

# Compliance & Ethics Professional

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## Congratulations, Laura!

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our 15,000<sup>th</sup> member

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# Very few business ethicists

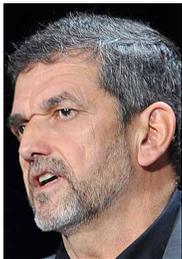
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**W**e have a business ethics crisis around the world. Many people don't trust business because of the occasional business ethics issues. We need to fix it. It's important. We also have many other ethical issues around the world, but that doesn't mean it's efficient for every ethics professional to work on every ethics issue in the world. Like any other profession, ethicists should consider specializing and becoming proficient in a single ethics area.



Snell

I just received an email today from a non-profit ethics organization that has the words "business ethics" in their name. You'd think they would focus on business ethics. The email I just received was about water quality, accessibility, affordability, etc., around the world. Yes, the water issue is important. Yes, it's sad. Yes, we do need to work on it. Yes, businesses can help. However, it's a political or social ethics issue, not a business ethics issue. If we include all social and political issues in our definition of a business ethicist, then we won't be focused. The email I received is partial evidence. All you have to do is go to LinkedIn business ethics groups to see that almost every ethical dilemma in the world is discussed.

One of the reasons we are not making progress with the world's business ethics crisis is because many "business ethicists" can't stay

focused. If I am asked by my wife to clean the garage (again) and I start cleaning the garage but get distracted by fixing the lawn mower (again), then I will fail to clean the garage (again). The fact that something else always distracts me or is deemed important doesn't mean that the garage should never be completely cleaned. We need to stay focused if we are to successfully clean up business.

Solving the world's water problems will do nothing to prevent the next Enron, WorldCom, Siemens, or Penn State problems. We are forsaking business ethics for a good cause (world ethics), but we are still forsaking business ethics. Businesses have a role in solving many of the world's problems, but business also needs someone to focus on business ethics. I don't care if there is a 1,000-to-1 ratio of social and political ethicists to business ethicists. Make it 10,000-to-1 if you want. Take all the ethicists you want for political and social ethics, but leave us a few business ethics professionals.

If you don't stay focused on a problem, the chances of fixing it are either significantly diminished or fixing it will take much longer. The longer we take to fix the business ethics problem, the more regulations and laws will be written. The longer we take, the longer people won't trust business. The longer we take, the longer accounting, bribery, and other business ethics issues will continue to occur. \*