

Writing Assignment #3
American Marketing Association Code of Ethics
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The professional code of conduct I chose to analyze and critique is the American Marketing Association. I chose this because as a business management major I thought it would be extremely interesting to know what ethical guidelines are in place for marketers to follow. Marketing would be my ideal profession after college because I am allowed to use both my left and right sides of my brain. However, what often time worries me about marketing is the ethical dilemmas that may arise in the field like promoting a product I know isn't safe or not of good value.

The American Marketing Association is a Chicago based agency that produces its own original content about current marketing trends. They are organized under a membership structure where you can only read and view the content if you are a subscribing member. Marketing firms that wish to join the association must abide by their statement of ethics. To my surprise, the statement of ethics wasn't very long or extensive and it is broken down into subdivisions such as Preamble, Ethical Norms, Ethical Values, and Implementation.

The Preamble mentions the AMA's commitment to promoting these professional 'norms' that are expected and maintained for its members which include practitioners, academics, and students. However, there is one part of the preamble that makes me feel confident in marketers' ability to be ethical. "As marketers, we recognize that we not only serve our organizations but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating and executing the transactions that are part of the greater economy." This mention of not only fulfilling a duty to your organization but also to the economy or world as a whole help to reassure me that you can still stand by your own individual morals.

Do no harm is the first of 3 ethical norms and by the harm they mean avoiding harmful actions or omissions. Second is to foster trust in the marketing system and lastly, embrace ethical values. These ethical norms seem to cover a majority basis of standard principles I already assumed were in place. They go further a break down the ethical values which actually appear as principles for the AMA. They are as followed: Honesty, Responsibility, Fairness, Respect, Transparency, and Citizenship.

Honesty is important when marketing products because this fosters this trust in the marketing system they were mentioning. I believe it is important to be honest and also transparent when marketing products or services. I believe in practice the best instance of this is in the pharmaceutical business. Often times when you see an advert for a new drug they have to be forthright about the potential side effects and risk right there in the commercial. It always sounds absurd listing the potential risk and effects as they seem to often outweigh the initial reason for the drug in the first place but the companies are at least of being honest and transparent about the drug.

Responsibility is another important principle or value to the marketing code of ethics because this requires you to accept the consequences of your organizations' decisions. However, I think a better value would include also accountability. This value covers your actions in case of poor decisions or marketing strategies. In my marketing class, we often talk about how companies must take accountability for poor judgments or campaigns. For instance, the case of Kylie Jenner and Pepsi advert where they tried to create a campaign highlighting the current social justice movements but it read as making a mockery of the black lives matter movement. Pepsi had to take accountability of a poorly thought out advertisement where they weren't considering how certain minority groups would feel about the advert.

Fairness is presented “to balance justly the needs of the buyer with the interests of the seller. Within this context, I believe this is also an important consideration that needs to be taken in from the marketer’s perspective. In the case of Epi-pens, a lot of people raised the question of whether their pricing was ethical. The company that makes them took complete advantage of the supply and demand structure and knew that people needed Epi-Pens but raised the cost anyway. This was a completely unfair and unjust action by the company.

Citizenship and Respect go hand in hand. The tired saying, treat others how you would want to be treated still remains relevant in today's’ marketing world. It’s important for companies to contribute to the improvement in the world not take away. Often times advertising can just come across as white noise and most of the time that is what it is. I believe most younger generations want to change that. Respecting people of all identities and backgrounds will make for a much more balanced and happier world.

This code of ethics was summed up with an implementation paragraph, summarizing the expectations of the AMA members to be courageous and proactive in aiding their organizations to remain faithful to their stakeholders. The overall theory represented in this code of ethics seems to be Virtue Ethics. Virtue ethics developed by Aristotle is the quest to understand and live a life of a moral character. While this does tie into corporate social responsibility I think it connects a bigger picture about how ethics can improve marketing starting solely on the people who choose this as a profession.