

Business ethics assignment

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Business ethics; too often still an oxymoron It is still too often the case that people refer to business ethics as an oxymoron, with ethical values considered an individual matter. People tend to think of ethics as something that cannot be applied, something existing in a realm of great complexity and therefore a waste of time and money – after all, didn't Milton Friedman say: “ The social responsibility of business is to increase its profit”? For some of us, such a statement makes our hair stand on end.

Decades and dozens of corporate ethical failures later, when business ethicists and critical management theorists might have popped for a rethinking and challenging of traditional business theories, Friedman's shareholder theory is still core to business education. And more often than not it is dissociated from alternative ethical values, if not just ignored. The BEEN conference set a platform for change – a place for open debate, bringing both long- standing and new dilemmas to the forefront.

It was an inspiration to see students, early-career researchers and experienced academics alike, in search of critical thinking and alternative business theories. I was energized by their rallying for change and they are actively seeking reconciliation between two worlds, two traditions, and theories too often thought of as mutually exclusive. We discussed education, but also ethics and politics, ethics and spirituality, and challenging business theories. The conference was catered with Fair Trade and organic goods – a true display of people eager to walk their talk. Can business ethics be taught?

The topic of 'ethics education' attracted fervent interest. Participants talked about their experiences introducing ethics units into Business Schools. The 'soft nature' of ethics strikes again. The ever-pervading questions remain: how can ethics be taught? Is ethics a matter of the 'self'? Can it should not be taught in class? To those who believe ethics should and can be taught, other dilemmas arose: How best is ethics taught? Should you use case studies? Should you give a personal opinion during class discussion? What are the best forms of assignment to use? Business Ethics By maulers