1980s

Ethical Climate

The social contract between employers and employees is redefined. Defense contractors are required to conform to stringent rules. Corporations downsize and employees’ attitudes about loyalty to the employer are eroded. Health care ethics emphasized.

Major Ethical Dilemmas

- Bribes and illegal contracting practices
- Influence peddling
- Deceptive advertising
- Financial fraud (savings and loan scandal)
- Transparency issues arise

Business Ethics Developments

- ERC develops the U.S. Code of Ethics for Government Service (1980)
- ERC forms first business ethics office at General Dynamics (1985)
- Defense Industry Initiative established (1986)
- Some companies create ombudsman positions in addition to ethics officer roles
- False Claims Act (government contracting)