

Tracy Balazs, President and CEO of FSR, joined the Business Leadership Series (BLS) on August 6 to talk about Ethics: The Moral Compass. Tracy started her company after working for twenty-five years as a registered nurse, with the goal to help customers be successful in their healthcare missions.

Today, FSR places healthcare personnel, as well as subject matter experts, information technology workers and more across many government organizations. They were named one of the Fastest 50 growing women-owned businesses by Forbes and Fast 50 Asian American Businesses by USPAACC.

As Tracy explained during the webinar, ethics and ethical business practices are a key component in everything FSR does. Each employee at the firm comes with a set of values– their guiding principles – but leaders set the tone. Since she started the company, Tracy has made it a priority to stress the importance of professional and morally responsible behavior in everyday work because interactions with the public define your ethical standing. By stating their core values - integrity, honesty, and reputation – FSR is making a clear statement to the public that they care about doing the right thing.

One example she shared during the live session involved placing an employee at a certain job, but having the original start date delayed by one month. Instead of waiting for the contract to begin, FSR decided to ‘do the right thing’ and compensate the employee during the transition period. It wasn’t the best decision for their bottom line, but it was the best decision for the employee’s morale and the company’s reputation.

This example demonstrates the idea of a moral compass, or a person's ability to judge what is right and wrong and act accordingly. Since there are ‘shades of grey’ in ethics, leaders like Tracy need to rely on their moral compass to determine what is right for the client, the company and the employee.

Next, Dr. Tarabishy presented a discussion on the theory of ethics, honesty and customs. He explained the different categories of ethics - descriptive ethics, relational ethics, normative ethics, applied ethics, meta ethics – and how it relates to Tracy’s experience. The session ended with a debate about the difference between business posturing and lying.

Situation– you are an entrepreneur and founder of a new firm. While you know your new company can successfully compete for business on your capabilities, you are concerned that ‘looking less established’ might hurt your chances with potential clients. Consequently, you rent space in a shared office for only one day a month, fill it with temps, then walk the potential client through your ‘busy office’ for the initial meeting. Business Posturing or Lying?