

INTEGRATING ETHICS INTO MARKETING COURSES  
(ABSTRACT)

David M. Ludington, Berry College, Mt. Berry, Georgia

INTRODUCTION

The development of a personal value system is an important part of the ethical decision-making process in marketing. Organizations can develop guidelines, frameworks, procedures, and policies to encourage ethical behavior, but in the end, the vast majority of ethical decisions rely on the value system of the person making that decision. Marketing educators need to assist their students in developing ethical orientations. This should be done in each course on an integrated basis, and not be confined to a one-time business ethics class.

ETHICS AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

To assist students in developing more ethical decision-making systems, we can apply the learning process to marketing ethics. The learning process is the vehicle for the advancement to higher levels of ethical thinking and reasoning. There are three major domains of learning: 1.) the INTELLECTUAL domain (transmitting information, understanding, and analytical skills); 2.) the FUNCTIONAL, or practical domain (concerned with the various communication, social, research, and technical occupationally related skills); and 3.) the AFFECTIVE domain (concerned with beliefs and attitudes, including ethics and morals). (Josephson 1987)

Attainment of the Intellectual Domain skills takes students through six stages: knowledge, understanding, analysis-issue spotting, analysis-problem solving, judgement, and synthesis. Marketing students who master these skills develop the ability to synthesize various ethical principles, develop new and original solutions to ethical problems, and to develop ethical marketing strategies.

The Functional Domain skills involve the development of inter-disciplinary knowledge, and the ability to communicate ideas in both an oral and written manner. To assist students in this level of ethical decision-making, marketing classes should contain projects that require ethical research

outside the discipline for environmental analysis, and the presentation of this information in oral and written form.

The affective, or moral domain, deals with the development of a student's ethics, values, attitudes, beliefs, and his or her conscience. This highest level of learning helps students determine the proper way to act in a given situation. It is the process of value clarification and development.

One way we can help marketing students attain this level is presenting a number of values that could be considered to be shared by most in our society. Such values would include: respect for others, concern for others, honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, fairness, fidelity, respect for rule of law, commitment to excellence, positive influence, and accountability. These values can be used as benchmarks in determining the correctness of answers, and case solutions. Marketing professors can build these benchmarks into the student evaluation process, much as they use logic in judging case solutions.

CONCLUSION

We need to help our students develop ethical systems that are based on this country's traditional values and beliefs, and we cannot leave this to the business ethics course. The understanding and use of the learning domains by marketing professors can help in this process.

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