

The Dividends of Decency: How Values-Based Leadership Will Help Business Flourish in Trump's America

Donald Lee Sheppard

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A strong, impassioned plea for valuing ethics in American business, *The Dividends of Decency* is the kind of book that will embarrass some business leaders and embolden others. Donald Lee Sheppard, who founded the nation's largest independent full-service employee communications firm, rails against businesses with no moral compass.

Using relevant cases, the author explores the pervasive lack of ethics among companies in the first part of this fervent work. He also unflinchingly points to Donald Trump as a glaring example of a businessman with "deficient ethics."

In part 2, Sheppard shares his personal story to provide context to the notion of building a business that follows ethical guidelines. Entrepreneurs should be particularly interested in reading about his trials and tribulations. Part 3 is the logical culmination of the book; it offers substantive recommendations for exercising decency in business.

Sheppard writes, for example, that too many businesses are concerned with actions that impact shareholders while undervaluing the importance of employees, customers, and vendors. He explores the concepts of integrity, ethics, diversity, and trust. Sheppard plainly outlines four reasons why "every corporation in America needs a code of ethics" and provides seven specific steps to take to develop a meaningful code.

The Dividends of Decency easily could have devolved into an indictment of American business. Rather than merely excoriating companies, however, Sheppard offers a clear pathway to decency. His discussion of trust is especially lucid: the author outlines precisely why trust matters, highlights how "Trust Dividends" can be earned and paid, and details "Four Actions to Follow" in the pursuit of operating an ethical business.

In the end, Sheppard maintains that "people who conduct business without principles destroy themselves, and do terrible damage to their colleagues, their organizations and to those of us who emphasize truth and respect in our business dealings."

Revelatory in its focus and action-oriented in its approach, *The Dividends of Decency* is a timely, courageous book that deserves the attention of all business leaders.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May/June 2018)

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