**Happiness in Business**

This is a short document to understand what “happiness” mean.

For better understanding, I copied here a few findings from the internet and also from a research paper. I made bold the most important, relevant parts for the reader.

**1. Epicurean Philosophy**

Epicurus (Greek philosopher) lived between 341 BC and 270 BC.

Claims about human happiness from Epicurus:

1. “**Happiness is Pleasure; all things are to be done for the sake of the pleasant feelings associated with them**
2. False beliefs produce unnecessary pain; among them, that the gods will punish us and that death is something to be feared
3. There are necessary and unnecessary desires. **Necessary desires, like desiring to be free from bodily pain, help in producing happiness**, whereas unnecessary desires, like desiring a bigger car or a more luxurious meal, typically produce unhappiness
4. **The aim is not the positive pursuit of pleasure but rather the absence of pain, a neutral state he calls “ataraxia,” which is freedom from all worry, often translated simply as “inner tranquility.”**
5. This state of ataraxia can be achieved through philosophical contemplation rather than through pursuit of crass physical pleasures
6. **Happiness is not a private affair: it can be more readily achieved in a society where like-minded individuals band together to help inspire one another’s pursuit of happiness”**

From: <https://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/epicurus/>

Read more from here, if you interested: <https://www.verywellmind.com/epicurean-philosophy-and-happiness-4177914>

**2. Stakeholder happiness from a scientific paper**

Based on the paper from Jonas and Felps (2013) I tried to identify the happiness concept in Business environment. That will help the project group to understand the meaning of happiness and keep the vision in mind. Their work is restricted to companies in developed countries, because “welfare is still likely to be strongly related to happiness

in developing economies.”

“**Social welfare ought to be seen in terms of human happiness** rather than simply

equated to economic welfare. From this perspective, economic welfare is simply

the means to the end—human happiness—sought through the economic system.

In addition, evidence from a number of sources attests to a **weak empirical link**

**between income and happiness.”**

**Their proposal:**

“We propose that, for publicly-held corporations in developed economies, the **direct**

**pursuit of social welfare, through a corporate objective we call stakeholder happiness**

**enhancement (SHE), should replace the profit motive as the driving force**

behind economic activity.”

**Their definition about happiness:**

**“For the purposes of this article, we define happiness as the sum of positive feelings**

**(e.g., contentment, satisfaction, pleasure, joy) net of negative feelings (e.g., agitation,**

**anxiety, fear, anger, pain). (…) Depending on home discipline, personal preference, and publication outlet, scholars may refer to what we are calling happiness as subjective well-being, welfare, quality of life, or utility.”**

**Their definition for stakeholders**:

“According to Phillips, a stakeholder is “any individual or group of individuals that is

the legitimate object of managerial or organizational attention” (2003: 25). Phillips

also stresses that normatively legitimate stakeholder obligations are incurred when

“the organization voluntarily accepts the contributions of some group or individual

(2003: 25). Henceforth, when we use the term stakeholders, we mean normatively

legitimate stakeholders.”

**Their proposal Nr.2. regarding managerial behavior:**

“We propose that managers will do a **better job** at pursuing social welfare if they: (a) **focus on stakeholders in the foreseeable future**, rather than everyone forever; (b) are **satisfied with making choices that enhance**, rather than maximize, **stakeholder happiness**; and (c) **think about stakeholder welfare at the group level**.”

**Customer satisfaction:**

“(…) we can say with some confidence that certain activities, practices, and policies reliably improve or harm human happiness. With respect to customers, the evidence suggests that **customer satisfaction** comes from, among other things: (a) **pleasant point-of-sale** interactions, (b) **exceeded expectations**, (c) **basic human need fulfillment**, (d) **equitable treatment**, and (e) **reliable products** that do not require repair (Oliver, 2010).”

**Suggestion for companies:**

“Managers might be wise to focus on life satisfaction, which relies more heavily on judgment, and less on immediate happiness, which relies more on emotional states. In addition, improving the short-term feelings of stakeholders may be a less worthy goal

than improving their life satisfaction.”

“Managers may need to use questionnaires to collect their own measures of stakeholders’ subjective well-being”

**Last addition to happiness from Utilitarianism study**

“(…) morally appropriate behavior will not harm others, but instead increase happiness or ‘utility.’”

From <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/utilitarianism-history/#Con>

**References:**

Jones, T. M., & Felps, W. (2013). Stakeholder happiness enhancement: A neo-utilitarian objective for the modern corporation. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *23*(3), 349–379.

Visited websites on 17.10.2019.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/utilitarianism-history/#Con>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/epicurean-philosophy-and-happiness-4177914>

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