CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Corporate Integrity

What do corporations look like when they have integrity, and how can we move more companies in that direction? *Corporate Integrity* offers a timely, comprehensive framework – and practical business lessons – bringing together questions of organizational design, communication practices, working relationships, and leadership styles to answer this question. Dr. Marvin T. Brown explores the five key challenges facing modern businesses as they try to respond ethically to cultural, interpersonal, organizational, civic, and environmental requirements. He demonstrates that if corporations are to meet the needs of civil society, they must facilitate inclusive communication patterns based on mutual recognition and civic cooperation. *Corporate Integrity* is essential reading for professionals in organizational ethics, business leaders, and graduate students looking for practical and reflective insights into doing business with integrity and purpose.

MARVIN T. BROWN teaches at the University of San Francisco and at Saybrook Graduate School, and has been working in the field of organizational ethics and communication for more than twenty years as an educator, writer, and consultant. He is the author of *The Ethical Process: An Approach to Disagreement and Controversial Issues* (2002) and *Working Ethics: Strategies for Decision Making and Organizational Responsibility* (1990).

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Corporate Integrity

Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership

MARVIN T. BROWN

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title:www.cambridge.org/9780521844819

© Marvin T. Brown 2005

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Sabon 10/13pt system Advent 3B2 8.07f [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Brown, Marvin T., 1943–
Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership /
Marvin T. Brown.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0 521 84481 9 – ISBN 0 521 60657 8 (pbk.)
1. Social responsibility of business. 2. Business ethics.
3. Business communication. 4. Leadership. I. Title.

HD60.B766 2005
174′.4 – dc22 2004057062

ISBN-13 978-0-521-84481-9 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-84481-9 hardback
ISBN-13 978-0-521-60657-8 paperback
ISBN-10 0-521-60657-8 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any contant on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

Preface *page* ix

1 The context for corporate integrity 1
The meanings of integrity 4
The five dimensions of corporate integrity 9
Theories of corporate responsibility 13
Corporate responsibility and corporate dominance 22
Aristotle's civic ethic 28
Corporations as ongoing communication patterns 32
From theory to practice 36

2 Cultural integrity as openness 38
Pearce's typology of different cultures 40
Four communicative culture types 44
A corporate resources conference 50
Cultural responses to differences and disagreements 52
Strategies for moving toward cosmopolitan communication 54
Characteristics of the dialogical process 58
The world of work and communicative cultures 63
The world of technology and cultural pluralism 65
Designing cultural integrity through dialogue 68
From theory to practice 69

3 Interpersonal integrity as relational wholeness 71
Images of relationships 73
Official images of work relationships 76

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Ideal images of family relationships 84
Ideal images of civic relationships 89
The conditions for public deliberation 92
The need for security and the right to participate 96
Relationships of secure civic reciprocity 101
From theory to practice 103

4 Organizational integrity as pursuing a worthwhile purpose 105
The economic perspective of corporate purpose 107
The management perspective of corporate purpose 112
The civic perspective on corporate purpose 119
The comparison of for-profits and nonprofits 121
Business corporations as self-governing organizations 123
Business corporations and public purpose 126
Private and public corporations and the road and highway transportation system 132
From theory to practice 135

5 Social integrity as civic cooperation 136
Characteristics of modern cities 138
Corporations and civil society 142
Corporations and city government 150
The interdependence of corporations and cities 158
Corporations and a city's mission 159
Civic cooperation and the funding of public education 162
From theory to practice 166

6 Environmental integrity as natural prosperity 168
The United States' conversations on environmental protection 170
The United Nations' conversations on sustainability 174
Conversations about world trade and finance 181

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Conversations about the integrity of nature 190
Four themes of natural integrity 198
From theory to practice 203

7 **Corporate integrity and organizational leadership** 205
The connections among the five dimensions of integrity 206
Comparing business and political leaders 211
The leader-and-follower relationship 215
A civic view of authority in the workplace 218
Designing the context for corporate integrity 222
Showing signs of corporate integrity 226
From theory to practice 233

Appendix: Assessment worksheets 235
Bibliography 253
Index 263

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Preface

What would corporations look like if they were to have integrity and how can we move them in that direction? In an effort to answer this question, *Corporate Integrity* takes a different path than most books that have distinguished themselves either in business ethics or corporate social responsibility. For one thing, this book overrides that distinction and provides a model of organizational ethics that is truly integrative. With a strong sense of integrity as wholeness, the book explores five dimensions of corporate life: the cultural, interpersonal, organizational, civic, and environmental. This exploration moves from an analysis of the integrity challenge on each of the five dimensions to a leadership strategy for meeting them.

The book is unusual in some other ways as well. It offers a particular perspective, a somewhat singular focus, and a special method. It explores the challenges of corporate integrity from a civic perspective. This perspective views corporations as members of civil society and corporate members as citizens. Instead of relying on the persuasiveness of the "business case," which needs to show that doing well will result from doing good, the civic case relies on shared civic values of meeting human needs and respecting human rights. This allows an examination of how these values are realized not only in interpersonal relationships, but also in corporate relationships with other groups in civic society as they struggle to work together to design a sustainable world.

To bring these and other values into the analysis, the book focuses on relationships. It follows the implications of understanding integrity as wholeness, which requires us to see individuals as part of the relational whole to which they belong and corporations as part of the larger whole to which they belong. In each of the five dimension of corporate life, the integrity challenge is to develop appropriate relationships for individuals, for corporations, and for corporations and other civic organizations. Improving the quality of these relationships will improve integrity.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Of course you cannot directly observe relationships, but you can observe the patterns of communication in which they are embedded. So the method for improving the integrity of relationships is to analyze, evaluate, and redesign communication patterns. These patterns include much more than verbal pronouncements. They also include nonverbal behaviors and actions. Actions sometimes do speak louder than words. In organizations, however, communication patterns often speak the loudest. The daily routines, schedules, structures, everyday conversations, reward systems, shared images, and interpretive schemes largely determine the quality of relationships on all five dimensions of corporate life.

So the book takes up a civic perspective to explore corporate relations by examining communication patterns so that we will understand the challenges of integrity and learn what is necessary to meet them. Behind this approach lie some basic assumptions. These will be explored in chapter 1, and others will be examined throughout the book. The book's overall purpose is quite simple: to show what corporations would look like if they were to have integrity, and to explore how to move them in that direction. Once we know what corporate integrity entails, we will know what to expect of them, and corporate and civic leaders will know how to design them.

To assist readers in evaluating and applying the book's various themes, each chapter is followed by a series of questions for reflection and dialogue. In addition, the appendix contains worksheets for each chapter to facilitate the exploration of existing patterns of communication and for developing strategies to improve them.

This book has evolved from the fusion of multiple disciplines and experiences. Business ethics has provided most of the material for the conversations in which this book participates. The focus on communication has its roots in the study of theological and philosophical hermeneutics (theories of interpretation) and conversations years ago with Edward Hobbs. My interest in designing communication patterns has evolved from my earlier work on ethical decision making to a concern about how to create the conditions in which people could make ethical decisions. The civic perspective is an answer to a question that I probably should have asked much sooner than I did: "Who am I when I am engaged in ethical analysis?" I realized I had always done this work, at least implicitly, as a citizen, rather than as an economist, or even a philosopher. Once I became clear about this, my interest focused on making that stance explicit. Conversations with Mark

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521844819 - Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership
Marvin T. Brown
Frontmatter
More information

Brown have also increased my knowledge of research in political theory and democratic practices. The relational focus has several sources, including feminist ethics and the professional perspectives of Erdmut Brown and Kirsten Brown on relational distress and wholeness in couples therapy and social work.

The experiences behind the book include years of teaching graduate and undergraduate students, who have always challenged me to make ideas relevant and practical. There is also my early experience as an intern, and later as a researcher, in the lay academies in Germany, which then provided a variety of conferences for workers and managers to explore controversial issues. More recently, I have had the opportunity to help design corporate training programs as well as ethics and compliance programs at such companies as Levi Strauss and Company and the California State Automobile Association. Colleagues in Germany, Poland, Venezuela, and Argentina have invited me to give lectures and workshops, which have increased my understanding of what a contemporary corporate ethic requires. The chapter on corporations and cities was originally a paper I presented at an ethics conference in Buenos Aires sponsored by the Asociación Argentina de Investigaciones Éticas. Ideas from the other chapters were also previously presented in papers at conferences of the Society of Business Ethics, the International Society of Business, Economics and Ethics, and the Association of Professional and Practical Ethics. Collegial responses to these papers, as well as dinner conversations, have usually been enlightening.

The book has benefited from conversations with many colleagues, including W. Barnett Pearce, Nancy Southern, David Gill, Barbara McGraw, Toni Wilson, Eugene Muscat, John Moyer, and Horacio Bolaños. I am grateful to Georges Enderle, Joseph DesJardins, Heidi von Weitzien Hoivik, and Joseph Rost for reading the whole manuscript or parts of it and providing valuable comments. Mark Brown's reading of the completed draft was especially helpful. The reviewers at Cambridge University Press were also helpful in clarifying the book's overall direction. The Press's editor, Katy Plowright, has been nothing but generous throughout this project. I am deeply grateful for her guidance. I am also grateful to Linda Lancione Moyer, a friend and poet, who gave the various chapters her attention as they were written. I dedicate this book to Erdmut Brown, who has held our relationship as a life-giving source of support, renewal, and joy.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org