

**Speech delivered by Don Sun, MBA '11
Queen's MBA Oath Ceremony April 9th, 2011.**

Good afternoon and welcome to the inaugural Queen's MBA Oath ceremony. I am very excited to be here today and commend you for making the choice to take the MBA Oath.

Before we get started I wanted to take a second recognize our guests:

MBA administration

Center of Responsible Leadership Tina Dacin and Tina Bailey

Guest Speaker, Mr. Don Drummond.

I also wanted to take a second to thank the Oath Committee for the hard work in helping getting this event off the ground. I could not have done it without you. I also want to thank the Queen's Full Time MBA Administration and the Center for Responsible Leadership for supporting our initiative – we couldn't have done it without you! And of course I'd like to thank Mr. Don Drummond for agreeing to speak to us today and I look forward to your comments.

I want to talk about why this event is important and I'll start by reading some recent headlines and I want you think about them as I read them and consider what you would do in that situation:

Two major headlines in recent times:

[**Former Goldman director charged with insider trading**](#) Rajat Gupta
Mar 1 2011

Former Ontario Tory candidate gets bail after fraud charges Salman Farooq **Mar 31 2011**

A few others that have cropped up in the last two weeks:

Former Alberta government employee charged with fraud

Mar 15 2011

[**Facebook Fired Employee for Insider Trading Ahead of Goldman Deal**](#)
April 1 2011

[Former Gucci Employee Charged with Hacking, Abusing Employee Discount](#)

April 5 2011

[Founder of Colorado-based health plan indicted on charges of money laundering ...](#)

April 6 2011

Aside from Rajat Gupta and Raj Rajaratnam, there is no indication that the people in these stories had an MBA but they ALL were working for companies and organization and conducting business, just as we will be, when they made some unethical decisions. The hope is that taking the oath is small and meaningful step to reducing unethical and socially irresponsible decision-making.

The origins of this particular movement started in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008. The media was looking for someone to blame and as some of the people that potentially contributed to the collapse had MBA training, there was speculation as to whether what is being taught or not taught in B-Schools had a part of this. Some students from Harvard thought that, we could do better and started a grassroots movement at their school which has since spread to other schools and become the MBA Oath Project. Now this wasn't the first time something like this has been pursued, Thunderbird School of Management in fact has had an oath of honor as a part of their program since 2004, but the MBA Oath project is the first to gain larger attention. From my view there are two outcomes. The first is that it is a first step to move management toward being a profession. Medical professionals, lawyers and engineers have licensing bodies that they must belong to and must adhere to a code of conduct as they practice and there is notion that management should take this path as well.

The other, and the one I think that is more important, is that it provides a tool to help us remember to make ethical and socially responsible decision. Now some of you may be thinking, "I'm choosing to take the Oath because I'm aware and won't make bad choices, might this be redundant?" Maybe, but let me tell you why I'm taking it.

In my view of the world, individuals face situations everyday in which they have the agency to make a choice. Some of those choices appeal to what I call "natural person", what he/she natural wants that benefits self. The other

choice is the proverbial “right” choice, by nature of law, policy, contract or benefit to society. Sometimes the desire of the natural person are inline with the proverbial “right” choice and sometimes not. And everyone, must make those choices everyday. My fear is that I might start to make small little choices that start to air on the side “not right” which can then lead comfort around those small deviations and then choices on a bit larger deviations that eventually lead to outright unethical decisions. Let me give you some examples.

Do I read the Dilbert comics on their website for an hour, while on a work computer and work time?

Do I forward the email with my favorite color and cat video to all family and friends from my work email when there is policy restricting this?

Do I make that long distance call to a client of my personal consulting company on my work phone and do work to them on company time?

Do I expense that gift I got for my wife because it was on the same bill as other legitimate expenses and it was too much trouble to separate it out?

Most five alarm fires do not reach that level of intensity instantaneously. They start with a small spark. Some sparks whither and die and no harm is done. Others smolder and turn into small fires that spread slowly to surrounding areas and then pick up speed as it gets larger and more fuel available. I have to make these decisions everyday and the natural desires of a person are strong. I really like nice cars and big houses and would like them now. I need all the help I can get to make sure that I make ethical and socially responsible decisions that don't harm other as I pursue business activities.

I am taking this Oath to provide for me, another measure, a personal commitment and reminder to myself to prevent those sparks and potential infernos and I encourage you to take it with that same intent.

Once again I commend you for making this choice and thank you for your participation.