

-28.11

DOW: 7985.18

-4.65

NASDAQ: 1301.50

-4.61

S&P500: 843.59

BUSINESS

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DAILY CAMERA

SECTION E

CEO: Mission key to ethics

Medtronic's chief visits CU business class

By Matt Branaugh

Camera Business Writer

The head of a medical technology company visiting the University of Colorado on Tuesday told students U.S. businesses can better defend themselves against scandals by adopting clearly defined corporate missions.

Art Collins, the chairman and chief executive officer of Medtronic Inc., dropped in on CU's Profiles in Business and Society, a class studying corporate ethics and responsibility.

Nancy Veiss, one of those CU students, said she's living

proof that Collins' company's mission works.

"The company's major mission statement is to improve the quality of life for people whose lives haven't exactly been perfect," Veiss said after the executive's visit. "That sets the stage for it to be an ethical company."

Veiss is diabetic, and uses a Medtronic insulin pump to regulate her blood sugar. When she was diagnosed 16 years ago, Veiss had to inject herself with needles five times a day to do the same thing. At that time, doctors told her she'd likely die by the age of 31.

Now 32 and married, Veiss is pursuing a second undergraduate degree, this time in business. She credits a number of advances, including Medtronic's work, for her turn of fortune.

Medtronic's mission has created opportunities to make devices like the ones Veiss uses, Collins said. Politicians, burned investors and others who pine for more government regulation in light of last year's accounting debacles from the likes of Enron Corp. should take note, he said.

Please see CEO on 4E



PAUL AIKEN / Daily Camera

Art Collins, the chief executive officer of Medtronic, speaks to University of Colorado students about clearly defined corporate missions on Tuesday.

CEO says mission is key to ethics

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"They got in trouble," Collins said of last year's failures, "because they didn't have a mission statement, they didn't have clear direction."

Companies grew too fast, spread their purposes too thin — or both — and "they lost their way, they lost their moral compass," he said.

Medtronic toed an equally dangerous line in 1960, he said, just 11 years after its founding.

After rapid growth — spurred on by its work on cardiac pacemakers — the company faced bankruptcy. Co-founder Earl Bakken sat down and hashed out six core statements that became the roots of today's mission statement: Restoring health, extending life and alleviating pain.

Today Minneapolis-based Medtronic employs 29,000 people worldwide, including 174 in Louisville. Last year, it

logged \$7.5 billion in sales. A recent employee survey showed 95 percent of respondents said one of the top reasons they work for the company is because of its mission, Collins said.

Now the company is poised to further that objective, shelling out \$800 million a year on research and development. Medtronic estimates that every eight seconds, one of its devices either saves or maintains someone's life, Collins said. The goal is to make that every second, he said.

Weiss said she knows the company is in business to make money, but it's also encouraging to hear and see its priorities working to advance human well-being.

"Their mission statement, and because they're in the market to help people, seems to go hand-in-hand with an ethical company," she said.

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