

Ethics in Marketing - Indian Spirituality

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Abstract

Ethics are a collection of principles of right conduct that shape the decisions people or organizations make. Many people assume that only actions that violate laws are considered unethical. While it is true that illegal activity is also unethical, a business activity can be unethical even though no laws are violated. Practicing ethics in marketing means deliberately applying standards of fairness, or moral rights and wrongs, to marketing decision making, behavior, and practice in the organization. Marketing ethics is the area of applied ethics which deals with the moral principles behind the operation and regulation of marketing. Indian spirituality is all about showing respect to all living beings—animals, trees, rocks, and even water and lead a positive and healthy life. It is believed that the supreme Creator has put each one of us in this world for a purpose and that purpose is to be compassionate, caring and loving to one-another. The great Indian spiritual personalities and gurus have played an important role in spreading the message of love, care and the need for positive living all over the world. "In Karma-yoga no effort is ever lost, and there is no harm. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear [of birth and death]." - Bhagavad Gita quotes. "Man jeeth tho jag jeeth". The top Manager has to win himself then alone can he win the world. The top manager has to have a balance within him. He has to combine his management skills with inner love and connectivity. This Paper focuses on the requirement of ethics in marketing and how the Indian spirituality can be considered as a model for global ethical marketing

Keywords: ethics, patanjali, Indian spirituality, pranayama, karma

INTRODUCTION

Ethics in marketing refers to the practice of marketing in business in an ethical and morally sound way. It means deliberately applying standards of fairness and portray the company to others. While the goal of any business is to be profitable, if a company has to use false advertisement, or deceptive or objectionable marketing tactics to achieve it, it's really not running an effective marketing campaign. Sure, there may be short term gain to be had in doing something unethical, but the loss of trust and respect in the marketplace, not to mention potential lawsuits, will eventually catch up to any business owner.

More importantly, a company that acts in an ethical manner will reap long-term rewards for their actions. They will build loyal customers, enjoy word of mouth referrals, and will be building a positive image in their prospects' mind about their business. Many people assume that only actions that violate laws are considered unethical. While it is true that illegal activity is also unethical, a business activity can be unethical even though no laws are violated. For instance, some consider it unethical for marketing companies to aggressively promote unhealthy foods to children though such promotional practices are generally not viewed as illegal. Many may ask "is there a place for ethics in marketing?" In discussing

concerns that consumers and advocacy groups have with the apparent lack of concern for consumers' well being, we must address the challenges that marketers have to 'self regulate' and become more socially responsible. This really is no different than what would be expected of each of us: In an organized society it is the responsibility of all to behave ethically. One concern within the marketing industry is that if marketers do not change their ways, and become more socially responsible, they will become subject to more government controls. Service is really the art of offering a consumer more than just the product they are purchasing. Part of that offering is to provide consumers with the assurance that what you are marketing to them is based on ethically sound principles: Do organizations treat their customers with respect? Are they honest and forthright in their communications with consumers?

As awareness of consumer rights increases, and advocacy groups increase pressure on organizations and governments, the priority that organizations must place on the ethical implications of their marketing programs will only increase. In the service industry the relationship between the consumer and the service provider is all that matters. If the consumer perceives that they are being treated unethically they will go elsewhere. But, not only will they leave, they

will take with them as many others as they can. The risk that organizations face by

Why Spirituality is Popular

Why all the sudden interest in spirituality at work? Researchers point to several key factors. Corporate downsizing and greater demands on remaining workers has left them too tired and stressed to be creative—at the same time that globalization of markets requires more creativity from employees. To survive into the 21st Century, organizations must offer a greater sense of meaning and purpose for their workforce. In today's highly competitive environment, the best talent seeks out organizations that reflect their inner values and provide opportunities for personal development and community service, not just bigger salaries. Unlike the marketplace economy of 20 years ago, today's information and services-dominated economy requires instantaneous decision-making and building better relationships with customers and employees.

The Source of the Problem

The reasons for this sorry state of affairs are not far to seek. The Western idea of management centres on making the worker (and the manager) more efficient and more productive. Companies offer workers more to work more, produce more, sell more and to stick to the organization without looking for alternatives. The sole aim of extracting better and more work from the worker is to improve the bottom-line of the enterprise. The worker has become a hireable commodity, which can be used, replaced and discarded at will.

Thus, workers have been reduced to the state of a mercantile product. In such a state, it should come as no surprise to us that workers start using strikes (*gheraos*) sit-ins, (*dharnas*) go-slows, work-to-rule etc. to get maximum benefit for themselves from the organizations. Society-at-large is damaged. Thus we reach a situation in which management and workers become separate and contradictory entities with conflicting interests. There is no common goal or understanding. This, predictably, leads to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes. The absence of human values and erosion of human touch in the organizational structure has resulted in a crisis of confidence. Western management philosophy may have created prosperity – for some people some of the time at least - but it has failed in the aim of ensuring betterment of individual life and social welfare. It has remained by and large a soulless edifice and an oasis of plenty for a few in the midst of poor quality of life for many.

Hence, there is an urgent need to re-examine prevailing management disciplines - their objectives, scope and content. Management should be redefined

to underline the development of the worker as a person, as a human being, and not as a mere wage-earner. With this changed perspective, management can become an instrument in the process of social, and indeed national, development.

DISCUSSION

How to be effective in their job?

- In the *Bhagavad Gita*, which repeatedly proclaims that “you must try to manage yourself.” The reason is that unless a manager reaches a level of excellence and effectiveness, he or she will be merely a face in the crowd.
- Practicing Yoga, Meditation, Patanjali

How the Indian Management is Differ from Western management?

The modern (Western) management concepts of vision, leadership, motivation, excellence in work, achieving goals, giving work meaning, decision making and planning, are all discussed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. There is one major difference. While Western management thought too often deals with problems at material, external and peripheral levels, the *Bhagavad Gita* tackles the issues from the grass roots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions and their results. The management philosophy emanating from the West, is based on the lure of materialism and on a perennial thirst for profit, irrespective of the quality of the means adopted to achieve that goal. This phenomenon has its source in the abundant wealth of the West and so 'management by materialism' has caught the fancy of all the countries the world over, India being no exception to this trend. India, has been in the forefront in importing these ideas mainly because of its centuries old indoctrination by colonial rulers, which has inculcated in us a feeling that anything Western is good and anything Indian is inferior.

The result is that, while huge funds have been invested in building temples of modern management education, no perceptible changes are visible in the improvement of the general quality of life - although the standards of living of a few has gone up. The same old struggles in almost all sectors of the economy, criminalisation of institutions, social violence, exploitation and other vices are seen deep in the body politic.

What type of culture required to have the satisfaction in Work?

An effective work culture is about vigorous and arduous efforts in pursuit of given or chosen tasks. Sri Krishna elaborates on two types of work culture – “*daivi sampat*” or divine work culture and “*asuri sampat*” or demonic work culture.

- Daivi work culture - involves fearlessness, purity, self-control, sacrifice, straightforwardness, self-denial, calmness, absence of fault-finding, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of envy and pride.
- Asuri work culture - involves egoism, delusion, personal desires, improper performance, work not oriented towards service.

Mere work ethic is not enough. The hardened criminal exhibits an excellent work ethic. What is needed is a work ethic conditioned by ethics in work. It is in this light that the counsel, “*yogah karmasu kausalam*” should be understood. “*Kausalam*” means skill or technique of work which is an indispensable component of a work ethic. “*Yogah*” is defined in the *Gita* itself as “*amatvam yogah uchyate*” meaning an unchanging equipoise of mind (detachment.) Tilak tells us that acting with an equable mind is Yoga. By making the equable mind the bed-rock of all actions, the *Gita* evolved the goal of unification of work ethic with ethics in work, for without ethical process no mind can attain an equipoise.

The guru, Adi Sankara (born circa 800 AD), says that the skill necessary in the performance of one's duty is that of maintaining an evenness of mind in face of success and failure. The calm mind in the face of failure will lead to deeper introspection and see clearly where the process went wrong so that corrective steps could be taken to avoid shortcomings in future.

The principle of reducing our attachment to personal gains from the work done is the *Gita*'s prescription for attaining equanimity. It has been held that this principle leads to lack of incentive for effort, striking at the very root of work ethic. To the contrary, concentration on the task for its own sake leads to the achievement of excellence – and indeed to the true mental happiness of the worker. Thus, while commonplace theories of motivation may be said to lead us to the bondage or extrinsic rewards, the *Gita*'s principle leads us to the intrinsic rewards of mental, and indeed moral, satisfaction.

What state of mind should have managers?

Sound mental health is the very goal of any human activity - more so management. Sound mental health is that state of mind which can maintain a calm, positive poise, or regain it when unsettled, in the midst of all the external vagaries of work life and social existence. Internal constancy and peace are the pre-requisites for a healthy stress-free mind.

Some of the impediments to sound mental health are:

- Greed - for power, position, prestige and money.
- Envy - regarding others' achievements, success, rewards.

- Egotism - about one's own accomplishments.
- Suspicion, anger and frustration, Anguish through comparisons.

The driving forces in today's businesses are speed and competition. There is a distinct danger that these forces cause erosion of the moral fibre, that in seeking the end, one permits oneself immoral means - tax evasion, illegitimate financial holdings, being “economical with the truth”, deliberate oversight in the audit, too-clever financial reporting and so on. This phenomenon may be called as “yayati syndrome”. In the book, the *Mahabharata*, we come across a king by the name of Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a thousand years. However, he found the pursuit of sensual enjoyments ultimately unsatisfying and came back to his son pleading him to take back his youth. This “yayati syndrome” shows the conflict between externally directed acquisitions (extrinsic motivation) and inner value and conscience (intrinsic motivation.)

How the truth, doing right things , right work, viewing the world as family, welfare of the mankind will lead to success?

Here are some great sanskrit hymns from ancient Indian texts.

- ❖ “**Vasudaiva Kutumbam**”- The whole earth is a family
- **Globalization concept which is introduced recently is a very old concept in India.**
- ❖ “**Satyameva Jayate**” - Truth always triumphs
- **Marketing by false attitude may win temporarily, not permanently.** So adapt truth.
- ❖ “**Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithaha**” - He who carries out his duties shall be protected
- Marketers should protect Dharma means any one which exists in that region so that it will protect them also.
- ❖ “**Sarvejana Sukhinobhavanthu**” - May all the people in this universe live with happiness and prosperity
- **When the marketers / products given the delightful satisfaction, then there is no need to market because the product will market automatically.**
- ❖ “**Asatho Ma Sathgamaya,Thamaso Ma Jyothirgamaya, Mruthyorma Amrthagamya**” - Lead me towards truth from untruth,Lead me towards light from darkness,Lead me towards immortality from Death.
- Indian companies are taking social responsibility, involving in all the activities which upheld the society. So world has to adapt this.

- ❖ **“Annam na nindhyath, Annam na pari-chaksheeta, Annam bahu kurveeta” -**
 - o Do not abuse food, Do not discard food, Grow food in abundance!
 - o Marketing with right attitude- **BT BRINJAL**- If you see this concept how the hidden strategies will effect the home country, then the companies will never enter into the market because already the image is spoiled.
- ❖ **“Satyam Vadha Dharmam Chara”- Speak the truth, follow the righteous path**
 - o **So marketing practices should be right.** i.e not hidden, unhealthy competition, adverse advertisements.
- ❖ **“Karmanye Vadhikaraste, Ma phaleshou kada chana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani”**
 - o In simple terms it means: Keep on performing your duties without expecting for any reward in return, leading a selfless life – this it what it is all about.
 - o Marketing companies have to adapt the societal concept.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- ❖ **Taking responsibility:** marketers need to take responsibility for their products and their decisions. In the past marketers have often responded to social concern about particular products by defending them on the basis of “It was what the customer wanted”;
- ❖ **Dealing fairly:** marketers need to be honest and fair in their dealings with all stakeholders. This means that products must be fit for use and accurately described, and contracts (both formal and implicit) should be drawn up in good faith and honoured;
- ❖ **Respecting consumer rights :** including the right of redress, the right to information and the right to privacy;
- ❖ **Deceptive Marketing Practices:** This can encompass everything from misleading information on what the product really does to things like paid celebrity endorsers who have never actually used the product. One extremely grey area is what companies promise in their sales material. There is a fine line between showing your product in the best light possible and over promising on the results. Selling the sizzle is fine, after all that's what copywriting is all about. However, there must be some substance behind the sizzle, and an accurate representation of what the customer can expect.
- ❖ **Deceptive pricing.** This could be any number of things, from providing misleading sales prices, omitting important conditions of the sale, or presenting a misleading introductory offer. For instance, pushing customers into forced continuity programs is considered unethical. This is where a person gets something for free, usually with just a small shipping and handling charge, but doesn't realize that they've also signed up for an ongoing, fee-based program.
- ❖ **Offensive Marketing Tactics:** Many marketers try to get creative in their advertising campaigns. There's nothing wrong with this, provided a company has looked to see if the campaign might be considered offensive. While it's true that one can't please everyone, there is a general consensus among marketers that some things should usually be avoided. For instance, overtly sexual advertising, stereotyping of races or gender, and aggressive, high pressure selling methods are usually never effective and often leave people with a bad impression of a business.
- ❖ **Privacy Issues:** This issue is important when doing market research, as well as when handling information on your prospects and customers. No one likes to be surprised about how or what information is shared on them. You should have an established privacy policy that is clearly displayed and strictly followed in your company. It may seem like a small issue, but privacy rights are a big concern, and a potential lawsuit waiting to happen.
- ❖ **Value-oriented framework,** ethical problems on the basis of the values which they infringe e.g. honesty, autonomy, privacy, transparency.
- ❖ **Stakeholder-orientated framework,**
 - o analyzing ethical problems on the basis of whom they affect e.g. consumers, competitors, and society as a whole.
- ❖ **Process-orientated framework,** analyzing ethical problems in terms of the categories used by marketing specialists e.g. research, price, promotion, placement
- ❖ **Market research:** ethical danger points in marketing research include:
 - o Invasion of privacy ,Stereotyping
- ❖ **Market audience:** ethical danger points include
 - o Targeting the vulnerable e.g. children, the elderly
 - o Excluding potential customers from the market: selective marketing is used to discourage demand from undesirable market sectors or disenfranchise them altogether.

- ❖ **Pricing ethics:** list of unethical pricing practice:
 - Price fixing , Price skimming, Price discrimination, Price wars , Bid rigging , Dumping
- ❖ **Advertising and promotion:** ethical pitfall:
 - Issues over truth and honesty ,Issues with violence, sex and profanity ,Taste and controversy ,Negative advertising
- ❖ **Media Role**
 - Marketers are using in the negative way. Media is spoiling in the following ways
 - Spoiling Culture: We can't see the advertisements by sitting with whole family.
 - i.e. such as sexual picturisation, filthy languages.
 - Educating unwanted products
 - Activating desires beyond their limits
 - Misguiding the customers by using celebrities
 - Spoiling the Children
- ❖ **Internet & Mobile marketing**

E-mail spam, and sending the mails by collecting the email ID's and Phone numbers misguiding the customers. Unfulfilled promises, asking for deposits, once the money is received then the company will disappear.
- ❖ **Satisfaction**

Finally neither seller nor buyer is not happy because both are having endless desires to make profits by selling and searching the satisfaction in materialistic things.

CONCLUSION

Ethics in Marketing is very essential to sustain in the long run because customer is aware of the quality of the product, Price of the product, Services, Brand image and the nature of the company. Ultimately the solution for ethics in marketing is Indian spirituality where the values are hidden in all the activities of the life. So now-a-days companies adapting yoga, Pranayama and spirituality in the companies to make the employees to work with physical as well as mental satisfaction.

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