recently, I taught business ethics exclusively to undergraduates in a liberal arts setting. It is difficult to imagine another discipline that is as multidisciplinary, taught in as many formats and as many contexts, by faculty with as many different backgrounds and with as many different aims, as business ethics.

Yet, although the students, format, pedagogy, and teaching goals change, the basic philosophical and conceptual structure for the field remains relatively stable. There are a range of stakeholders with whom business interacts: employees, customers, suppliers, governments, society. Each of these relationships creates ethical responsibilities and every adult unavoidably will interact with business in several of these roles. A course in business ethics, therefore, should ask students to examine this range of responsibilities from the perspective of employee, customer, and citizen as well as from the perspective of business manager or executive. Students should consider such issues in terms of both the type of lives they themselves wish to lead and the type of public policy for governing business they are willing to support.

My hope was that this book could provide a basic framework for examining the range of ethical issues that arise in a business context. With this basic framework provided, individual instructors would then be free to develop their courses in various ways. I have been grateful to learn that this book is being used in a wide variety of settings. Many people have chosen to use it as a supplement to the instructor’s own lectures, an anthologized collection of readings, a series of case studies, or some combination of all three. Others have chosen to use this text to cover the ethics component of another course in such business-related disciplines as management, marketing, accounting, human resources. The book also has been used to provide coverage of business-related topics in

more general courses in applied or professional ethics. I take this variety of uses as evidence that the first edition was reasonably successful in achieving its goals.

## NEW TO THE FOURTH EDITION

In response to the advice of many friends and colleagues who have been using this book in their own classes, this fourth edition has made the following changes:

- Every chapter begins with a new, or significantly revised and updated, discussion case. All of these changes involve cases that have developed in the years since the previous edition, including cases on Bernard Madoff, AIG, subprime lending, predatory lending, Steve Jobs, and Google in China.
- Sustainability topics have been more widely integrated throughout the text, including a new sustainability section in chapter 5 on corporate social responsibility and a sustainability-focused discussion case on marketing in chapter 8.
- Many new cases include material and topics arising from the recent financial meltdown, making this edition more timely and relevant.
- New sections include a model for ethical decision making, philanthropic CSR, and a business case for sustainability.

Another bit of advice that I received, as consistent as it was challenging, was to add this new material without making the book longer or more cumbersome. It has been gratifying to learn that readers have found the book clearly written and accessible to students unfamiliar with the field. To achieve these goals, I have deleted some outdated cases and worked to improve the clarity of the more philosophical sections, especially within chapter 2's discussion of ethical theory.

Readers of previous editions will find a familiar format. Each chapter begins with a discussion case developed from actual events. The intent of these cases is to raise questions and get students thinking and talking about the ethical issues that will be introduced in the chapter. The text of each chapter then tries to do three things:

- Identify and explain the ethical issues involved;
- Direct students to an examination of these issues from the points of view of various stakeholders; and
- Lead students through some initial steps of a philosophical analysis of these issues.

The emphasis remains on encouraging student thinking, reasoning, and decision making rather than on providing answers or promoting a specific set of conclusions. To this end, a new section on ethical decision making at the end of chapter 1 provides one model for decision making that might prove useful throughout the remainder of the text.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with previous editions, my greatest debt in writing this book is to those scholars engaged in the academic research of business ethics. I tried to acknowledge their work whenever I relied on it in this text, but in case I have missed anyone I hope this general acknowledgment can serve to repay my debt to the business ethics community. I also acknowledge three members of that community who deserve special mention and thanks. My own work in business ethics has, for over 20 years, benefited from the friendships of John McCall, Ron Duska, and Laura Hartman. They will no doubt find much in this book that sounds familiar. Twenty years of friendship and collaboration tends to blur the lines of authorship, but it is fair to say that I have learned much more from John, Ron, and Laura than they from me.

Previous editions have also benefited from the advice of a number of people who read and commented on various chapters. In particular, I would like to thank Norman Bowie, Ernie Diedrich, Al Gini, Patrick Murphy, Denis Arnold, and Christopher Pynes.

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