

ACCEPTING YOUR MEDICAL WASTE RESPONSIBILITY ... ETHICALLY

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What is ethics?

- The philosophical study of morality and, accordingly, morality is clearly identified as the characteristic subject matter of ethics (Huss & Patterson, 1993)
- Morality (*mores* or 'custom') focuses on the 'right' and 'wrong' of human behaviour (Baker, 1996; Boynton & Kell, 1996)

Thus ...

- Ethics is about people and deals with questions about the way people act towards one another (Cragg, 1997)
- Ethics is basically a discipline about good life → RIGHT & WRONG CONDUCT (Miettinen, 2004)

Unfortunately ... (1)

- The ‘frailty’ of business/ medical waste ethics
- Medical waste dumping to be probed (24 January 2011 – News24.com)
 - “Both the City of Tshwane and the Gauteng Health Department are to investigate the dumping of medical waste in southern Pretoria. This follows a Pretoria News report on Monday that medical waste had been dumped near a soccer field used primarily by children in Olievenhoutbosch.”



Unfortunately ... (2)

- **Medical waste removed from warehouse (21 July 2010 – IOL.co.za)**
 - “A new waste removal company was appointed by the Northern Cape Health Department on Wednesday to remove dumped medical waste found stored in a warehouse in Kimberley. “



Unfortunately ... (3)

- **Medical waste: seven in court** (9 February 2011 - timeslive.co.za)
 - Seven people representing nine companies have been charged in connection with the Wasteman medical-waste dumping scandal.



World Health Organisation (WHO)



World Health
Organization

- “Waste generated by health care activities includes a broad range of materials, from used needles and syringes to soiled dressings, body parts, diagnostic samples, blood, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and radioactive materials.
- Poor management of health care waste potentially exposes health care workers, waste handlers, patients and the community at large to infection, toxic effects and injuries, and risks polluting the environment.
- It is essential that all medical waste materials are segregated at the point of generation, appropriately treated and disposed of safely.”



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Health Care Waste in Southern Africa

- “Health Care Waste is a mounting problem in South Africa as in many other countries. Desktop studies show that 45% of health care waste generated in the KwaZulu-Natal province alone cannot be accounted for, suggesting that it is being illegally dumped, buried or burnt somewhere, thus affecting the health of people and the environment.”

**Llewellyn Leonard - Health Care Waste Projects
Coordinator, *groundWork***



Ethical management ... (1)

- Accountability
- Sustainable development
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) →
- “Triple Bottom Line”
 - Economic performance
 - Social performance
 - Environmental performance

Ethical management ... (2)

- Does your firm have a written code of ethics?
- Does your firm have a forum for the discussion of ethics?
- Do you consider that your firm's activities have an environmental (negative?) impact?

Ethical management ... (3)

- Nan Demars (*The Business Ethics Activity Book*)
 - Writing extensive codes of ethics and conduct.
 - Expanding employee handbooks for guidelines.
 - Incorporating ethics training (with discussions of reality-based case studies).
 - Creating ethics hotlines (often anonymous).
 - Hiring ethics directors.
 - Establishing ethics departments or appointing a human resource representative "point person" whom employees can approach with ethical dilemmas.

New thinking on ethical management

- Domingo (2005)
 - We need a totally new approach to business ethics
- Move from consequence-based ethics to deontological and procedural ethics.
- “An ethical organization should map their borders of responsibility and find a middle way that satisfies the expectations of all parties interested. One of the possibilities for doing that is ethics auditing that evaluates achievements in that area and fulfilment of duties.”

BUT ...

- Ethics in business and entrepreneurship requires more than corporate governance and CSR
 - Corporate social responsibility focuses mainly on social issues.
 - Corporate governance is primarily focused on the functioning of the board of directors, although it also includes executive accountability and control, and executive remuneration.
 - Codes of conduct and even ethical charters have limited impact.
 - ✓ A policy and procedure document exist on how to dispose of medical waste ...

We need ...

- An adequate response to the small practical matters of everyday activities in business life when it comes to the management of medical waste ...
- **ETHICAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Ethical Management System

- Main characteristic of any management system is its rational focus, the fact that it is designed mainly to monitor, standardize and, if necessary, certify and audit processes (Argandoña, 2004)
- An ethical management system is a set of internal rules that a company's management uses to standardize and mould behaviours and to monitor and supervise processes with a view to achieving within the organization certain goals of an ethical nature (Argandoña, 2004)

Tools for an ethical management system

- Rules of conduct
- Lines of communication (ethical help-lines for queries, reports or complaints, for example)
- Ethics committees (to develop ethics policies, review performance, conduct research and impose sanctions)
- Ethical officers and ombudspersons
- Ethical training programmes
- Ethical reporting

Specific Management Actions (1)

- A systematic approach
 - Adopt specially designed measures that may yield better results than a sporadic and haphazard approach.
- Ethical management is a process not an outcome.
 - The focus must be on the process.
- The goal is to achieve the desired behaviour
 - Values and intentions are not enough.
 - Values must be projected into policies, procedures and training plans, which in turn will influence behaviour and outcomes.

Specific Management Actions (2)

- Ethical management must be integrated with other management practices.
 - Strategic planning and all the company's actions must be driven by the organization's values and measured in terms of their economic, socio-political and ethical effects.

Specific Management Actions (3)

- Having an ethical, social and environmental management system may (will?) encourage a company to search for solutions that would not otherwise have been considered.
- This may (will?) ...
 - motivate managers and employees to achieve the results they are aiming for; and
 - establish valuable links between the company and other stakeholders, such as the local community, unions, customers and suppliers, and NGOs.

Ethical [Power] Management

- Five P's of Ethical Power Management
- **P**urpose
- **P**ride
- **P**atience
- **P**ersistence
- **P**erspective

Ethical [Power] Management

■ Purpose

- Know what your objective or intention is and there is a much higher chance you will do the morally right thing — if being ethical is part of your purpose.

■ Pride

- Pride is a sense of satisfaction you get from your accomplishments as well as those of your staff. To hold to your purpose you must believe in yourself and have faith in your abilities. People with humility don't think less of themselves ... they just think of themselves less. No one can make you feel inferior without your permission.



Ethical [Power] Management

■ Patience

- With spiritual faith and positive thinking no matter what happens, things are going to work out all right because we can handle whatever happens.

■ Persistence

- "Stick-to-it-ive-ness." Being an ethical person means behaving ethically all the time — not only when it's convenient. In fact, it is especially important to act ethically when it is inconvenient or unpopular to do so.

Ethical [Power] Management

■ Perspective

- Having, in any given situation, a capacity to see what is really important, indicates a grasp of perspective. Perspective is the central place from which one can oversee the other four principles. Lacking proper perspective, many lives are out of balance and unfulfilled. Every problem can be solved if you take some quiet time to reflect, seek guidance, and put things into perspective.

Questions?

