

Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem



The Business Ethics Center of Jerusalem is a non-profit organization that promotes programs in Israel and overseas for business, the professions, the education sector and academia. The Center's main activities include development of ethics and governance training programs, corporate ethics training, seminars, publishing and research.

History: The Center was established in 1992 by Dr. Meir Tamari, previously the Chief Economist in the Office of the Governor of the Bank of Israel and a leading international authority in the field of Jewish Business Ethics. In December 2000 the Center opened



a new Business Ethics Library and Educational Resource Center. The facility, endowed by the Noaber (formerly Baan Brothers) Foundation from Holland, provides



a wide range of resources and includes a unique collection of books, pamphlets, codes of ethics and audio-visual materials. The resource center runs training programmes and lectures for teachers, students, business people, IDF officers and academics.

In 2001 the Center was instrumental in introducing business ethics for the first time into the Israeli matriculation (bagrut) syllabus for secular and religious schools in the business management studies framework. In 2003 the Center organized in Tel Aviv, the first ever formally-recognized in-service teacher training program on "Business Ethics, Management, Economics and Jewish Values". In 2006 the Center introduced the "Ethics and Intellectual Property Rights" educational program in cooperation with the Israel Ministry of Education, the US Embassy, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals (Israel) Ltd. and Microsoft Israel Ltd.



In 2009, the Center held a major corporate conference at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem entitled: **Global Corporate Ethics & Governance Standards - Israeli Realities and Ideals**. The program focused on the interface between corporate governance and business ethics. It primarily addressed the roles of top management and boards in these areas.



The keynote speech was given by Prof. Stanley Fischer, Governor of the Bank of Israel. Prof. Fischer examined how much unethical behavior was responsible for the recent global economic crisis and he then compared ethical standards in Israel to other countries

Current Programs for Corporate Sector: One of the Business Ethics Center's central roles is to show that wealth creation can most effectively operate within a framework of ethics, transparency and integrity. The Center's Corporate Fellows Program is based on this premise; it is centered on a select group of leading Israeli corporations and their leadership with a view to involve them in a joint effort aiming at making a difference in the ethical and governance behavior of major Israeli corporations.

The program is a further step in the Center's intent to become the focal organization for the promotion of higher ethical and governance standards in Israel and the creation, collection, development and dissemination of knowledge related to ethical and governance issues in Israel. The program



is modeled on a highly successful program of the Ethics Resource Center (ERC) in Washington that has been running for over 10 years. The objectives of the Business Ethics Center's Corporate Fellows Program are:

- To involve and engage CEOs and chairmen of leading Israeli companies in issues of corporate ethics and governance.
- To develop a cadre of executives throughout Israeli business and industry with an expertise in corporate governance and ethics.
- To provide a center for the dissemination and transfer of ethical and corporate governance knowledge within the business community, and between the business and academic worlds.
- To encourage cooperation and interaction between companies, and develop innovative ethics and corporate governance programs.

Social Venturing - A further major area of interest of the center is the development of ethics and governance programming for Social Venture organizations in cooperation with the Noaber Foundation. Social venturing is an emerging niche that links the profit and the nonprofit sectors. SV seeks to identify ways to create social value which fall in the interstices between the public and private sector: they are not profitable enough for the private sector but they are too enterprise-oriented or too expensive for the public sector. The challenge for this sector is to create standards of accountability that will keep it focused on achieving its objectives and to create structures of governance that will incentivise the organization to adhere to its standards over the long term and avoid the all too common pitfalls of "mission-drift".

SUMMARY

Our experience clearly shows that in a period where schisms and divisiveness are rampant within the Jewish world and Israeli society in particular, the areas of business and public ethics constitute areas of values and interest in which all people, whatever their background or religious affiliation, can find common ground.

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