Workplace Ethics
Turning your Organization into an Ethical Place!

Developing Professional
Lori E. Miller
(716) 645-7777
lmiller@developingprofessionals.com
www.developingprofessionals.com
Workplace Ethics

- Shape of today’s organizations
- Why we need ethics in the workplace
- What shapes our behaviors
- Identifying ethical situations in the workplace
- Handling ethical dilemmas
- Turning your office into an ethical place

What is the point of these pictures?

1st Picture ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2nd Picture ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3rd Picture ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Fading Forces

In the beginning, it was the church, community and military that shaped the values and expected behaviors of individuals. But this is no longer the case. Government and church are no longer the driving forces in people’s lives - it is where people work. While government and church still might have somewhat of an influence on the choices people make, it is organizations that are shaping people’s behaviors.

And we only have 40 or so years of experience dealing with this power shift.

Autonomy

Teach your employees to
_______________, _______________,
and ______________ in responsible relation to others - customers, fellow workers, ____________, community and the _______________________.

Tom Chappell:
“Beliefs drive strategy. Your ethics can form the foundation of smart analysis and clear thinking. Your personal values can be integrated with managing for all traditional goals of business.”
Why do we need ethics in the workplace?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

If we were placed in a room all by ourselves, and no one would ever know the consequences of our actions, here’s what we would do when confronted with an ethical dilemma based on research studies conducted by experts in the field.

Teachers of ethics say that:

_______ of us are certain we would do the right thing.

_______ of us are certain we would do the wrong thing.

_______ of us will say “it depends” and act accordingly.

Almost all decisions in the workplace fall into the “it depends” category. Our decisions are made based on what is right for ourselves at the given time and what fills our needs at that time. They can be security needs, need for acceptance or need for self-respect.
Abraham H. Maslow’s Needs Hierarchy Model

1. ________________________________

2. ________________________________

3. ________________________________

4. ________________________________

5. ________________________________
Lawrence Kohlberg Stages of Moral Development

Stage 1.

Stage 2.

Stage 3.

Stage 4.

Stage 5.

Stage 6.
Differences Between Morals and Ethics

Morals:

Ethics:

Standards for Legal, Ethical and Moral Behavior
Personal Ethics Quiz

Please circle either YES, NO, or NOT SURE after each statement and fill in your totals at the end of the quiz.

1. I have done something illegal.                      YES NO NOT SURE
2. I don’t agree with actions of some of my fellow coworkers. YES NO NOT SURE
3. I have been asked to do something that I disagree with. YES NO NOT SURE
4. I would never want to be treated like I treat others. YES NO NOT SURE
5. Some of my actions I would not want my spouse or children to see. YES NO NOT SURE
6. My mother would disapprove of my actions.            YES NO NOT SURE
7. I would not want to have my actions detailed in tomorrow’s newspaper. YES NO NOT SURE
8. I feel bad sometimes after the decisions I make.     YES NO NOT SURE

Total YES_______ Total NO_______ Total NOT SURE _______
Team Exercise: What are common inappropriate behaviors that occur in your workplace?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.
Categories of Diversity

Primary Categories (individuals have relatively little influence over):

- ____________. The number of years a person has been alive and the generation in which she or he was born.
- ____________. The biological groupings within humankind, representing superficial physical differences such as eye form and skin color. Race accounts for 0.012 percent of the difference in a person’s genetic heredity.
- ____________. Identification with a cultural group that has shared traditions and heritage, including national origin, language, religion, food, customs, and so on. Some people identify strongly with these cultural roots; others do not.
- ____________. Biological sex as determined by XX (female) and XY (male) chromosomes.
- _________________. A variety of characteristics, including body type, physical size, facial features, specific abilities or disabilities, and visible and invisible physical and mental talents or limitations.
- _________________. Feelings of sexual attraction toward members of the same or opposite gender, such as heterosexual, gay or lesbian, or bisexual.

Secondary categories (individuals have relatively more influence over):

- ____________. An individual’s formal and informal learning and training.
- _________________. The employment and volunteer positions the person has held and the array of organizations for which the person has worked.
- ____________. The economic conditions in which the person grew up and his or her current economic status.
- _________________. The person’s situation as a never-married, married, widowed, or divorced individual.
- _________________. Fundamental teachings received about deities and values acquired from formal or informal religious practices.
- _________________. The location(s) in which the person was raised or spent a significant part of her or his life, including types of communities and urban areas versus rural areas.
- _________________. Having or not having children and the circumstances in which the children are raised (single parenting, two-adult parenting, etc.).
- _________________. Tendency of the individual to think, feel, or act in a particular way.

What is an ethical dilemma?

Ethic issues range from a “little white lie” on the telephone to being asked or forced to perform an illegal, immoral and unethical task on the job. A shared understanding of office ethics promotes productivity. Produces open communication, mutual trust and respect. Consider what our jobs would be like without ethics. Think of the customers we would attract.

For Goodness Sake

In your teams, develop a list of key principles from the video.

When you are ___________ with a situation that you need to ___________ and are encouraged to react in a manner that is ___________ with your ___________ and ___________ systems.

What can you do in your everyday actions to be a better person?
What does your Company Code of Ethics Say?

Ethical Priority Compass

- Yourself
- Company
- Manager
Your manager is harassing you. What do you do?

Follow The Ethical Priority Compass

Quick Questions to Guide You

➢ Is it ________________?
➢ Does it meet my ____________________________?
➢ Does is comply with the ______________________?
➢ If I perform this act, will I feel ____________________?
➢ Would I do it if someone ________________________?
➢ How would I feel if my actions ____________________?
➢ If I know it is wrong, ___________________________.
➢ If I am not sure - ________________.
➢ Keep asking until _______________________________.
Challenging Situations Case Studies

Problems with the Boss
Your supervisor implies that if you don’t contribute at least a minimum amount to the current United Way campaign, your earned promotion might not happen. What do you do?

Tell Me No Secrets
An employee tells you that a fellow employee is HIV-positive. What do you do?

Workplace Harassment
When a particular male supervisor talks to any female employee, he always addresses her as “sweetie.” You have overheard him use this term several times. What should you do?

Security & Tips
A co-worker with whom you play tennis, sends you a “tennis ball” chain letter. It asks you to send a can of three balls to the name on top, delete the name, and then add your name on the bottom. Then you are to send the letter to six other people. The original letter came on company letterhead paper and received through work. You should:
Problems with Boss Best Practices

Tell me No Secrets Best Practices

Workplace Harassment Best Practices

Security and Tips Best Practices
The Ethics Group Game

Round 1: Competitive Intelligence

Your company is currently preparing business plans for the upcoming year. Your manager asks you to try to acquire information about a competitor, including cost and pricing data and new product plans. What should you do?

A. Under the pretext of being a business school student doing research, ask the competitor’s Public relations office for the information.

B. Ignore public information, immediately file a Freedom of Information request with the U.S. Government.

C. Ask one of your coworkers who formerly worked for the competitor to obtain the information for you.

D. Use publicly available information from industry or trade publications.

Dilbert: Make up something and refuse to name your sources.

Round 2: Disparaging Competitors

A potential customer asks you to explain how your company’s products and services are superior to your competitor’s products and services. What is an acceptable response?

A. Call into question the competitor’s expertise and experience.

B. Decline to pass judgment on the competitor, but explain the positive capabilities of your product.

C. If quantitative performance data is publicly available, comparative data can be used.

D. Say that your customer service program is superior, offering greater convenience and higher customer satisfaction than your competitor.

Dilbert: Make vague references to your competitor’s criminal past but quickly add that “It’s only a rumor.”
Round 3: Proper Use of Company Resources

One of your coworkers is copying software at work and taking it home. You need the same software for your personal use and are having problems raising the money to buy it. What do you do?

A. Tell your coworker it’s unfair that you have to save in order to buy the software, when he didn’t.

B. Report the matter to your supervisor, and ask whether you can copy the software for personal use.

C. Copy the software yourself; your coworker hasn’t been caught.

D. Contact the Software Support representative for guidance.

Dilbert: See if there is a reward for turning in your coworker.

Round 4: Quality Assurance

You work in Quality Assurance. You rejected some parts as non-conforming to specifications, but your manager told you to accept the part “As Is.” You don’t agree with the decision. What do you do?

A. Do nothing. It’s the manager’s decision to make.

B. Discuss it with your manager.

C. Call the Ethics Helpline.

D. Ask the engineers who are responsible for the specification to clarify the situation.

Dilbert: Gripe about it to everybody in the cafeteria.
Round 5: Favoritism

One of your coworkers has just been promoted to a position in another department, the Smidget Assembly Department. You were also a candidate for this position. You know that you were equally qualified, but your coworker is a long-time friend of the Smidget Department manager. You suspect favoritism. What should you do?

A. Discuss the issue with Human Resources.
B. Do nothing. Everyone knows that these things happen, and there’s nothing you can do about it.
C. Talk with your supervisor.
D. Discuss the situation with your Ethics Officer.

Dilbert: Put “crazy glue” on the coworker’s chair.

Round 6: Charging Practices

A coworker signed up for a training course. You know he did not attend the course nor was he at work. How do you handle the situation?

A. It’s none of your business so stay out of it.
B. Speak to your supervisor about the coworkers absence.
C. Send a letter to the company Ethics Office.
D. Speak to your colleague about this discrepancy and see what his explanation is.

Dilbert: At the next staff meeting, ask him to share what he learned with the group.
Round 7: Management Practices

In a department meeting, your supervisor takes credit for some excellent work done by a colleague who is absent. What do you do?

A. Put the word out to your fellow workers as to who really did the work.
B. Seek a private meeting with the supervisor in order to make sure your colleague gets the proper credit.
C. During an informal conversation with “the big boss,” casually let it slip that your colleague did not get the credit he deserved on a recent project.
D. Inform your colleague as to what took place, and let him take whatever action he desires.

Dilbert: Learn from this example. Someday you might be a supervisor too.

Round 8: Falsifying Records

You witness your supervisor sign the name of the Department Manager on an important financial document that must go to your corporate department for approval. He tells you he has the authority to sign the Department Manager’s signature - but you have reason for doubt. What do you do?

A. Do nothing, because you know your supervisor can make your life miserable.
B. Suggest that your supervisor call the Program Manager and inform her that he is signing her name to the document.
C. Recommend to your supervisor to revise the document - signing his own name as acting for the Program Manager. If he does not, report the incident.
D. Call the Ethics Office.

Dilbert: This is a good time to ask for a raise.
Round 9: Performance Management

For several months, one of your colleagues has been performing poorly at work and you are faced with an increased workload in order to compensate for the colleague’s poor performance. You think it is unfair. What do you do?

A. Recognize this as an opportunity for you to demonstrate how capable you are.

B. Go to your supervisor and discuss the situation.

C. Discuss the problem with your colleague in an attempt to solve the problem without involving others.

D. Discuss the problem with the Human Resources Department.

Dilbert: Send his resume to someone you don’t like and recommend him highly.

Round 10: Vendor Relationships

You are the purchasing manager for your company. Your spouse works for one of your vendors. Your spouse’s company has given her two tickets to a Buffalo Bills football game valued at $60 each. Can you accept one of the tickets and go to the game with your spouse?

A. You can go to the game with your spouse because the gift was based on a pre-existing personal relationship, independent of any business relationship.

B. Because the face value of the ticket is more than $20, you should not accept or use the ticket.

C. You can use the ticket to go to the playoffs, but must reimburse the vendor for the face value of your ticket.

D. You can accept the ticket, but should consult your supervisor to determine whether or not you can use it.

Dilbert: Use the ticket, but go to the game in disguise.
What does an ethical office look like?

- Happy productive workers
- Reasonable bosses
- Shared understanding of appropriate behaviors
- A commitment to hold yourself and each other accountable
- Open and honest communication

An ethical office has three main characteristics:

1. A corporate conscious, which is a _______ ___________ __________ and ____________ of what ____________ are for ____________ and ____________ behavior.

2. A ________________ to hold yourself and each other ____________ ____________ and ____________ for those standards.

3. An ongoing ________________ or system of ________________ communication about ________________ issues that promote ____________ and ________________.

We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors… but they all have to learn to live in the same box.