INSTITUTE OF DESTINATION ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS
ETHICS IN DESTINATION ARCHITECTURE

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OVERVIEW

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Introduction

The basis for ethical behavior springs from personal value systems developed through an individual's life. Formal business ethics are based in collective agreement on values. In the destination design profession, an established organizational body, the Institute of Destination Architects and Designers (IDAD), adopted a code of professional conduct very similar to a code of ethics. It is the intent of this writing to present foundational business ethics that contribute to the formation of such professional codes.

Business Ethics

Viewing ethics as the catalyst that causes professionals to take socially-responsible decisions is probably the most practical approach to understanding business ethics. Business ethics are an important part of professional practice. In the sections that follow, definitions of ethics, explanations of why ethics are important, a discussion of codes of ethics, and ways to demonstrate ethics will be given.

Ethics Definitions

Most definitions of ethics are closely tied to the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Dr. Albert Schweitzer said ethics is "our concern for good behavior. We feel an obligation to consider not only our own personal well-being, but also that of other human beings." This view of ethics is really just a restating of the Golden Rule. A definition of ethics in a business

might be an ability to project values into corporate decision-making, to evaluate how various people are affected by those decisions, and to provide a way for day-to-day practice to incorporate those values. Ethics is often referred to as a domain of inquiry, a discipline, in which matters of right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice, are uniformly examined. Morality, by contrast, is often used to refer not to a discipline, but to patterns of thought and action that are actually operative in everyday life. In this sense, morality is what the discipline of ethics is about. In summary, business morality is what business ethics is about.

Why Professional Practices Require Ethics

A past Chairman of the Board for IBM, John Akers, said that being ethical makes good business sense for managers. He believed that companies could not be competitive without acting ethically. According to Akers,

> "Ethics and competitiveness are inseparable. We compete as a society. No society anywhere will compete very long or successfully with people stabbing each other in the back; with people trying to steal from each other; with everything requiring notarized confirmation because you can't trust the other person; with every little squabble ending in litigation; and with the government writing reams of regulatory legislation, tying business hand and foot to keep it honest."

Overall corporate health can be enhanced in three major areas by ethical management practices. Productivity is the first one; management practices

affect employees who are stakeholders in a company. Employees can be positively affected when management considers ethics in its decisions toward its own stakeholders. The second way that ethical business decisions can benefit the company is by affecting outside stakeholders. A reputation for ethical behavior by a company can increase its public image, and attract customers who view these values as desirable. The third way that ethical management policies can help corporate health is by minimizing interference from government regulations and government agencies. If the public believes that companies are performing unethically or not in a responsible manner, then they will push legislators to increase regulations and other government controls.

Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is a formal guide used by an organization such as IDAD to guide its members in making ethical decisions and performing their jobs in an ethical manner. Issues such as social responsibility, financial disclosure, conflicts of interest, competitors, and giving or receiving political influence or business, are often addressed in Codes of Ethics. However, there is no way that all ethical and unethical conduct within an organization can be written into one code. Codes of ethics need to be comprehensive guides that are usable by their intended audiences, and to that end they must be constantly monitored and updated to be sure they provide useable guidelines to make ethical decisions.

Ethical Image

In most organizations, managers work hard to promote ethical work practices, not only to satisfy their own values and the organization's values, but because of the importance in gaining whatever competitive advantage there is in projecting to the public an image of the organization as ethical and responsible to the public and employees. Professionals can feel confident that a potential action will be considered ethical by the general public if it is consistent with one or more of the following standards:

1. The Golden Rule — Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

2. The utilitarian principle — Act in a way that produces the greatest good for the greatest number.

3. Kant's categorical imperative — Act in a way that the action taken under the circumstances could be a universal law, or rule, of behavior.

4. The professional ethic — Act in a way that would be seen as proper by disinterested professional peers.

5. The TV test — Professionals should ask themselves "Would I feel comfortable explaining why I took this action on national television?"

6. The legal test   Is the proposed action or decision

                                            legal? Established laws are generally

                                            considered <u>minimum</u> standards for

                                            ethics.

7. The four way test   Professionals can feel confident that a

                                            decision is ethical if they can answer

                                            "yes" to the following questions as they

                                            relate to the decision: Is the decision

                                            truthful? Is it fair to all concerned?

                                            Will it build good will and better

                                            friendships? Will it be beneficial to all

                                            concerned?

Decision-Making

Business ethics ultimately result in decision-making by organizations and

professionals in real-world scenarios. Three common concerns among

professionals have been:

   (1) the choices and characters of persons,

   (2) the policies and cultures of organizations, (3) the arrangements and

      ideologiesof entire social systems. It can be seen that business ethics is

      multi-leveled. At the level of the individual (the ethic of the professional), it

      refers to the values by which self-interest and other motives are balanced

      by concern for fairness and the common good, both within and outside the

practice. At the organizational level (the ethics of a professional

enterprise), it refers to the spoken and unspoken group conscience that

every practice has, either by design or by default, as it pursues its

economic objectives. At the level of the entire system (the ethics of the

business community), business ethics refers to the pattern of social,

political, and economic forces that drive individuals, firms and societies.

Along with the three levels of business ethics, there are three ways in which one

might take an interest at each level: descriptively, normatively and analytically.

A descriptive interest would lead one to focus on the actual moral beliefs of

business persons or groups. Although descriptive ethical information does not

entail normative or prescriptive conclusions about right and wrong, it can be

valuable in other ways. A decision-maker concerned about potential responses

from the social environment will pay close attention to the ethical views of various

parties. The focus is on what people think is right or wrong. If ethical convictions

guide behavior, they become important to enlighten management decision-

making.

Normative interest in business ethics means searching for a defensible set of

ethical norms or values for individual or institutional decision-making. Unlike

descriptive ethics, normative ethics is not neutral about right and wrong. While

descriptive consideration about the ethical climate may be important to a

business decision-maker, his choices will in the end be guided by implicit or

explicit normative principles (such as honesty, loyalty, promise-keeping, and financial obligation).

Analytical interest in business ethics scrutinizes ethical values and their relationships to such action-guides as religion, law, social custom, and economic self-interest. Analytical ethics (sometimes called metaethics) is a reflection about descriptive and normative ethics, and the connection between them.

Ethics belong in the decision-making process of an organization. It can increase the resources for making decisions and ensure that people make the best possible decision. The purpose of ethics is not to make people ethical; it is to help people make better decisions. Decisions about what groups or organizations should do (policy decisions) can benefit from ethical reflection. The application of ethics is similar to the adage: "If you give a hungry man food, he will want more the next day. If you teach him to grow his own food, he will never be in want again." If you tell people what is right, you will have to tell them tomorrow. If you teach them how to discover what is right, they will find the way themselves. Ethics gives people a method, viable assumptions, and conceptual tools to decide on an appropriate course of action. Ethics should not be looked upon as a set of rules: it is the process of deciding what should be done to ensure that people have the resources so they can make better decisions.

Summary

In conclusion, it is apparent that ethics have foundations in moral imperatives and societal standards. At an individual level, ethics are based on internal values of right and wrong. At the professional business level, collective individual values are tempered by decision-making guidelines, or codes of ethics, to reflect the broader value judgments of many individual professionals in a discipline. At the societal level, ethics are a reflection of many competing interest groups and a wide range of professions. Destination architects are individuals, professionals and a part of the larger society. As such, their ethics will be guided by personal integrity and commitment to standards they adopt as their own. It is the goal of organizations, such as IDAD, to provide general guidelines for professionals to follow. In the final analysis, the familiar and simple concept of the Golden Rule applies to all:

"And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way."

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