

The Ethics Buzz

NEWSLETTER

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Junk Teens: Turning Trash into Treasure

The Junk Teens is a professional junk removal and disposal service made up of a team of school teenagers. The founders of the company, 19-year-old freshman Kirk McKinney Jr. at Babson College and 17-year-old junior Jacob McKinney at Westwood High School, are brothers who strive for excellent service and professionalism. The business originated when Kirk got a job at a grocery store and discovered their dump, leading him to collect valuable items from it, sparking the idea for the Junk Teens.

Junk Teens is committed to recycling and reducing landfill waste. Since the establishment of the Junk Teens warehouse in March 2023, the organization has expanded its capacity to rescue more items. The facility allows for the storage of a wide range of items, including furniture like sectional sofas and complete bedroom sets, along with various miscellaneous items such as electronics and sports equipment. Guided by the principle that "One man's trash is another man's treasure," the organization actively promotes sustainability. These combined efforts ensure that items are either recycled, reused, or find new homes, contributing to the overall environmental responsibility of the business.



Junk Teens strives to inspire and support teenagers and the community at large. By employing many teens part-time, the organization provides valuable hands-on experience in hard work and its rewards. The impact is evident when customers express their appreciation for the services. The social impact extends beyond local boundaries, as individuals from different states and countries have reached out to express their interest in the business. Additionally, their social media pages serve as not only advertising and awareness platforms but also seek to display the fun side of the work they do.

Junk Teens' success is tied to equipment upgrades. Starting with a pick-up truck, the organization's growth surged with the acquisition of a dump truck in April 2022 and further accelerated with a second dump truck in May 2023. These additions allow for larger jobs, boost work volume, and improve daily efficiency by minimizing trips to the dump or warehouse.

In terms of technology and industry trends, Junk Teens stands out for its advanced approach to marketing and the effective utilization of social media. With a youthful perspective and adeptness in social media strategies, the organization has achieved remarkable brand awareness compared to competitors, particularly credited to the ingenuity of Kirk. A recent development involves a focused effort on securing customer reviews, enhancing the Google page, and improving rankings on search engines and social media platforms.



Being a junk removal company in Massachusetts has its challenges. The company contends with fluctuating fees and increasing restrictions at the transfer and recycling facilities it collaborates with. Their primary facility, Wellesley Recycling and Disposal Facility, has raised fees multiple times and limited acceptable items, prompting them to seek alternatives.

That alternative was Recycling Solutions of Raynham due to their lower prices and fewer restrictions, although its location presents a drawback. There are rumors that town facilities may close in the future, leaving private companies as the sole providers of waste disposal services. Ethically, this poses a dilemma as increased fees must be passed on to customers. Additionally, they remain committed to following disposal restrictions, contrasting with other businesses that attempt to dispose of prohibited items, such as tires, mattresses, and chemicals in disposal areas, in an effort to avoid fees.



If you're curious about how those at Junk Teens manage the delicate balance between work and school, Charlie Rooney's journey provides a great example. As a first-year Bentley student who has been part of Junk Teens since high school, Charlie maintains a solid work-school balance throughout the semester. On weekdays, his focus is on classes, with almost all of his time dedicated to academics. When Saturdays come around, providing a free day for him, he immerses himself in work with Junk Teens. Using a campus car for convenience, he commutes to Norwood early on Saturday mornings, departing around 6 am to kick off work at 7 am.

Despite working just one day a week, Saturdays prove to be exceptionally productive. To ensure a restful Sunday, Charlie strategically completes all his homework on Friday afternoons. This approach allows him to unwind and enjoy stress-free football watching. Despite the demanding workload from both school and work, Charlie experiences a profound sense of satisfaction. His involvement with Junk Teens transcends the typical job experience; instead, it's a source of fun and enjoyment that he eagerly anticipates every weekend.



FEATURED NEWS IN BUSINESS ETHICS



Shein's mounting ethical concerns may be pushing some Gen Z shoppers to look elsewhere

CBS News
AUGUST 11, 2023

Shein, a fast-fashion retailer, is known for its ultra-low prices and vast variety, attracting a Gen Z following. However, it faces ethical concerns like copyright issues and alleged forced labor. Shein's low prices result from its real-time fashion model, but this contributes to environmental problems. Critics call for stronger regulations and ethical consumer choices.

To read more about this [click here](#).



Big tech companies cut AI ethics staff, raising safety concerns

Financial Times

MARCH 29, 2023

Big tech companies are reducing their "responsible AI teams," raising concerns about AI safety and ethics as the technology becomes more widespread. These teams are crucial for addressing ethical issues and biases in AI, but they are being downsized due to cost-cutting and market pressures.

To read more about this [click here](#).



The Yeezy standard for accounting

Financial Times

OCTOBER 4, 2023

Adidas' Yeezy sneaker partnership with Kanye West to emphasize the need for transparent financial disclosure. Adidas didn't initially reveal Yeezy's profitability, which later had a negative impact on its stock. This is a problem because Adidas cut ties with Kanye because of his racist and antisemitic comments. The article suggests that investors should demand clearer information to understand a company's operations and risks, fostering accountability and better decision-making.

To read more about this [click here](#).



US to incentivise companies to report misdeeds at businesses they buy

Financial Times

OCTOBER 4, 2023

The US Department of Justice's new policy aims to tackle national security threats from corporate misconduct. Companies can avoid charges by self-reporting misconduct within six months of acquisition and fixing it within a year, encouraging responsible corporate behavior during mergers and acquisitions.

To read more about this [click here](#).



GE Healthcare Discloses Potential Foreign Bribery Violations in China

The Wall Street Journal

OCTOBER 4, 2023

GE HealthCare Technologies, a General Electric spinoff, reported potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) in its operations in certain Chinese provinces. The company disclosed "tender irregularities and other potential violations" to U.S. regulators voluntarily. GE HealthCare is cooperating with the SEC and Justice Department reviews since 2018. The FCPA prohibits foreign bribery. The company, having implemented compliance policy enhancements, is uncertain about potential regulatory actions or penalties.

To read more about this [click here](#).

Hoffman Scholarship in Business Ethics

The Annual W. Michael Hoffman Scholarship in Business Ethics at Bentley University rewards outstanding pieces on business ethics with a **\$1,000** scholarship prize! The scholarship is open to both undergraduates and graduates and requires papers to include a business ethics component. Topics can range from corporate social responsibility, corporate political activity, sustainability, organizational DE&I, conflicts of interest, ESG investing, social entrepreneurship, and much more. Submissions are evaluated on **four criteria**: ethical content, depth of analysis, originality, and writing quality.

Applicant submissions can take various forms ranging from: essay, short story, case analysis, research paper, or any other type of written assignment. Additionally, there is no set page limit. Eligibility requires graduation in **May 2024** or walking with **no more than two classes remaining**. Co-authored papers need **at least one co-author graduating in May 2024**. Applicants should feel free to reach out to the Hoffman Center of Business Ethics, for any questions they may have. We wish all applicants the best of luck on their submissions!

MEET OUR NEW SCHOLARS



Hannia Velasquez

Hannia Velasquez is from Boston, MA, and loves to visit on the weekends. She has hands-on internship experience with companies such as Fidelity Investments and John Hancock and is working to land an actuarial internship for the summer. On campus, she has close ties to the Bentley Actuarial and Analytics Club and is in standing to become a first-year liaison for the Bentley Non-Profit Society. You can also catch her in the Card Office replacing student IDs and issuing parking permits. She is excited to be part of the Sullivan Scholar community and cannot wait for what is to come in the future!



Fatima Khan

Fatima Khan was born in Georgia, but has grown up her entire life in Lahore, Pakistan. She is very excited to be an addition to the Bentley Community and is an enthusiastic participant in various clubs, including SASA, BPA, and BMA. Utilizing her background in owning an NGO and undertaking multiple marketing internships, she is determined to apply these skills towards actively pursuing new opportunities on campus and being a very involved community member. Her ambition is to contribute and engage in initiatives that mirror the meaningful work she's accomplished through her NGO involvement. Furthermore, she is interested in joining an E-board next semester and working for Bentley SP&E to contribute to a richer student life.

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ABOUT THE W. MICHAEL HOFFMAN CENTER FOR BUSINESS ETHICS

Established in 1976 at Bentley University, the W. Michael Hoffman Center for Business Ethics (HCBE) is among the world's oldest and most highly-respected business ethics research and educational institutes.

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VISIT US! HCBE has an extensive business ethics library, and all students, staff, faculty, and the general public are welcome to visit and make use of our resources as well as those on our website.

Contributors to this edition of the newsletter are the following current HCBE Leon Sullivan Scholars: **Augustine Peprah, Elina Crosby, David Evans, and Yinghong Gao.** Augustine serves as the editor of the newsletter. Sullivan Scholars work as interns at the W. Michael Hoffman Center for Business Ethics during their undergraduate years to experience the true meaning of "business ethics."