Chapter 16 Ethics and Behavior Analysis in Management Howard C. Berthold Jr. Ethical issues seem to dominate the news these days, and they extend to all areas of human endeavor including, of course, business and psychology. This chapter explores the topic of ethical issues when behavioral methods are applied to industrial/organizational (I/O) settings. The goal is not to create ethical guidelines. Rather, it is to provide an overview of the types of ethical guidelines already available as well as the nature, relevance, and importance of ethical issues that underlie such guidelines. WHAT ARE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES? Philosophers have long debated ethical issues. Numerous competing schools each adhere to tenets that not only are different, but sometimes opposite (Macklin, 1982). Part of this debate concerns the basic issue of how to define an ethical principle. Philosophers sometimes quibble over whether our perceptions are reliable indicators of reality, but this issue seems to be of less concern to scientists. Scientists start with the observable, or what can be defined in terms of the observable (operational definitions). In most cases, there is a strong consensus about what is really “out there,” a consensus that is in large part based upon the consistency among observations. Scientists then attempt to find relationships between these observable entities or events, an activity that produces factual statements called laws. Factual statements deal with what might be called objective reality, descriptions about how things are. In addition to factual statements, there are statements of value. Value statements are assertions about what is “good,” “right,” or “wrong,” and how entities and events in the world should be, not the way they necessarily are. Value statements are a cornerstone of ethics. Ethical principles look beyond what is, and ask what should be. Other chapters in this book describe principles that can be used in organizational settings to modify behavior. In effect, the authors are presenting laws describing relationships between antecedent conditions, behaviors, and consequences. The process of discovering and describing these laws is identical to the process of discovering and describing laws in all other sciences, and as such, is grounded in objective reality and statements of fact. This chapter goes beyond such objective considerations and deals with ethical issues associated with the discovery and use of such laws. WHY WOULD ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT RAISE ETHICAL CONCERNS? Organizational behavior management (OBM) utilizes information derived from the field of behavior analysis (Mawhinney, 1984). Behavior analysis attempts to find universal laws of behavior. As a scientist, the behavior analyst believes that human behavior is lawful in the same sense that the behavior of physical objects is lawful. This concept of behavioral determinism is upsetting to many people, and has led to considerable criticism, some sophisticated, some not. For some, the mere concept of behavioral determinism is upsetting in the same way that it was upsetting for people of another century to be confronted with the fact that the earth was not the center of the universe. For others, the fear relates more to how such knowledge might be used. Similar fears surround other sciences. For example, some people object to current work in genetics because such research might lead to discoveries that could be used to alter plants, animals, people, or society in ways that some people would not like. Deceased U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall is purported to have said, “Our whole constitutional heritage rebels at the thought of giving government the power to control men’s minds.” The sentiment he expressed goes beyond “minds” and government. People rebel at the concept of control in general, even though, as Skinner (1971) noted in a discussion of control and countercontrol, control is always present no matter how vehemently one argues for free will or independence from genetic influences. The discovery of laws of behavior increases the possibility of effective control. Management is one of many areas in which control of people’s behavior is an explicit goal. Combining the two, therefore, is alarming to some and raises issues pertaining to what should be controlled and who would decide. Decisions pertaining to the appropriateness of applying these laws move us from the field of objective scientific inquiry into the domain of ethical practice. How do we differentiate between ethical and unethical applications of laws of behavior? We shall look at some writings that pertain to this issue in the fields of philosophy, psychology, business, behavior analysis, and OBM. Ethics and Philosophy The study of ethical issues most clearly lies within the domain of philosophy, and there is a vast literature one could read on the topic. On the other hand, if one is looking for answers, then a better strategy would be to read a single source, because picking up a second will almost certainly demonstrate the lack of any fundamental agreement. Despite the number and complexity of positions, the ends of the spectrum are easily described. At one end is the position that fundamental ethical principles exist, and the duty of philosophers is to find them. This position is sometimes referred to as ethical objectivism (Klemke, Kline, and Hollinger, 1986). At the other extreme is the position that there are no universal or absolute ethical principles. This is not to say that people do not classify objects or events as good or bad. Rather, these statements are opinions held by the people themselves and not objective properties of whatever has been observed. Many eloquent arguments support each position. Moreover, there are many fascinating variations of these positions, some of which draw the two closer together. And each position has spawned hundreds, perhaps thousands, of interesting subquestions and ramifications. For example, assuming absolute values exist, are they the same for every culture and time? If values are completely relative, then why even talk about good and bad—throw this chapter out of the book! If philosophers cannot agree on even the most basic issue of whether or not fundamental ethical principles exist, what help are they to those of us struggling with the very practical issue of ethics in OBM? If nothing else, philosophers offer us the assurance that we have not missed something. If philosophers had discovered a set of incontrovertible ethical principles, then the principles should be incorporated into our literature. Knowing that these experts have not reached agreement is, in a perverse way, reassuring because it means that those who have devised ethical guidelines in our own fields have not naively overlooked some obvious, absolute ethical standards. Ethics and Psychology There are many formal documents on ethical practices in psychology. At the national level, the American Psychological Association (APA) published its first statement on ethical standards of psychologists in 1953 and its most recent statement in 1992. The comprehensive nature of the American Psychological Association (1992) report is evident from its table of contents, shown in Table 16.1. State psychological associations have their own guidelines and committees that attempt to promote and regulate activities of psychologists in accordance with ethical standards. If psychologists violate the ethical standards of national or state psychological associations, they may be censured or expelled from the association. These guidelines provide fairly inclusive ethical standards for psychologists. Nevertheless, they only scratch the surface. There are also federal and state laws. These laws are value judgments (and therefore ethical guidelines) devised by groups that have the power to levy penalties on those who do not obey them. Licensing of individuals, groups, and facilities is part of this legal system, which details standards and constraints on training, techniques, and environmental conditions. The most restrictive rules controlling psychologists’ efforts to influence behaviors tend to be state rather than federal laws; therefore practices can vary widely from state to state. A compilation of the laws governing psychologists in all fifty states would result in a truly enormous set of general and specific ethical principles. In addition to the formal ethical guidelines by psychological associations and governmental agencies, various types of discourse are found in journal articles and books. On occasion, a psychologist has attempted to identify a single overriding principle to serve as the standard for all specific ethical decisions. For example, in writing about the types of constraints that might be appropriate in psychologists’ acquisition and development of knowledge, Sarason (1984) suggested that the ultimate question should be how psychologists’ activities improve the psychological sense of community. Skinner (1971) suggested that the ultimate ethical imperative is the preservation of human culture and society. In writing about workplace ethics from a behavioral standpoint, Clark and Lattal (1993) argued that the ultimate goal should be trying to achieve an appropriate balance between concern for others and respect for oneself (e.g., respecting the autonomy and intrinsic worth of every human being). TABLE 16.1. Contents of APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct CONTENTS INTRODUCTION PREAMBLE GENERAL PRINCIPLES Principle A: Competence Principle B: Integrity Principle C: Professional & Scientific Responsibility Principle D: Respect for People’s Rights & Dignity Principle E: Concern for Others’ Welfare Principle F: Social Responsibility ETHICAL STANDARDS 1. General Standards 1.01 Applicability of the Ethics Code 1.02 Relationship of Ethics and Law 1.03 Professional & Scientific Relationship 1.04 Boundaries of Competence 1.05 Maintaining Expertise 1.06 Basis for Scientific & Professional Judgments 1.07 Describing the Nature & Results of Psychological Services 1.08 Human Differences 1.09 Respecting Others 1.10 Nondiscrimination 1.11 Sexual Harassment 1.12 Other Harassment 1.13 Personal Problems & Conflicts 1.14 Avoiding Harm 1.15 Misuse of Psychologists’ Influence 1.16 Misuse of Psychologists’ Work 1.17 Multiple Relationships 1.18 Barter (With Patients or Clients) 1.19 Exploitative Relationships 1.20 Consultations & Referrals 1.21 Third-Party Requests for Services 1.22 Delegation to & Supervision of Subordinates 1.23 Documentation of Professional & Scientific Work 1.24 Records and Data 1.25 Fees & Financial Arrangements 1.26 Accuracy in Reports to Payors & Funding Sources 1.27 Referrals and Fees 2.Evaluation, Assessment, orIntervention 2.01 Evaluation, Diagnosis, & Interventions in Professional Context 2.02 Competence & Appropriate Use of Assessments Intervention 2.03 Test Construction 2.04 Use of Assessment in General & With Special Populations 2.05 Interpreting Assessment Results 2.06 Unqualified Persons 2.07 Obsolete Tests & Outdated Test Results 2.08 Test Scoring & Interpretation Services 2.09 Explaining Assessment Results 2.10 Maintaining Test Security 3.Advertising and Other PublicStatements 3.01 Definition of Public Statements 3.02 Statements by Others 3.03 Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements 3.04 Media Presentations 3.05 Testimonials 3.06 In-Person Solicitation 4.Therapy 5.01 Discussing the Limits of Confidentiality 5.02 Maintaining Confidentiality 5.03 Minimizing Intrusions on Privacy 5.04 Maintenance of Records 5.05 Disclosures 5.06 Consultations 5.07 Confidential Information in Databases 5.08 Use of Confidential Information for Didactic or Other Purposes 5.09 Preserving Records & Data 5.10 Ownership of Records & Data 5.11 Withholding Records for Nonpayment 6.Teaching, Training Supervision, Research, and Publishing 7.Forensic Activities 8.Resolving Ethical Issues 8.01 Familiarity with Ethics Code 8.02 Confronting Ethical Issues 8.03 Conflicting Between Ethics & Organizational Demands 8.04 Informal Resolution of Ethical Violations 8.05 Reporting Ethical Violations 8.06 Cooperating with Ethics Committees 8.07 Improper Complaints Source: From American Psychological Association. (1992). Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. American Psychologist, 47, p. 1597. Copyright 1992 by the American Psychological Association, Inc. Adapted by permission. More often, however, writers direct their efforts toward less encompassing issues related to narrower areas of work. For example, ethical issues are discussed in relation to socially sensitive research (Sieber and Stanley, 1988), counseling (Stein, 1990), and teaching (Strike and Soltis, 1985). In addition to journal articles, textbooks are available (e.g., Carroll, Schneider, and Wesley, 1985; Corey, Corey, and Callanan, 1988; Keith-Spiegel and Koocher, 1985; Steininger, Newell, and Garcia, 1984). The books appear to be particularly useful for courses designed to meet APA’s certification requirement that ethics be taught in applied programs. Ethics and Behavior Analysis Having considered some of the approaches to ethics in philosophy and psychology in general, I now narrow the focus to writings by and about people in the field of behavior analysis. The types of information on ethical approaches to behavior analysis are similar to those for psychology in general. Specifically, there are formal guidelines, legal guidelines, general proclamations about overriding issues, and individual articles dealing with more narrowly defined ethical problems. Two sets of formal guidelines were published in the late 1970s and appear to have withstood the test of time quite well. The first was titled “Ethical Issues for Human Services” and was adopted on May 22, 1977, by the board of directors of the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy and published in Behavior Therapy. The statement consists of eight major questions with two to five subquestions under each (for a total of thirty-three questions), which anyone planning to implement a behavioral program should be able to answer in the affirmative. The second set of guidelines arose from a commission appointed by the American Psychological Association to delineate ethical issues in behavior modification (Stolz and associates, 1978). Eight major issues were discussed in the report. More recently, Van Houten and colleagues (1988) published results of work by a task force appointed by the Executive Council of the Association for Behavior Analysis to “consider treatment-related issues, with particular focus on clients’ rights” (Iwata, 1988, p. 110). Six basic rights of clients subject to programs designed to change behavior were identified and discussed. Considerable overlap exists between these three sets of guidelines, although each has some unique components and cuts a little deeper into certain areas than the others. Taken together, they provide a set of ethical principles that are fairly inclusive for anyone using behavioral methods, including those working in I/O environments. It has been noted that public laws are related to ethical issues in that they define what is and is not appropriate behavior. Cataloguing federal and state laws that are relevant in any way to behavioral interventions would require volumes, and will not be attempted here. Worth noting, however, is an increasing interest by psychologists in becoming involved in the formation of public policy. This is evident in general writings in psychology (e.g., Brown, 1992; DeWall, 1992; Sneed and Chavis, 1992) and in the behavioral literature (Fawcett et al., 1988). The Fawcett et al. (1988) report was the result of work by the Task Force on Behavior Analysis and Public Policy, sponsored by the Association for Behavior Analysis. The report is extremely important, not because it contains any recommendations regarding what should become public policy, but because it recognizes the importance of behavior analysts becoming involved in the creation of public policy, which in a sense is equivalent to the creation of legally binding ethical standards. The principles identified in the preceding documents represent the efforts of carefully selected individuals appointed by organizations representing large numbers of people who work in the field of behavior analysis. In addition to these documents, countless other journal articles and portions of books relate to ethical conduct in the practice of behavior analysis. Ethics and Business The history of distrust toward business practices extends into antiquity. By the 1950s and 1960s, the old horror stories about sweatshops and child labor were replaced by fear and anger toward the “military-industrial complex.” In the 1980s people such as Marvin Harris (1987) argued that business practices that spawned oligopolies, increased bureaucracy, and a shift to a service-and-information economy were the root causes of most of our social and personal problems. In the 1990s, we were bombarded by tales of insider trading, savings and loans scandals, illicit deals with foreign governments, and so on. One might think that little or no consideration has been given to the issue of ethics by business. Indeed, pollster Louis Harris (1986) found that 70 percent of the public answered “no” to the question, “Does business see to it that its executives behave legally and ethically?” (p. 236). Despite such reports, ethical guidelines do exist in the business world. For example, Dreilinger and Rice (1991) cited a study showing that between 1984 and 1987, 75 to 87 percent of Fortune 1000 companies claimed to have a formal code of ethics and 14 to 32 percent had corporate ethics committees. The most farreaching guidelines are those issued by the federal government. It issued revised ethics rules on August 6, 1992, applying to some 2.1 million federal civilian employees in the executive branch (but not Congress or the courts) and officers (but not enlisted personnel) in the armed forces. The rules, which originated with the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, were intended to replace and unify separate rules governing different agencies. Although it appears that less space tends to be devoted to ethical issues in the typical management text than the typical behavior modification text, courses on ethics in business are now commonplace in undergraduate and graduate school curricula, and numerous books are devoted to the topic (e.g., Beauchamp and Bowie, 1993; Blanchard and Peale, 1988; Iannone, 1989; Liebig, 1990; Madsen and Shafritz, 1990). One of the more telling indicators of the amount of scholarly interest in ethics and business comes from a study by Randall and Gibson (1990). They utilized three computerized databases: Management Contents, which indexes 500 U.S. and international journals from 1974 onward, the Social Sciences Citation Index, which contains over one million citations from 1972 onward, and the Business Periodicals Index, which indexes 304 periodicals from 1982 onward. In addition, they conducted manual searches of The Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature from 1960 onward, which indexes around 175 U.S. periodicals, and the Business Periodicals Index from 1958 to present. Finally, they studied the reference sections of the articles they found through the preceding sources for any additional studies. The result was over 700 citations on ethical beliefs and behavior in organizations. This is not an overwhelming number considering the fact that it represents everything that could be found in hundreds of journals over a thirtyyear period. Nevertheless, a significant literature does exist. Together with the books, a review of articles in the Journal of Business Ethics would provide the interested reader with a good representative sample of the writing and research on business ethics. The literature encompasses both ethical knowledge and practice (behavior), including the oftentimes imperfect correlation between the two. Ethics and I/O Psychology As they are a subset of all psychologists, the majority of guidelines already discussed in this chapter apply to I/O psychologists as well. Other guidelines speak specifically to activities undertaken by I/O psychologists. Most noteworthy, perhaps, is “Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Industrial/Organizational Psychologists” (American Psychological Association, 1981), which extended APA’s Standards for Providers of Psychological Services (American Psychological Association, 1977) to I/O psychology. The document (1) discusses the importance to I/O psychology of supplementing and clarifying the more general APA standards upon which it is based; (2) defines the education and experience required of an I/O psychologist, including a doctoral degree from a regionally accredited university in a primarily psychological program committed to the scientist-professional model; (3) defines the types of services I/O psychologists provide, including selection and placement, organizational development, training and development, personnel research, improving motivation, and optimization of work environments; and (4) provides specific guidelines for I/O psychological services. The guidelines are summarized in Table 16.2. In the document, each of these guidelines is followed by one or more paragraphs of “interpretation.” The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology helped in the formulation of these standards. The society holds high standards of ethics and conduct as a primary goal (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Inc., 1983), and has issued other reports dealing with ethical issues. For example, Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1987) sets guidelines for “validation research, personnel selection, and promotion” (p. 1). In the area of assessment and personnel, documents on standards and ethical principles abound. Many of these were developed by professional organizations, and many have the status of federal and state laws. London and Bray (1980) provide a somewhat dated but informative overview of this area. TABLE 16.2. Summary of Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Industrial/Organizational Psychologists Guideline 1 PROVIDERS Staffing and Qualifications of Staff 1.1 Professional I/O psychologists maintain current knowledge of scientific and professional developments that are related to the services they render. 1.2 Professional I/O psychologists limit their practice to their demonstrated areas of professional competence. 1.3 Professional psychologists who wish to change their specialty to I/O areas meet the same requirements with respect to subject matter and professional skills that apply to doctoral training in the new specialty. 1.4 Professional I/O psychologists are encouraged to develop innovative procedures and theory. Guideline 2 PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS Protecting the User 2.1 I/O psychological practice supports the legal and civil rights of the user. 2.2 All providers of I/O psychological services abide by policies of the American Psychological Association that are relevant to I/O psychologists. 2.3 All providers within an I/O psychological service unit are familiar with relevant statutes, regulations, and legal precedents established by federal, state, and local governmental groups. Planning Organizational Goals 2.4 Providers of I/O psychological services state explicitly what can and cannot reasonably be expected from the services. 2.5 Providers of I/O psychological services do not seek to gain competitive advantage through the use of privileged information. 2.6 Providers of I/O psychological services who purchase the services of another psychologist provide a clear statement of the role of the purchaser. 2.7 Providers of I/O psychological services establish a system to protect confidentiality of their records. Guideline 3 ACCOUNTABILITY Evaluating I/O Psychological Services 3.1 The professional activities of providers of I/O psychological services are guided primarily by the principle of promoting human welfare. 3.2 There are periodic, systematic, and effective evaluations of psychological services. Source: From American Psychological Association (1981). Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Industrial/Organizational Psychologists. American Psychologist, 36, pp. 666-668. Copyright 1981 by the American Psychological Association, Inc. Adapted by permission. In addition to the ethical guidelines provided by professional organizations, the numerous legal statutes, and the organizations within which I/O psychologists work, numerous individuals have published ideas and research relating to ethics in the I/O environment (Saal and Knight, 1988). It was surprising, therefore, to find that the 1990 special issue of the American Psychologist which focused on organizational psychology contained no articles about ethics, standards, or legal issues (Offermann and Gowing, 1990). Ethics and Organizational Behavior Management With roots in philosophy, psychology, business, behavior analysis, and I/O psychology, OBM psychologists have a vast array of ethical principles to draw upon. It is tempting at this point to try to identify a small set of principles that could serve as guideposts for OBM practitioners. There are many ways to approach this task. For example, Berthold (1982) used a type of critical incident technique to generate six principles OBM practitioners could follow to avoid some of the difficulties that arose when behavioral methods were applied to other areas. Clark and Lattal (1993) opted instead for a process approach based on moral pluralism. They identified four basic values that should be weighed and balanced in arriving at ethical decisions in the workplace. The values were (1) rights: All people deserve equal rights because all people are equally valuable; (2) justice: Those in greatest need should receive the greatest help; (3) the common good: The good of all human kind should take precedence over the good of the few; and (4) self-interest: Each person must try to meet his or her own needs. Rather than debating the relative merits of these and other approaches, I will use the remaining space to discuss a far more serious issue pertaining to ethics and OBM. Professor Fisher, a management professor at Franklin and Marshall College, had a habit of endlessly repeating principles he considered important. He uttered one more than all the others combined. It went something like this (with the expletives deleted): “It doesn’t matter what the truth is; it only matters what people think the truth is!” Bypassing the issue of the ethicality of the statement itself, most would agree that even if OBM practitioners followed impeccable ethical standards, if people involved in the decision to adopt or use OBM principles viewed them as unethical, then the likelihood of adoption would be greatly reduced. In the absence of universally agreed-upon ethical principles, such factors as culture (the aggregate of learned principles in a society), individual learning histories, and current contingencies are likely to govern what is considered ethically correct and what will be used. Homme and Tosti (1971) brought this point home in a powerful fashion. They noted how Skinner was laughed out of the room by a group of military strategists after demonstrating a pigeon’s ability to guide a rocket to an intended target. They also described two cases in which management was horrified that someone would suggest using pigeons in quality control, even though the pigeons did demonstrably better than humans. Goddard had all the knowledge necessary to send a rocket into space, but his ideas were rejected and overlooked until the Russians put the first satellite into orbit. It was not the scientific knowledge or technology that was lacking; it was the absence of positive consequences accruing to the acceptance and use of what was known. OBM would appear to be in a similar situation. Although this book contains numerous examples of situations where OBM has been used, the question remains: With successes such as these, why isn’t OBM used more often? No doubt, there are numerous answers, but one answer has to be the way behavioral methods are viewed by people outside the field. These views reflect people’s cultural history, just as they did when people laughed at Skinner and ignored Goddard. An OB textbook illustrates the persistence of the problem. After citing several OBM successes, Robbins (1993) ends the section with a series of questions relating to whether OBM techniques are ethical. He concludes, “There are no easy answers to questions like these” (p. 254). In discussing such matters, behavior analysts often utilize the term “acceptability,” because “acceptability” is more easily operationally defined than terms such as “image,” or phrases such as “what people think is true.” If one were to take an extreme relativistic stance, then acceptability might be considered an operational definition of ethics as well. At the very least, acceptability is related to ethics and the issue of the way that behavioral methods are viewed by potential users. Turco and Elliott (1986) credit Wolf (1978) with first discussing intervention (treatment) acceptability in terms of social validity of applied behavior analysis. Providing a theoretical base such as social validity for work in an area such as treatment acceptability has enormous heuristic value because it ties together areas and prompts research hypotheses. Earlier writers had studied the issue, but in a more isolated context. For example, Frey (1974), Musgrove (1974), and Throll and Ryan (1976) measured schoolteachers’ knowledge and attitudes toward behavior modification. Woolfolk, Woolfolk, and Wilson (1977) studied students who rated behavior modification procedures less acceptable than procedures described as “humanistic” or “affective education.” Kazdin (1980) provided excellent statements on the importance of the acceptability issue, and developed two scales for measuring treatment acceptability. One utilized a Likerttype format and the other used the semantic differential by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957). Kazdin’s scales have been used in numerous studies on acceptability (e.g., Kazdin, 1981, 1984; Kazdin and Cole, 1981; Singh and Katz, 1985; Singh, Watson, and Winton, 1987). These studies have focused primarily upon the use of behavioral techniques in the treatment of children with behavioral problems, most often in institutional or clinic settings. Stephen Elliott and Joseph Witt developed an instrument which they used to measure intervention acceptability, primarily in classroom and educational settings (Turco and Elliott, 1986; Witt and Elliott, 1985). Elliott (1988) provided an informative review of the treatment acceptability literature, including a table that summarizes important aspects of the cited studies. Elliott (1986) is a good source of information about Kazdin’s Treatment Evaluation Inventory and Witt and Elliott’s Children’s intervention Rating Profile. The information provided by the acceptability/social validity literature is valuable as a model for research that should be done in OBM. Some evidence exists that these results may generalize to the I/O setting. Dubno et al. (1978) developed a scale to assess attitudes toward behavior modification utilizing a hypothetical management situation that was psychometrically tested on a sample of 252 graduate business students. More work needs to be done at this level of sophistication. Berthold (1983) reported a series of less formal studies which also suggest that findings involving educational and clinical settings might generalize to I/O settings. Disturbed by animosity from colleagues toward his adherence to the behavioral approach and reports such as those by Turkat and Feuerstein (1978) documenting the negative image of behavior modification in articles in The New York Times, Berthold (1983) and several of his students studied attitudes toward OBM. Their techniques varied. Chris Ivanoff asked students which of two lists of terms seemed more ethical. A list of words from the glossary of the book Organizational Behavior Modification by Luthans and Kreitner (1975) and a list from a more traditional management text by Elbing (1978) were used. Bill Vadinsky performed a similar study with paired titles from readings in the Elbing (1978) text and titles from readings in the OBM text by O’Brien, Dickinson, and Rosow (1982). These and other studies showed that undergraduates consistently rated behavioral words, techniques, and readings as less ethical, interesting, and desirable than nonbehavioral words, techniques, and readings. Two other studies refined and extended the initial research (Berthold, 1983). In a fivepart experiment, Debbie Cardinale questioned approximately equal numbers of managers and workers in a large fabric dyeing plant and others in small retail establishments in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. In addition to confirming the results from college students, Cardinale found that the businesspeople were confused about what behavioral terminology meant, and were not very interested in finding out. She found no statistically significant differences between managers and workers or between factory and retail environments. Daniel Murray pursued the relationship between familiarity and acceptability of behavioral terms and methods. He found a statistically significant relationship between the two, a finding that was consistent with an earlier study by Young and Patterson (1981) on college students and faculty. The aforementioned studies suggest a challenge for those involved in OBM. The challenge is not new. In an article for Newsday back in 1978, B. F. Skinner asked, “Why aren’t we using science to change behavior?” Wolpe expressed a similar concern in a 1981 article in the American Psychologist. Like the businesspeople in Cardinale’s study, he found that despite its demonstrated superiority over the traditional technique (psychoanalysis in this case), only 25 percent of the psychiatrists at an American Psychiatric Association meeting claimed to know anything about behavior modification. Is there a way to help ensure that OBM programs not only are ethical, but appear to be ethical as well? The research points to two causal elements that could be used to solve the problem. One has to do with level of knowledge about OBM and the other with behavioral terminology per se. Level of Knowledge Woolfolk and Woolfolk (1979) reported one of the first attempts to improve acceptability through enhanced knowledge by documenting behavior modification’s efficacy and popularity. They met with little success. Likewise, Kazdin (1981) found that the effectiveness of treatments in altering behavior did not influence acceptability ratings. On the other hand, Kazdin (1984) found that aversive procedures and medication were rated more acceptable when they had more marked effects than when they had weaker effects. Moreover, Kreitner (1981) found that managers did not react negatively toward behavioral terms provided the techniques worked. The mixed results suggest that telling people how well behavioral techniques work may or may not improve acceptability. The effectiveness of this approach may depend upon interacting variables such as actually witnessing a successful application or increasing the importance of using effective techniques. Just as the Russian space program advanced Goddard’s standing, so too might global economic competition advance OBM. Rather than presenting information on efficacy, another strategy is to teach the behavioral techniques themselves. Singh and Katz (1985) obtained acceptability ratings for several behavioral and humanistic techniques involving treatment of children and then presented lectures on the behavioral techniques to the undergraduate subjects. A posttest showed significant increases in ratings for the behavioral approaches and decreases in ratings for the humanistic techniques even though the humanistic techniques were not discussed. Although the results are somewhat mixed, direct tests of the hypothesis that increased knowledge about OBM would improve acceptability are clearly warranted. If the relationship is found to hold, then OBM psychologists would have an important tool for not only improving people’s evaluations of OBM’s ethical standards, but also increasing the likelihood of OBM being used in I/O settings. Behavioral Terminology In addition to educating people about behavioral methods, particularly the reinforcement techniques advocated by OBM proponents, the studies cited in this chapter also demonstrate a need to give serious consideration to reactions to behavioral terminology. Spiegler (1983) suggested that behaviorists simply use operational definitions when talking with clients, telling them in concrete terms what will be done without reference to theoretical principles and the accompanying jargon. Kazdin and Cole (1981) showed that operationalizing terminology might not be enough. They separated out the impact of the label (behavior modification), content of the procedure, and jargon used to describe the procedures. Results showed that the label did not produce large negative evaluations; rather, undergraduates found the procedure itself unacceptable. Moreover, the behavioral jargon actually improved the negative evaluations somewhat. More important than the language used when we apply behavior modification may be the language used when we talk about behavior modification. Krasner (1976) noted that behaviorists had allowed writers to establish a dichotomy between behaviorism and humanism which conveyed the impression that behaviorists are not as concerned about people per se as humanists. Bevan (1982) stated “… I believe that if we are to achieve a balanced national life, we must somehow reconcile our needs for a technology based on science with those for a humanely inspired culture” (p. 1304). According to Offerman and Gowing (1990), I/O psychologists need more than scientific expertise and publications describing successful programs to persuade organizations to adopt their methods. “In garnering support for our activities, I/O psychologists need to be able to speak the language of business” (p. 104). In business, that language will often be bottomline dollars and cents, with little emotional content. At other times, however, even in the business world, the emotional correlates of language produced through higher order conditioning become important. Nonbehaviorists have made effective use of terms that have acquired positive associations through everyday usage; Behaviorists have not in many instances. But behaviorists can use the same language as the nonbehaviorists in describing their concern for people and their ideals. Utilizing this language might prompt people to learn and use behavioristic language more effectively. Laws governing human behavior continue to operate whether or not they are known or accurately stated. Parsons (1992) convincingly demonstrated that the classic Hawthorne studies followed an OBM paradigm, but the research was not originally conceived or interpreted in this manner. Indeed, so many different explanations were used to account for the results that Parsons (1978) dubbed the Hawthorne studies “… the biggest Rorschach blot in the history of behavioral and social science” (p. 261). Laws may be objective statements of reality, but people’s reactions to their disclosure may not be at all objective, as Galileo and numerous other scientists could testify. Politicians employ “spin doctors” to rephrase policies, programs, and actions (behaviors) into a language that may be very different from how they were conceived so as to evoke a positive reaction from the general public. Money is a powerful reinforcer. Nevertheless, behaviorists who have used money in educational, institutional, and private settings have sometimes been criticized for giving “bribes.” This would be less of a concern in business, where money has always been viewed as an appropriate motivator. But other concerns can emerge. Money may seem an entitlement to people accustomed to a noncontingent relationship between pay and work. Changing a system so that money becomes contingent on performance can lead to protests and grievances. Careful analysis would show that the primary issue is not whether pay-for-performance contingencies are ethical, but whether changing the system of payment is ethical, no matter how superior the new system. As a start, employees must be convinced that the performance goals are realistic and that they will have the necessary resources to succeed. But there will be an important language component as well. The reinforcing value of a monetary contingency might differ if it is introduced as “an exciting new way to earn some extra cash” rather than as a “reinforcer.” However helpful our language and knowledge is in designing an OBM program, we must realize that if we introduce that language into the implementation stage, it becomes one of the factors that will affect the outcome of the program. CONCLUSION: OBM AND ETHICS A limited number of attempts have been made to identify specific ethical principles for OBM (e.g. Berthold, 1982; Clark and Lattal, 1993). Perhaps it is time for members of a national or international organization interested in OBM to attempt to devise a set of ethical standards. On the other hand, there is little ambiguity in the way guidelines from associated fields generalize to the OBM environment, and there seems to be little evidence of unethical behavior by OBM psychologists. Positive reinforcement, praise, feedback, etc. would seem preferable to the aversive control procedures commonly used in I/O settings. As Clark and Lattal (1993) note, OBM provides the best method for improving the current ethical climate in business. Of greater immediate concern is an apparent discrepancy between actual ethics and perceived ethics (acceptability). Many researchers have recognized the importance of acceptability. Kazdin (1980), for example, stated: “Improving the overall acceptability may increase the likelihood that treatment is sought, initiated, and adhered to once it is initiated” (p. 330). A similar situation may well pertain to OBM programs. If so, we need to increase our efforts to educate businesspeople, and indeed all people, about principles of behavior analysis. While assumptions of external rather than internal control and unfamiliar terminology present obstacles to acceptance, other aspects of OBM work in its favor. Positive reinforcement, after all, is something people find desirable. Finding and providing contingent positive reinforcers has great potential for being interpreted as an ethical activity. In evaluating OBM programs, it is important to measure not only productivity, but such factors as job satisfaction and job involvement as well. Finally, OBM psychologists need to increase their usage of not only the language of business, but language that conveys the concern we most certainly share with practitioners of other approaches for doing the best and most ethical job we can toward the ultimate goal of ensuring the most productive and, yes, we should be willing to say it, the most humane, fair, and personally enriching work environment possible.