RESPONSIBILITY TO EMPLOYEES
WHAT MAKES A COMPANY AN ETHICAL EMPLOYER?

- What is fair treatment?
- What do you want from an employer?
- What is reasonable for an employer to ask from you?
CASE STUDY: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT UBER AND GITHUB

- In 2014 Julie Ann Horvath left GitHub
  - After calling attention to the discrepancy in treatment between male and female employees, she was harassed by a founder’s wife
  - Later solicited for sex by a coworker
  - Quit after watching her male coworkers gawk at her female coworkers exercising with hula hoops and realizing she couldn’t change the culture
- In 2017 Susan Fowler left Uber after her manager solicited her for sex
  - HR and upper management refused to intervene since he was a “high performer”
  - Fowler was cited as having “undocumented performance problems”
Github said they could not confirm Horvath’s story but they did “find evidence of mistakes and errors of judgment.”

- CEO resigned

Over 20 employees fired at Uber after Fowler’s viral blog post

- CEO resigned over this and other internal issues

Allegations of misconduct continue to come to light in tech and other industries as well as academia
WHY DO PEOPLE SEXUALLY HARASS?

- Not a compliment
- Not about attraction or passion
- All about power and entitlement
WHY DO PEOPLE NOT COME FORWARD?

- Victims who come forward are often not believed or outright punished
  - #MeToo movement only happening because we reached critical mass – not because this is something new
- Systems of power tend to protect the offender
  - Enacting justice versus maintaining order
- People of the majority tend to side with the majority
CASE STUDY: AMAZON AND FOOD STAMPS

- 10% of Amazon employees in Ohio are on food stamps
- Other large employers who have employees use SNAP:
  - Walmart, Kroger, Home Depot, Target
- Mostly part-time factory workers
  - Full time workers receive ~15/hr plus benefits, career tuition, maternity leave etc
- Amazon profits from Q4 2017 was $1.9B
IMPACT ON LOCAL AND STATE ECONOMIES

- Local and state government provides tax break incentives to Amazon
- Local community gets a major employer in the area
- Food stamp subsidies not considered in this equation
- What about other businesses?
CASE STUDY: AMAZON AND WORKER BRACELETS

- Amazon patented a bracelet with ultrasonic pulses and radio transmissions to track employee hands in relation to inventory bins
- Designed to streamline “time consuming” tasks
- Amazon already known for firing workers who can’t meet quota
  - To the point that workers don’t take bathroom breaks...
NOT JUST THE FACTORY WORKERS...

- White collar Amazon employees expected to “hit the wall” then “climb the wall”

- Emphasis on:
  - Long work hours
  - Extracting the most from its employees
  - Competition between employees as a form of “Darwinism”
A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH TO BUSINESS

- If you believe in “optimal” business practices
  - What are you optimizing?
  - How do you know when you’ve accomplished it?
IT’S NOT JUST AMAZON!

- In 2013 Intuit, Lucasfilm, and Pixar were ordered to pay $20M for a “no-poach” pact
- In 2015 Apple, Google, Intel, and Adobe were ordered to pay $415M for a “no-poach” pact
- Large companies colluded to retain talent by price-fixing wages between them
How much land does a man need?

- How much profit does a company need to make?
  - Current “wisdom” is that a business that isn’t growing is dying

- How much money does an individual need?
  - In 2016 the average CEO made 271 times the wage of the average worker (an increase of more than 930% since 1978)

- How much “convenience” do consumers need?
  - Demand for same-day delivery is why companies like Amazon have incentive to treat their workers like robots
OPTIMIZING FOR HAPPINESS

- Scientists estimate 40% of our happiness is under our control
  - 60% determined by genetics and external factors
- You have a great deal of control of how happy you are!
WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE HAPPY?

- Strong, close relationships
- Time over money
- Enough money to not worry (income up to ~$75,000 on average)
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Engaging in acts of kindness toward others
- Physical exercise
- Experiences and community rather than material possessions
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