

Saving the Corporate Soul & (Who Knows) Maybe Your Own **by David Batstone.**

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003. 270 pp.

Reviewed by David W. Gill www.ethixbiz.com

David Batstone is a professor of ethics at the University of San Francisco and executive editor of Washington DC-based *Sojourners* magazine. He has a track record as an intensely-creative entrepreneur, with a passion to combine business excellence and positive social impact. He was a founding editor of *Business 2.0* magazine and is familiar with the Silicon Valley venture capital, high tech scene. Batstone's "breadth expertise" serves him well in this fine new book. Undoubtedly there will be criticism from those having "depth expertise" in specific areas he addresses, but his overall case is compelling.

For Batstone, the "soul of the corporation" is its people or, more specifically, the values that the people bring with them to work. "Saving the corporate soul" means aligning corporate activities, structures, and policies with those deeply-held values, rather than allowing the financial numbers to drive everything. Batstone's own values, his humanistic concern for people, obviously motivate his argument, but he argues that hard evidence indicates that ethical and value-driven corporations usually achieve business success, not just sainthood. It is not an either/or, "business success vs. human values," proposition. It is a both/and, win/win situation.

Batstone proposes eight principles having to do with (1) responsible, accountable leadership and corporate governance, (2) transparency and integrity in business operations, (3) corporate concern for communities, not just markets, (4) care for customers, (5) valuing workers, (6) respecting the environment, (7) striving for diversity and equality, and (8) responsible, ethical global operations. Each chapter-length discussion opens with the principle, then poses a dozen or more questions as a way of checking the company's "vital signs" in this area, and then rolls through his argument.

Batstone is bold and unapologetic in giving his own opinions about the necessary steps to take on this or that topic. He includes lots of stories and sidebars giving the experience and counsel of various businesses. One of the best things about the book is its many positive business examples. Batstone is no whining nay-sayer. He manages to make his points with strength but without offense. This is not an ethics book in any narrow sense nor is it a prophetic diatribe against corporations or globalization. It is a case for making sure that ethical and human concerns are part of the core ideology of the corporation. It is a wise and balanced discussion that will stimulate growth and learning among those who resonate with his opinions, as well as with those who do not.