

The Responsibility of Corporate Citizens

Milton Friedman wrote a famous essay in the New York Times back in the early 1970s, which formed the intellectual foundation for the view that corporations are responsible to their owners and not to other claimants of a share of corporate responsibility, beyond the universal responsibility of citizens to act ethically and obey the laws of the land.

Consider the behavior of the following companies. In some cases the companies are examples of doing good and in other cases not. Each member of the team is to select a company and explain what it did (or does) to make it to this list. (What scandal was it involved in, or what charitable deed(s) put it on the list of notables.) Then determine if this behavior is consistent with Friedman's essay or not. Explain your reasoning.

Infamous Examples

Volkswagen

BP

Apple (battery issues)

Facebook (harvesting private data)

Enron (cooking the books)

Do Good Examples

Disney

Home Depot

Johnson & Johnson

State Farm

Ambiguous Examples

Twitter

Google

Amazon

CNN

Submit one paper from each team, with the contributions of each member. Limit yourself to not more than one page per company example.