

15.1: Introduction to Ethical and Legal Behavior

What you'll learn to do: differentiate between ethical and legal behavior

Ethical and legal behavior can often be confused—partially because they can often overlap. However, legal behavior and ethical behavior are different. For instance, it is not a legal issue to debate if you should buy a boat or donate to a charity, but it could be an ethical issue.

Both legal and ethical behaviors have significant consequences for business: legal misconduct can result in fines and (depending on the severity of the misconduct) incarceration of perpetrators, and ethical misconduct can result in a loss of trust from customers and partners. In this section you'll get an introduction to ethics and learn why this is an especially challenging issue for companies that are trying to “do the right thing.”

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