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The Integration of a Catholic Social Teaching Website into a Business Curriculum

Megan M. Kalina and Mary U. Henderson

Purpose

This paper outlines the reasoning for the creation of a website, *The Ethical Evaluator* © (<https://ethicalevaluator.wixsite.com/ethicalevaluator>). This new website includes *The Ethical Evaluator* © tool, which is based upon the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching, and is a framework through which to examine ethical challenges. Plus, it features other ethics-related resources and links to valuable content.

In today's world, people face ethical dilemmas and challenges in the workplace. These situations, and the angst that accompanies them, can create stressful and uncertain conditions for employees and business leaders. Examples of these ethical scenarios include fraud, sexual harassment, inequitable pay, and environmental issues. Other internal company ethical breaches include expense report padding, misrepresentation of financial data, and dishonesty in communication with work colleagues.

The Ethical Evaluator © website is designed for university students and alumni in business professions. Students will access this website as a resource while they do ethics casework in their business classes. It will also be available to them post-graduation. The website will be updated with new content and resources on an ongoing basis.

The Framework of *The Ethical Evaluator* © Website

The *Ethical Evaluator* © website is a new site that is a work-in-process. The priority for the website design is ease of use. Consideration was also given to providing meaningful resources that support ethical decision-making. Layout and graphics complement the content.

The website is introduced with a home page featuring the following tabs to access further information: *About Us*, *Ethical Evaluator* ©, *Resources*, and *Cases*. The *About Us* section introduces the website authors to the users. *The Ethical Evaluator* © tab is the actual tool which includes ethical scenarios, which occur in the workplace. It is organized by the relevant tenet of Catholic Social Teaching. These principles assist the user in examining and thinking about the situation. The tool is not meant to be prescriptive nor directive; rather it is simply a lens through which to reflect on the ethical dilemma and to guide the user toward a meaningful solution. Currently, two cases are included in the *Cases* area; each case has recently been updated. New ethics cases will be developed and added in the futures. The resources section of the website is described in the next section of this paper.

Resources

The website includes readily available resource links for users seeking additional guidance or information as they utilize *The Ethical Evaluator* © in making ethical decisions. The resources

selected either address ethical decision-making directly or provide valuable information about making ethical decisions based upon Catholic Social Teaching. Following are some of the resources featured on the website.

- *Giving Voice to Values* by Mary Gentile, Ph.D. (<http://store.darden.virginia.edu/giving-voice-to-values>) -- An author and professor, her work is about ethics, values, and learning how to speak up for what is right. Dr. Gentile's book and curriculum have received significant attention on a global basis. Corporations, universities, organizational leaders, students, and faculty use her materials. Dr. Gentile has led training of the *Giving Voice to Values* curriculum in many settings with the latter stakeholders. Dr. Gentile's work is particularly valuable because she emphasizes action and encouragement in using your voice to make ethical decisions. She provides readers with practical direction on how to do this. Her work includes advice, exercises, and even scripts for speaking.
- Catholic Social Teaching Themes – These themes provide a critical lens when evaluating ethical situations. Two websites, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/>), and Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis (<https://www.cctwincities.org/education-advocacy/catholic-social-teaching/>), offer meaningful context and a foundation in Catholic Social Teaching.
- John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought (<https://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/>) -- The Ryan Institute is within the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. Its work is centered on weaving faith more deeply within the work environment. The Ryan Institute does important work examining the Catholic social tradition and business, both theory and practice and its relationship. On the Ryan Institute's homepage, users can access a significant amount of information related to these areas. <https://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/>
- Faith and Co.: Business on Purpose (<https://faithandco.spu.edu/>) – This media was produced by the Center for Integrity in Business at Seattle Pacific University. It features ethics content including documentaries, an online course, and other related materials.
- Digital Resources -- Links have been included to TedTalks and Podcasts that address ethical decision-making. Students and alumni to do additional research use this form of medium frequently today.
- Supplementary Resources – Additional resources to support ethical decision-making have been included.

Summary

This paper described the rationale and purpose for the creation of a new website, *The Ethical Evaluator* ©. This website has been designed for university students and alumni. It provides an ethical framework, based upon Catholic Social Teaching, for individuals to use when they are facing an ethical dilemma. This framework and other ethics-related resources comprise the website.