Business Ethics and Management Professionalism: What Can Be Learned for Transdisciplinary Professionalism for Health

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A. Ordinary use of the word: following an occupation; performing that occupation well; skilled or an expert in what one does.

B. *de jure* definition of Professionalism

- Extensive Training
- A significant intellectual component
- Service to society
- Credentialing or certification
- Professional associations and codes
  - Pledges to codes
  - Sanctions for unprofessional behavior
    - (Michael Bayles)
Brandeis (1912) on Managerial Professionalism

- Necessary intellectual training (not merely skill–learning)
- Occupation pursued largely for others
- Financial return is not the measure of success
- REQUIRES:
  1. Employee Self–governance
  2. Independent professional associations
  3. Arbitration system
  4. Minimum and equal wages

Re–proposed in 2008 by Rakesh Khurana (HBS)
The Bad News

- Most business schools teach skills, not intellectual training
- 2/3 MBA programs have ethics modules, but
- Usually separate ethics from economics
- Some have voluntary oaths, (not to do harm) but...
- NO general codes
- No professional associations or accrediting bodies
- No prioritization of professionalism or of professional values
- No enforcement mechanisms (no “stopping rules”) except the SEC
“Ethics v. economics [J&J and the hip implant recalls]
“Silo” mentalities
“Hired hands” and “me-too’s”
BUT– THERE ARE THINGS TO BE LEARNED FROM GLOBAL COMMERCE: EXAMPLES OF SYSTEMS THINKING
Our health system is a “complex adaptive system (CAS).”

“A CAS is a collection of individual agents [and public and private organizations] that have the freedom to act in ways that are not always predictable and whose actions are interconnected such that one agent’s actions changes the context for other agents.” (312–3)
A Systems Model

Uninsured

Government(s) & Regulations

Competition

Public/private Insurers

Pharma Industry

Physicians/Prescribers

Hospitals & Clinics

HMO's

Pharmacies

Pfizer Switzerland

Patients

Media

LDC Patients

From Sybille Sachs
University of Zurich
An systems-alliance model for ExxonMobil
An systems–based transdisciplinary alliance model for healthcare professionals

- Communities
- Execs. & Managers
- Healthcare organizations
- Healthcare educators
- Oral healthcare professionals
- Other healthcare professionals
- Nurses & nurse-practitioners
- Professional Associations
- Physicians
- Patients

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Professional “Silo” mentalities
1. Develop a “creole—” a mutually shared discourse developed from the differing professional languages.
2, Establish shared values

Shared core value: HEALTH

Communities

Physicians

Patient

Professional Associations

Nurses & nurse practitioners

Other healthcare professionals

Healthcare organizations

Healthcare educators

Oral healthcare professionals

Execs. & Managers

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Developing a Creole & Values Consensus

1. Bring in a short case and have each participant briefly discuss it from his or her perspective.
2. Analyze the different expressions used to describe the case.
3. Highlight the differences and “translate.”
4. Come to some consensus …
5. Come to a values consensus
6. 3. Values prioritization, admitting to agree to disagree.

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