

## ethikos Volume 33, Number 5. May 01, 2019 Ethics and values-based business cultures: Are they still relevant?

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Corporate compliance and ethics programs are built on a relational foundation of leadership-employee trust and ongoing encouragement to “do the right thing.” During the past several decades, enormous amounts of personal energy and organizational resources have been expended to examine corporate culture and realign incentives to enhance a regulatory compliant workplace with a positive culture that adheres to ethical and moral values. The goal of this article is to assess the strength of our business culture values and discuss methods to continue to build on our ethical bases to promote relevancy and mutual trust between clients, peer organizations, payer organizations, and society as a whole.

There is no doubt that business ethics has been the center of attention in both national and international affairs over the past several years, exposing contemptuous behaviors such as the Volkswagen emissions scandal and the Wells Fargo fictitious sales debacle. Leadership noncompliance with government policies surrounding ethic laws continues to be not uncommon in the current business climate. This can be a frustration to the populace whose trust in our institutions may continue to erode as these behaviors are normalized. As noted by Susan Rose Ackerman of Yale University, “...mutual trust can be fragile.”<sup>[1]</sup> If big business can get away with these types of actions, what prevents others in the business community from thinking they have a right to cut corners on ethical decision-making? Even though this behavior change is occurring more and more in our society, the fallout may be more malignant as it spreads across the country and into the culture of our organizations.

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