

# The american business society

Business



American business is in dire straits and the blame is being heaped on its leadership or, more aptly, the lack thereof. There are probably no fewer business leaders today than there were 50 years ago. There is not a shortage of good people, but maybe a lack of the right kind of people. People with the skills necessary to drive companies forward in a thoroughly different and rapidly changing world. I feel a leader should have several essential attributes:

- Trust. Leaders must be trustworthy, and they must trust their people, also.
- Vision. The nuts and bolts of running a business. Leaders must know where they want the company to be in the future. Also, get the whole company to share that vision. Leaders have to set the direction and get the company headed that way.
- Commitment. There will always be disloyalty among employees, but leaders need to be seen as caring and nurturing.
- Integrity. A leader can't lack integrity and still have people follow. Leaders must have values. They must have dedication to do what is right. The values of an organization are manifested on what a leader does.
- Creative Ability. Leaders must be positive. Always looking for possibilities, not perfection. This means that they must be open to different ways of doing things.
- Communication. A good leader is in constant communication with his or her people. He or she makes the rounds and knows what's going on. Telling his people everything he can about what he knows and doesn't know.

· Risk Taking. It is essential to be open to possibilities, and to question assumptions. Always allow people to be innovative without the fear of failure.

AIDS is one of the most pervasive and difficult workplace issues. The community, not only for their life-style, rejects people with AIDS but also because the disease is incurable. AIDS is an acronym for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, a disease caused by a virus that attacks the body's ability to fight off infection. It now comes to be called HIV, human immunodeficiency virus. If a person is tested positive with the antibodies they are designated HIV+. It is presumable they have been exposed or have acquired the AIDS virus.

The increase presence of AIDS in the workplace has crystallized a number of concerns for both employers and employees. However, Title I of the American with Disabilities Act covers those infected. The Act prohibits discriminating against individual with AIDS.

States have different employment laws that apply to those infected. An employer can terminate someone from a job only if they cannot perform the essential tasks required for with that job. The employer is required to make a reasonable accommodation to the individual's needs and requirements. Accommodation cannot be made if it will cause hardship to the business.

Affirmative action was created 30 years ago as a remedy for the under use of minority and female human resources in the workplace and classroom. The term refers to active measures and passive nondiscrimination, as means of increasing the recruitment of minorities and ensuring equal opportunity. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the most comprehensive statute on <https://assignbuster.com/the-american-business-society/>

civil rights ever enacted in the United States, banning discrimination in employment, voting, public accommodation, public education and all federal assisted programs.

Executive Order 11246 requires that employers with federal contracts worth more than \$50,000 and 50 or more employees have written affirmative action plans. Affirmative action was once a bright synonym for equality of opportunity. In recent years, it has been entered the political lexicon, as a sinister euphemism for reverse discrimination, a bitterly divisive issue.

In recent years, affirmative action has appeared in politics. Most politicians support either eliminating or revising it, including President Clinton, who supports a reform version of affirmative action. Changes have already begun in some states and will spread across the nation. Some critics view affirmative action as a departure from the principles of meritocracy and individual striving. Also they feel as a policy it primarily hurts white men.

With all the demographic changes occurring in our nation, it may be time to change affirmative action. The achievements of it have been great, but the premises that underlie it have changed and may require revising. The focus on affirmative action may provide with an opportunity to shift to affirming diversity.

Under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) a victim of age discrimination is entitled to be "made whole", being placed in the position that he or she would have been in but for the discrimination. The act protects workers between the ages 40 and 70 from arbitrary age discrimination in employment. The ADEA encompasses issues of hiring,  
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firing, pay, promotion and fringe benefits. In recent years, more and more employees have been filing grievances under ADEA. Faced with expensive pensions and health costs, companies are trying to find ways to minimize their burden.

The Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA) is an act that prohibits discrimination based on age in connection with all employee benefits programs. Older workers get the same benefits as the younger workers. Companies can ask outgoing workers to sign a waiver, not to sue for age discrimination. A company faces an indefinite future of court-mandated payments and damages if they are found guilty of violating age discrimination regulations.

The American ideology is based on capitalism. A capitalistic system is a system in which the means of production are privately owned. The market operates to guide production and distribute income. The terms free or private enterprise are used interchangeably with capitalism.

The theory of capitalism is founded on two fundamental assumptions. One, people are capable of understanding the natural order of the universe. Two, the role of government in economy can and should be limited. These two barriers led economists to believe that all artificial barriers affect our economic behavior. If government or monopolists who enjoyed unnatural powers in the marketplace did not interfere, the market would benefit everyone in society.

All activities in a free enterprise must return a profit. However, free enterprise is never totally pure. Every nation has values and goals that place

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it on a continuum between free enterprise and a planned economy. Each determines where it lays on the continuum by the priority it gives to specific values and goals.

It is never too early or too late to start planning for retirement. Definitely, early is better. Starting any time is better than not starting at all. A large number of people are not saving and investing, as they should. The more a person saves now, the more options they will have later. Maybe a person won't be able to stop working completely, but they will not have to work as hard later. The dream of having a financially secure future is attainable, but there are a lot of sacrifices. To begin building a realistic financial plan that will allow you to retire with enough money, start with five basic dynamics:

1. Where do I stand now? That includes your personal savings and investments, your pension plans and your income prospects until retirement, as well as your debts and spending patterns.
2. How much money you'll need to retire? Figure that you'll need about eighty percent of your income to maintain your lifestyle after your regular paychecks stop.
3. Where will that money come from? Your regular paychecks.
4. How much time remains until retirement? Your strategy to achieve a worry-free retirement will depend on the target date you've set and how much progress you've made so far. A person can also shoot for an early retirement with the right planning.

5. How much risk you" re willing to take? When it comes to investing retirement money, risk is a balancing act. If you take too little, your investment will not grow. But if you take too much, there will be a crack in your investment that will be too difficult to repair. The more time you have until retirement; the more risk you maybe able to take. The less time you have, the more risk you may need to take.

The message here is that is can be done. You can take control and plan for a financially secure future regardless of where you stand right now.

A 401(k) is a tremendous two-fold tax shelter. Tax advantages number one: Money you contribute to the plan, up to a yearly maximum, is subtracted from your taxable income.

Tax advantages number two: Funds inside you account grow tax-deferred until withdrawn. The IRS can" t tax the earnings each year and you can keep more in the plan for long term compounding.

I recommend a person start to invest in at least a 401(k) plan. It is the hottest retirement savings deal. It eases a tax shelter power and wealth building potential. A 401(k) may be the single most important ingredient you can add to your retirement plan. With a 401(k), you can set aside a percentage of your salary, which your employer may match, in a retirement account you control. Money in the plan grows untaxed until you tap the account in retirement. If your investments do well, they win. If they don" t, the nest egg will be smaller. In either case, you bear the risk.

People find it difficult to make decisions about ethical issues. Ethical principles and standards vary widely among individuals, organizations and cultures. Business ethics are based on individual and collective moral decision making at every lever in the corporation. Standards for moral behavior are sometimes informal, but more often they explicit and embodied in a written document. Managers must decide which issues are important to them and how to identify and manage them. Here are some questions I think are important to ask one-self.

1. Have I Defined the Problem Accurately? Make sure you have an understanding of the problem.
2. How Would I Define the Problem From the Other Side? You must look at the issue from the perspective of those questioning your ethics.
3. How Did This Situation Occur? Look into the history of the situation. Make sure there is a real problem and not symptoms.
4. How Does My Intention Compare with the Likely Results? Despite the goodness of your intentions, the results may be harmful. Think about the probable outcome.
5. Whom Could My Decision or Action Injure? This issue is particularly difficult. Even a product for good use could fall into the wrong hands.

These questions could help managers sort out their own perceptions of ethical problems. The asking of questions could create discussions about subjects left to one individual. If management do not implement clear



policies to instill ethical behavior through the firm, managers are likely to come cynical.

There has been a steady increase in the number of sexual harassment cases since the 1991 Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearing. A recent Supreme Court ruling that an employer can be held liable for sexual harassment, even if the employer is unaware of the incident. This should serve as a warning to business owners to develop or refine company policies.

The ruling falls under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which also protects non-victims from working in a "sexual hostile" environment. In essence, an employee can sue a company if he or she witnesses others being harassed, reports and nothing is done.

Follow these steps to protect your company:

- Develop and establish a policy. Your company policy should clearly define sexual harassment, list several examples and explain procedures for filing complaints and follow-ups.
- Investigate every complaint. Take immediate action when informed of an incident. Carefully research the allegations and respond with the appropriate actions. Seek outside counsel if necessary.
- Many managers aren't sure how to handle a claim of sexual harassment. Provide training for management and staff so they clearly understand what harassment is, how to prevent it and how to handle it.

· Have a clear procedure for filing complaints. Employees should have a non-threatening process in place to report an incident, discuss any behavior they feel is unprofessional. Stress confidentially and that you, the employer, will not tolerate retaliation against any employee for coming forward. Give all the employees the names and phone numbers of human resources and other staff to contact. Provide sexual harassment training.

There are countless words to describe stress. The fact remains that stress is an essential part of life. It is inescapable and in moderation, a good thing. I think stress makes people feel vital and interested. The crucial difference between stress that clobbers and stress that invigorates is usually no more than an individual's reaction. There are myriad ways to deflect the damages such as meditation, drug therapy or changes in lifestyle.

Stress often undermines physical, emotional and intellectual energies exactly when strength in these areas is most needed, periods of heightened pressure. The body mobilizes energy to deal with the crisis by releasing the hormone adrenaline, which causes a racing pulse, accelerated breathing, in a sense of feeling keyed up.

The next stage is less obvious but more dangerous if allowed to go unmonitored. Sugar and fats are reserved for emergencies then released into the bloodstream, creating pressure and fatigue. This when people start to self medicate with coffee, cigarettes and alcohol. Generalized anxiety, poor concentration and memory loss become common, as with minor illnesses.

Finally, as energy reserves are drained, bodily systems begin to malfunction. Sleeplessness, disruption in eating patterns and personality changes often occurs. This stage is exhaustion, which leads depression.

Employee assistance programs (EAPs) are very useful in reducing stress. Companies can develop EAPs themselves or outsource them. Experts advise companies to help workers find a way out of their stressful situations through counseling, friendship and communication.

Most people have used a brain altering substance at some time, be it alcohol, an anti-anxiety medication, or a stimulant. Such substance can be helpful in removing our inhibitions, enabling us to relax, or making us feel better about things. While most can take them or leave them, an increasing number of people are finding that using these substances is no longer a choice, but necessity. They need them to function normally and will suffer physical symptoms of withdrawal without them. In medical term, they are substance dependent or addicted.

There are myriad treatments and approaches to substance abuse. As with most mental illness, a combination of medical treatment and psychological counseling is usually most effective.

Medical treatments may alter the body's reaction to a substance, reducing cravings, or change a substance's effect. There is usually a mental disorder that coexists with substance abuse, depression or anxiety. For the disorder psychoactive medications are often prescribed.

First a person must want or ask for help. They may want to talk to a clinician if they feel comfortable doing so. If you have access go to mental-health clinics to speak with someone who specializes in treatment. Whomever you talk with, the issue must addressed in depth. If not seek out another healthcare professional.