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Study Says Companies Are More Ethical Today

March 28, 2006 (SmartPros) — A study published by Baylor University researchers says the business world is not going the way of Enron. Or the way of Arthur Andersen. Or the way of WorldCom.

Instead, research shows that over the past 17 years the ethics of business leaders and professionals is improving. In recent years business owners and managers are making more ethical decisions. These findings are published in the April issue of the *Journal of Small Business Management*.

The study was based on responses from more than 5,000 managers of both small and large firms in all 50 states. Covering a 16-year stretch of time, the authors mailed surveys to respondents in 1985, 1993, and 2001 asking them to judge the degree to which they found 16 scenarios compatible to their own ethical views. The business situations ranged from the illegal to the debatable.

With the exception of the 1993 survey, in which small business respondents showed a propensity to be less ethical, there was no difference between large and small firms. Both showed increasingly positive selections.

Co-authors Carlos W. Moore, J. William Petty, Leslie E. Palich, and Joseph A. McKinney are professors at Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business.

The Journal of Small Business Management is the official journal of the International Council for Small Business. For more information: <http://www.baylor.edu/business>

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