

Ethics and moral character

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Ethics and Moral character about Henry Ford Henry Ford, the automobile pioneer in the American industry, is renowned for his unique vision, social responsibility, entrepreneurship, industrial philosophy, business ethics and moral character. Ford believed in industrial mass production and he never deviated from business ethics and morality while climbing the ladders of success. His social philosophy was one of strong progressivism. He believed that the primary responsibility of any industry is towards the society and he rated the success of a business enterprise based on its ability to provide service to the society. He stressed on cost-and means-efficient production of goods whereby the public could afford to acquire these goods as cheaply as possible. As a business man his primary motive was never to amass maximum profit. On the other hand, he held that “ it is the function of business to produce for consumption and not for money and speculation” (Johannes 7). Thus, he was never moved by the money motive and he brought about revolutionary changes in the twentieth century American industrial culture through such radical measures as the introduction of high wages, lower prices and increased buying power. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Ford’s business ethics was his strong belief that business should not be solely aimed at making profit. On the other hand, he held that one should maintain business ethics in all his/her enterprises keeping in mind the demands and needs of individuals and society. Once Henry Ford himself stated that “ for a long time people believed that the only purpose of industry is to make a profit. They are wrong. Its purpose is to serve the general welfare” (Ciulla 31). Similarly, good business leaders should not be egocentric; they should not be moved by ego but by reason. Henry Ford was

a genuine and brilliant leader who was never overtly flattered by success but who always welcomed legitimate contributions from others. Similarly, by offering higher wages to the hard-working employees Ford could very easily instill in their minds that they were also integral parts of his business. These high wages in turn resulted in greater productivity which helped Ford to become an iconic figure in the global automobile history. Henry Ford displayed considerable amount of moral character and ethical concerns in his business strategies. It can be seen that Ford's visions and business philosophies have passed from generation to generation within the organization and his tradition has in fact paved the way for a new organization work culture. Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, in this respect, observe that " Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company, left a legacy that emphasized the importance of the individual employee and the natural environment" (Ferrell, Fraedrich & Ferrell 175). This legacy is still followed by the current chairman William Clay Ford, Jr as the company believes in the potential power of its employees. It can be stated that Henry Ford was an ardent advocate of mass production and he ensured that quality products are delivered to the customers at affordable price rates. One can notice elements of scientific management devised by Frederick Taylor in his ideas about production and greater productivity. This is very well suggested by Wells when the researcher observe that " by favoring higher wages, shorter hours, and planned activities for workers on the job, Taylor's ideas undermined Spencer's " survival of the fittest," and led to a new phase in the history of American business ethics" (Wells 72). Thus, it can be concluded that Henry Ford introduced a new approach to production and organizational

culture that displayed his business ethics and moral character as well. Works Cited Ciulla, Joanne B. Ethics, the heart of leadership. 2nd revised ed: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004. Print. Ferrell, O. C., Fraedrich, John & Ferrell, Linda. Business Ethics: Ethical Decision Making and Cases. 7th revised ed: Cengage Learning, 2009. Print. Johannes, Stefan. Henry Ford, National Socialism, and Illiberal Visions of a Just Economy, 1920-39. Presented to the Conference on the History of American Capitalism, Harvard, 2008. Web. 31 May 2011. < http://harvard.academia.edu/StefanLink/Papers/133476/Henry_Ford_National_Socialism_and_Illiberal_Visions_of_a_Just_Economy_1920-39>. Wells, Samuel. Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader. John Wiley and Sons, 2010. Print.