

Ethics Team Event

This event involves analysis of a business case study using principles-based ethics. The principles can be applied in any business environment to guide a person's or a business's ethical decision-making.

Updates to the original guidelines have been made, due to the virtual competition format for 2021.

Specifications

1. Each school is eligible to enter one (1) team in the Ethics Team Event at the State Conference. Team members are not allowed to compete in any other event, except the Merit Award Program.
2. A team will consist of two members. **Each member must be a Senior.**
3. The top teams are eligible to attend the ASPIRE Academy at the International Conference.
4. Each member will take the Business Management & Administration Cluster exam during the online testing window in February. The scores of the team members scores will be averaged together.
5. A list of questions specific to the scenario is included in the participant's instructions. These are distinct factors that must be in the written entry, oral presentations and follow-up responses to the judges.
6. **Business Case Analysis (written entry):**
 - Each team will analyze the posted case-study situation, and write a five page report, in which the team members identify the ethical issues involved, and explain how they will address the issues.
 - The written entry will be turned in during the event's orientation at the conference. The written entry needs to be submitted in an official DECA folio [Shop DECA SKU: 4WEFOLI]. The team will be penalized 15 points if their written entry is not turned in during event orientation in a official DECA folio. **The written entry must be uploaded between March 1 and March 5, 2021 by the chapter advisor.**
 - A completed DECA Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form (*page 57 of the National DECA Guide*), certifying the originality of the work must be signed by the advisor and the students must be included. The DECA Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form must be the first page of the written entry. **Only those students whose name appears on the DECA Statement of Assurances and Academic Integrity form and have been included on the chapter's registration form will be allowed to compete in the event.**
7. **Oral Presentations:**
 - During competition, each team will give an **eight minute presentation** of its analysis and recommendations to the judges, followed by a two minute question and answer period.
 - Each team member must participate in the oral presentations and respond to questions from the judges.
 - Only visual aids that can be easily carried to the presentation by the actual participants will be permitted, and the participants themselves must set up the visuals. No set-up time will be allowed. Participants must furnish their own materials. No electrical power or Internet connection will be supplied. **Visual aids must be either a PDF or PowerPoint that can be shared through Doxy.**
 - Participants may use notecards during the presentation.
 - No materials may be handed to the judges.
8. The maximum score for written entry and oral presentation evaluation is 100 points.
9. If any of the above rules are violated, the Event Coordinator must be notified of such, by the judge(s).
10. The presentations and report are weighted twice (2 times) the value of the averaged exam score.
11. The decision of the judges is final. Students are **not** to ask judges for justification of their scores.



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BUSINESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Should businesses be held responsible for implementing practices to protect the environment? Discuss both the positive and negative implications of holding businesses responsible for implementing practices to protect the environment.

Since the time of the Industrial Revolution, businesses have been impacting the natural environment on a massive scale. However, it was not until the 1960s, when ecologist Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, highlighting the widespread effects of pollution, was published that social support for environmental protection started gaining momentum.

In the 1980s and 1990s, as major environmental catastrophes such as oil spills increased pressure on businesses, corporations moved from passive regulatory compliance to strategic environmentalism, a more proactive approach to addressing environmental issues. Then, in the early 2000s, scientific research findings ignited even more global concern for the challenges of pollution, emissions, and climate change. Environmentalism commanded universal attention as resource stewardship, a resource management approach in which people and businesses serve as nature's caretakers, was presented as a moral duty.

The 2010s onward reveal an expanded focus on sustainability, clean and green energy, and the integration of environmentally friendly policies into corporate management practices. Now, as climate change—worsened by human activity—intensifies deforestation, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, melting ice caps, overfishing, and more, businesses are increasingly expected to implement practices that lessen their impact on the environment.

Today, businesses must comply with numerous environmental regulations issued by local-, state- and federal-level governmental agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Energy. If a business breaches mandatory requirement set by any of these agencies, it is likely to face serious penalties and fines. In 2017, for example, when Volkswagen pleaded guilty in U.S. court to tampering with its vehicles' emissions software, the company was ordered to pay a \$2.8+ billion fine. The company also faced multiple class-action suits, penalties, and—in the case of a handful of its executives—federal prison time.

Beyond the guidelines issued by these different agencies, most businesses are left to determine how, or even whether, to curb their negative environmental impact. To what degree are businesses responsible for implementing practices to protect the environment?



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It is not a decision that companies necessarily make solely for the benefit of the environment—or for themselves. Businesses today are expected to be socially responsible and are held accountable to not only themselves, but also their employees, customers, stakeholders, and the public. Modern customers expect businesses to take a stand on ethical issues, including those related to protecting the environment. Mounting pressure from these belief-driven buyers means that the decisions businesses make regarding their social and environmental responsibilities have big implications for their future success.

Fortunately, companies interested in going green have many options these days when identifying and implementing practices to protect the environment. Businesses can lessen their carbon footprint by incorporating recycling programs, introducing energy-efficient equipment, and manufacturing processes, conducting sustainability audits, reducing single-use consumption, and various other sustainable business practices. Unfortunately, the practices that have the largest impact do not always come cheap. Some green initiatives, like installing facility-wide solar panels or sourcing materials from local suppliers, have higher front-end costs, which is not always feasible for smaller businesses or start-ups.

When the lines between protecting the environment and remaining profitable are blurred, it can be difficult to know what is ethical. The responsibility of businesses to protect the environment raises several ethical questions: To what extent are values compatible with profitability? What are the positive and negative implications of holding businesses responsible for environmental sustainability? Does a business's size and/or industry affect its responsibility? When faced with decisions related to environmentally friendly business practices, it is important to consider all possible consequences and ethical implications before determining what actions to take.



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CASE STUDY

Deja recently started working as the product manager of a small start-up technology company called Alchemy Tech. At first, Deja was nervous about leaving her old job to move to such a new business. She ultimately accepted the position, though, because she knew she would have the exciting opportunity to help build the company from the ground up.

Deja is interested in developing and implementing a variety of business practices that not only help Alchemy Tech, but also the surrounding community. Deja is most excited about the business adopting “green” processes and procedures that help preserve and protect the environment.

However, when Deja brings up the idea of sustainable business practices in a management meeting, she is surprised that she does not receive much support from her colleagues. Instead, several individuals argue that adopting sustainable business practices is too costly for the new business. Other managers say that they do not know what “sustainable” practices look like and would not even know where to start. The chief operating officer points out that since there is no specific law requiring “green” practices, the company is not responsible for protecting the environment anyway.

After the meeting, Deja expresses her thoughts privately to the start-up’s chief executive officer, Annette. Deja feels conflicted. Adopting sustainable practices makes sense to her, but so many other members of management seem to be against it. She does not know how to convince them that it is the right thing to do for the business, the community, and the environment. Annette listens to Deja’s concerns and suggests that perhaps they could revisit this conversation in a few years, once the start-up is more established.

Deja does not know how to move forward. Should she listen to Annette and her colleagues, agreeing to ignore sustainable practices for the time being because doing so makes the most sense financially? Or should she fight for the start-up to adopt environmentally friendly practices and potentially risk the new company’s future success?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- How can Deja best demonstrate **integrity** in this situation?
- To what extent should Alchemy Tech be held **accountable** for the impact its actions make on the environment?
- Is it **fair** to expect Alchemy Tech to spend company resources on sustainable business practices, even if not required to do so by **law**? Does this change if the business is not a new start-up, but a large corporation?
- What role could resource stewardship play in the **viability** of Alchemy Tech?
- If Alchemy Tech adopts sustainable practices, should it be **transparent** in its reasons why? Does it matter if a business focuses on “going green” just for its reputation and brand image, and not because it helps the environment? How does this affect public **trust** in a company?
- Should the responsibility of protecting the environment fall to Deja and other employees, who can take many individual actions to protect the environment, or to the business, which can implement company-wide initiatives?



NAME(S): _____
 CHAPTER: _____
 ID: _____ SECTION: _____

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EVALUATION FORM

Please refer to the event guidelines for a more detailed explanation of these items.

WRITTEN CONTENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
1. Discussed the importance of ethics in business.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	
2. Provided a comprehensive analysis of the case.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	
3. Identified and explained all ethical issues involved in the case.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	
4. Determined the actions that led to unethical behavior.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	
5. Described the impact of the ethical issues on the decisions that were made.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	
6. Provided a logical, meaningful rationale for how the case should have been handled.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	
7. Overall impression of the written entry.	1 - 2	3 - 4 - 5	6 - 7 - 8	9 - 10	

PRESENTATION / TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SKILLS	LITTLE/ NO VALUE	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	JUDGED SCORE
8. Statements were well organized and clearly stated.	1 - 2	3	4	5	
9. Appropriate business language was used.	1 - 2	3	4	5	
10. Presentation contained original ideas for problem resolution.	1 - 2	3	4	5	
11. Students demonstrated self-confidence, poise, and good voice projection.	1 - 2	3	4	5	
12. Both team members actively participated in the presentation.	1 - 2	3	4	5	
13. Both team members effectively answered questions.	1 - 2	3	4	5	

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS (100)	
LESS PENALTY POINTS <i>Deduct 15 points if the team did not turn in their written entry in a DECA folio at event orientation</i>	
FINAL SCORE	

COMMENTS:

JUDGE INITIALS _____