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### Talking Virtue: Professionalism in Business and Virtue Ethics

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In this paper, the authors assert that valuable new perspectives on business practice may be gained by placing business in a professional ethics context. This paper first considers the arguments for viewing business as a profession and, if it may be so regarded, for whether professional conduct in business should be evaluated by reference to generally accepted standards or whether specific role-based criteria should be used. The usefulness in professional contexts such as business of “talking virtue” with its emphasis on telos and character, as opposed to “talking rules” is examined. It is argued that business as a human practice is properly directed towards the goals of empowerment and transformation of people. A good professional role in business should therefore be defined by reference to virtues which contribute to those goals and therefore to human flourishing. The authors explore what would count as business virtues if such an approach is adopted. They examine some advantages and disadvantages of “talking virtue”, concluding that virtue ethics greatly enriches the professional ethics conversation with reference to business.

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