



Shapeholders: Business Success in the Age of Activism (Columbia Business School Publishing)

Mark Kennedy

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Today, all it takes is one organizational misstep to sink a company's reputation. Social media can be a strict ethical enforcer, with the power to convince thousands to boycott products and services. While executives are stuck on appeasing stakeholders?stockholders, employees, and consumers?shapeholders, with no stake in a company?regulators, the media, and social and political activists?are working hard to curb what they see as bad practice. Companies ignore these groups at their own peril.

In *Shapeholders: Business Success in the Age of Activism*, the former congressman, Fortune 500 executive, and university president Mark Kennedy argues that shapeholders, as much as stakeholders, have enormous influence on a business's fate, with significant power to determine a company's risks and opportunities, if not its survival. Many international, multi-billion-dollar corporations fail to anticipate activism, and they flounder on first contact. Kennedy zeroes in on the different languages that shapeholders and companies speak and on their contrasting metrics for what constitutes ethical business practice. He teaches executives to be visionary, to sidestep conflict effectively, and to find profitable?and probable?collaborations to diffuse political tensions. Kennedy's decision matrix helps corporations align their business practices with shapeholder interests, anticipate their demands, and assess the viability of changing moral and ethical standards so that together they can plan a profitable route forward.

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Felicia Sharpton:

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