



Stanford eCorner

Ethics in a Corporate Life

Carly Fiorina, *Former CEO, HP*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1720/Ethics-in-a-Corporate-Life>

Carly Fiorina, former CEO of HP, talks about the importance of ethics. She emphasizes that defying ethics will reap only short-term solutions but never provides a long-term benefit to the organization. She insists that only collaborative efforts can help overcome fears and bring the best outcomes for an organization.



Transcript

And finally, ethics. Here's the truth. In most organizations, in most endeavors, if you do things that are kind of on the line and on the edge, you can get better results in the short term. It's why a lot of businesses tolerate behavior that's on the edge. Because it sometimes produces better results in the short term. Values are what guide your behavior when no one's looking and you don't think anyone's going to find out. I believe that a leader's most important job is to make sure that everybody understands that actually, values matter, and ethics count. And you know what, we're not going to do stuff on the edge. Because what happens when people do things on the edge, is eventually, they walk over the line. And when they walk over the line, devastating things happen.

Because in this era of always on communication and information, you can't hide anything anymore. And people are going to find out. So you can't get close to the edge. You have to really stay true to a set of ethics and values. And yes, there is some variation on ethics and values around the world. But most of the time, people understand what's on the edge, and what's not. So I'm going to stop here. But let me just say, everyone's afraid. Change makes people afraid. But what you're studying is all about change.

Because everyone is afraid, people resist change, even when it's positive. And that is why only leaders can drive change. But if leaders drive change, collaboration powers change. It's only when people collaborate, really effectively collaborate, that they come to the best outcomes and the best answers.