



Summer 2007 AMA Educators' Conference High Impact Sessions

Session 1.1 A Dialog of Marketing Ethics: The Emerging Issue of Data Mining and Integrating Ethics into the Curriculum

Session Chair: Pat Murphy, University of Notre Dame

Participants:

Linda Ferrell, University of New Mexico

Bill Locander, Jacksonville University

Session Summary Writer: *Nancy J. Sirianni, Arizona State University*

Why is the study of ethics important in today's business schools? According to the passionate and knowledgeable discussants at this session, ethics should be interwoven into our marketing curriculum to create ethically-centered students who will grow into tomorrow's business leaders. Bill Locander, from Jacksonville University, sees promise in including ethical content in the environment that shapes our students. He says that for the most part, business schools have a "hidden curriculum" imposed by the competitive environment in our classrooms that shapes the students and their learning – and does not encourage students to reflect on their own value system and potential ethical challenges. Additionally, the use of business simulations has not given our students the opportunity to create personal insights that come from actual experiences in ethical decision making. To remedy this, Locander suggests that business professors blend lectures and cases, and provide opportunities for students' personal reflections because ethics must be lived in the classroom environment – not just imposed by faculty.

Next, Linda Ferrell, from the University of New Mexico, discussed ethical leadership, ethical decision making, and corporate governance and society. Ferrell suggests that to integrate marketing ethics in the classroom, educators need to survey students to understand their perceptions of ethics, develop a matrix of key topics in business ethics and then use a gap analysis process to determine where ethical topics fit in courses but may not be currently covered. She also recommended building a resource library including cases, DVDs, *Wall Street Journal* ethics abstracts, and even YouTube videos of banned commercials. Ferrell stated that deans and faculty need to understand the value of effectively dealing with ethics, and need to develop a college mission statement and code of business ethics.

Finally, Pat Murphy, from the University of Notre Dame, suggested that today's business students should be more open to learning about ethics than their predecessors. Due to

publicized corporate ethics violations, the downside of being unethical is well known and students realize that poor ethics can cost them their jobs. In addition, marketing faculty must consider ethics in data mining as advances in technology increase marketers' access to consumers' personal information. Moving forward, Murphy suggests that educators use the popular press to drive home ethical points, and celebrate ethics success stories in the news, instead of dwelling on negative cases, because students need good ethical role models.

Note: Resources for ethical development in business schools include the AACSB International's Ethics Education Resource Center (www.aacsb.edu/eerc) and eBusinessEthics, (www.e-businessethics.com) which offers ethical business cases, presentations and other materials.