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# Ruthless vs. Immoral: Choose Your Business



In the world of business, the terms "ruthless" and "immoral" are often heard, and although they may seem to carry similar meanings at first glance, there is actually an important nuance between them.

Although both concepts evoke unethical behaviour, they differ in terms of their motivations, methods, and consequences.

Ruthless business people generally exhibit a competitive, profit-oriented, and pragmatic approach. They may use harsh negotiation tactics to achieve their goals, exploit opportunities mercilessly, and avoid acting emotionally.

However, the "ruthless" generally does not exceed legal boundaries and obeys the rules. While trying to maximise their own interests, they do not hesitate to harm their competitors or customers, but they do not do so in illegal or unethical ways.

For example, the ruthless may acquire a struggling competitor to gain a stronger position in the market or force competitors by selling a product at the lowest price on the market. Although these behaviours may be morally questionable, they are within legally acceptable limits.

An immoral businessperson, on the other hand, does not hesitate to resort to any means to make a profit. They may engage in illegal and unethical behaviours, such as lying, cheating, defrauding, bribing, evading taxes, selling counterfeit products, or exploiting people.

The main goal of an immoral merchant is to obtain the highest possible profit in the short term, and they do not care about the rights or interests of others to achieve this goal.

Immoral merchants generally create great distrust and hatred in society, and their legal punishment is inevitable.

The main difference between the ruthless and the immoral is whether their behaviour exceeds legal and ethical boundaries. The

ruthless generally remain within legal boundaries, while the immoral break the law and engage in unethical behaviour.

In conclusion, although both types exhibit ethically questionable behaviour, the actions of the immoral can lead to much more serious consequences.

Immoral individuals not only harm others but also undermine trust in trade, disrupt the economic order, and create a great sense of injustice in society.

Therefore, combating immoral trade and promoting honesty, transparency, and ethical values are vital for sustainable economic growth and social welfare.

Now, let me explain why I made such an introduction: Achieving profit is undoubtedly important to achieve success in the business world and in life in general.

However, ignoring values while achieving this goal can lead to devastating consequences in the long run. History is full of countless examples of those who lost their values, gained short-term gains, but ultimately experienced an inevitable collapse.

## Roman Empire: The Price of Moral Decay

The Roman Empire was a civilisation that left its mark on history with its military power, law, and engineering achievements. However, the erosion of moral values over time became one of the important factors that led to the end of the empire.

Addiction to luxury and debauchery, corruption, injustice, and increasing social inequalities shook the foundations of Roman society. Emperors began to prioritise their own interests instead of thinking about the welfare of the people.

## The Romans were ruthless in many ways, but they were finished off by immorality

This situation reduced the people's trust in the state, increased social unrest, and caused the empire to become vulnerable.

As a result, the Roman Empire became unable to resist attacks from inside and outside, and Western Rome collapsed in 476. The Romans were ruthless in many ways, but they were finished off by immorality.

## East India Company: The Price of Ambition and Greed

Another example from history: The East India Company, founded in the 17th century, played an important role in the British Empire's colonisation of India. Although the company initially came to India for trade purposes, it gradually seized political and military power and began to exploit the local people in the region.

Company managers violated all kinds of moral values in order to make short-term profits. They forcibly collected taxes from the people, destroyed the local economy, and caused starvation.

## The great revolt in 1857 brought the company to an end

These brutal policies of the company led to great anger and resistance in India. The great revolt in 1857 brought the company to an end, and the British government had to take India under its direct administration.

They probably wouldn't have come to an end if they were just ruthless and daring, but when they tried to bend the law and morality, they came to an end.

## Enron: The Price of Fraud and Deception

I have mentioned this firm quite a bit in my previous articles. **Enron**, one of the largest energy companies in the USA in the early 2000s, fell into a swamp full of accounting fraud and corruption.

Company managers played complex financial games to show their profitability high and deceived investors. When the company's true situation came to light, its shares rapidly lost value, and Enron went bankrupt in a short time.

Thousands of employees lost their jobs, and investors lost billions of dollars. The Enron scandal clearly showed how devastating the consequences can be if companies focus only on making profits and ignore ethical values. They weren't actually ruthless; they were just immoral.

## Arthur Andersen: Violation of Ethical Principles and Collapse

**Arthur Andersen** was once one of the five largest auditing firms in the world. However, it was revealed that the company condoned accounting fraud in the Enron scandal and even tried to cover up this fraud.

This situation destroyed Arthur Andersen's reputation, and the company went bankrupt in 2002. The Arthur Andersen example shows how devastating the violation of ethical principles can be for an auditing firm and how important reliability is as a value.

It wouldn't be wrong to say that opening the door to immorality in order not to lose customers led to their end.

## Madoff: Ponzi Scheme and Destruction

Madoff Investment Securities, founded by

Bernard Madoff, was running one of the largest **Ponzi schemes** in history. Madoff was promising investors high returns and paying old investors with the money of new investors.

This system could be sustained as long as new investors continued to enter. However, with the 2008 global financial crisis, when the entry of new investors stopped, Madoff's scheme collapsed.

Madoff was sentenced to 150 years in prison for defrauding investors of billions of dollars.

The Madoff example shows how much destruction greed and unethical behaviour can cause. I don't think there is a need to write an extra comment.

## Lehman Brothers: Lack of Risk Management and Bankruptcy

**Lehman Brothers** became one of the most important symbols of the 2008 global financial crisis. The company had over-invested in risky mortgage products and failed to manage these risks.

With the outbreak of the crisis, Lehman Brothers' mortgage portfolio lost value, and the company went bankrupt. Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy caused great panic in the global financial system and dragged the world economy into a deep crisis.

The Lehman Brothers example shows how important risk management is and how big the consequences of irresponsible behaviour can be. Let's say every evil has a price.

## Our Values Are Our Compass; Ethics Is the Key to Our Success

The pages of history are full of stories of those who compromised their values and ended in disappointment. In today's business world, the pressure to make profits is felt more intensely than ever before with globalisation and

increasing competition.



*Business leaders and professionals should never put the goal of making profits above values – Emre Alkin*

However, giving in to this pressure and ignoring values makes sustainable success impossible in the long run, even if it provides short-term gains.

On the contrary, unethical behaviour can damage companies' reputations, lead to legal problems, reduce employee motivation, and most importantly, undermine society's trust and prepare the ground for ultimate collapse. I tried to show this fact with examples from history.

It should not be forgotten that success is not only measured by financial indicators. Success is also a result achieved by upholding values such as honesty, justice, transparency, social responsibility, and sustainability.

These values not only help companies make profits but also help them create a positive impact in society and leave a better world for future generations.

For this reason, business leaders and professionals should never put the goal of making profits above values. Values should act as a compass, showing the right path, and ethical principles should guide decision-making processes.

Only in this way can companies achieve sustainable success, gain a respected place in society, and be a source of inspiration for

future generations. In short, those who protect their values, whether they make a profit or not, will take their place on the right side of history.

Note: "What happens to those who are both ruthless and immoral?" There may be those who ask. Law and History only intervene on the immorality side.