

# ETHICS 4 EVERYONE

## A WORKSHOP ON PERSONAL BUSINESS ETHICS

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## PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

LEADER'S GUIDE WRITTEN BY SKILLBUILDERS, INC.

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**SAMPLE**

*Despite the codes of ethics, the ethics programs and special departments, corporations don't make the ultimate decisions about ethics.*

*Ethical choices are made by individuals.*

*— M. Euel Wade, Jr.*

## WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?

### SCENARIO ONE

Elaine manages the marketing department at a publishing company, and Ken is one of the lead analysts in the research department. At last week's team meeting, she asked Ken to draft a report on new products introduced by one of their competitors. Ken agreed to get the material in time for her big meeting with the upper management group.

It's late morning on the day of Elaine's presentation, and she stops by Ken's desk to see if the report is ready — she wants to review it before she meets with her manager.

Ken looks up from his work as Elaine asks about the report — with an unhappy expression on his face, he lets her know that he doesn't have it ready.

"But you promised! I need that for a meeting today!" says Elaine, clearly frustrated that Ken has not done what he said he would. "Some other stuff came up that I had to take care of. What could I do?" answers Ken.

Elaine walks away, wondering how to meet her own commitment to deliver the facts she was expecting in Ken's report.

### SCENARIO TWO

It's mid-morning Monday. Vice President Bill has stopped by to compliment Vicki on a major project she and her team completed, right on deadline. Behind her sits Lester, a coworker on the project team. Lester listens to this acknowledgement and praise. He is clearly up

"That was a great job, Vicki. I appreciate your working over the week end to get this done," comments Bill. "No problem Bill," replies Vicki. "I wanted to do this for the customer that customer is to us."

**SAMPLE**

Vice President Bill walks away. Lester walks up to Vicki. In complete frustration, he questions Vicki: “We all worked ten hours on Saturday to get that job done! I don’t understand, Vicki. Why would you let him think it was just you?”

Startled, Vicki replies, “I don’t know, I guess I just didn’t think it was a big deal.”

Lester doesn’t know what to say.

**Instructions:** As you introduce yourself to the group, share a response to one of the above scenarios.

- If you were Elaine, what would you have been thinking or what would you have said to Ken?
- If you were Lester, what would you have been thinking or what would you have said to Vicki?

**SAMPLE**

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

After completing this workshop, you will be able to:

- Describe the benefits of good ethics
- Describe the impacts of unethical behavior
- Recognize that small infractions are part of the problem
- Identify and manage the influences and pressures behind our ethical choices
- Describe how the organization's values, procedures and guidelines establish useful boundaries
- Use an Ethical Action Test to guide decision-making
- Respond more confidently when faced with ethical dilemmas

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 1: A PERSONAL ETHICAL ENCOUNTER

Think back to a situation you've personally encountered at work — one that involved ethical choices. This situation may have involved your actions, you may have been on the receiving end of someone else's actions, or you may have simply observed the situation and its results.

- Make brief notes about the situation below.
- Stop at the bold line.

*Note: This form won't be handed in.*

Recall the details of the situation.	
At the time, did you feel as if you were dealing with an ethical decision of some kind?	
Was it immediately clear how to respond to the situation? What outcome were you attempting to produce or avoid?	
How did you respond?	
What rationalizations were made?	
As best you can recall, what influenced your thinking? Did you feel pressured to decide a certain way?	
Did you think about seeking assistance? From where? Did you choose to use it?	

**SAMPLE**

## VIDEO: ETHICS 4 EVERYONE

Use this section to take notes as you watch the video.

### BENEFITS OF BETTER ETHICS

	How good ethics benefit the organization...	...and how good ethics in the organization benefit YOU...
1	Improves trust and respect at all levels.	Improves your communication with department and project team members.  Maintains your positive reputation. People will trust your opinions and be willing to share ideas and information with you.
2	Fosters a positive work culture and improves customer service.	Makes going to work every day more pleasant and comfortable for you.  Makes your customers happier, and helps your relationships with them go smoothly. Increases pride, professionalism and productivity. You feel better about your work and your career.  Reduces your stress level.
3	Ensure the long-term success of the enterprise.	You build job security and career options, collect a regular paycheck, and provide a better future for your family.  You get the chance to work with high-caliber people on meaningful projects.

*On the other hand, the costs of questionable or poor ethics are very real, and very significant.*

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 2: ETHICAL OPINION POLLING

**Directions:** What category does each of the behaviors on the list belong to?

<b>E</b>	Clearly Ethical.
<b>L</b>	Light Gray. Ethical, but a little fuzzy.
<b>M</b>	Medium Gray/Fuzzy. Not obviously unethical, but not really ethical either.
<b>D</b>	Dark Gray. Shady. Leaning strongly toward unethical.
<b>U</b>	Clearly Unethical.

- \_\_\_ 1. Conducting personal business on company time, (sending personal messages on company e-mail; extending lunch breaks to run errands).
- \_\_\_ 2. Using or taking company resources for personal purposes (home office, kids' school, etc.).
- \_\_\_ 3. Calling in sick when you're not really sick.
- \_\_\_ 4. Going to work to meet a deadline when you're obviously sick or contagious.
- \_\_\_ 5. Telling or passing along an ethnically- or sexually-oriented joke.
- \_\_\_ 6. Reporting a safety violation in another department.
- \_\_\_ 7. Engaging in negative gossip or spreading rumors about someone.
- \_\_\_ 8. Bad-mouthing the company or management to people outside the company.
- \_\_\_ 9. Reading information or documents on a co-worker's desk or computer screen without their knowledge.
- \_\_\_ 10. Passing along personal information shared in confidence.
- \_\_\_ 11. Calling a customer to report a small billing error that will require your company to give them a refund.
- \_\_\_ 12. Ignoring an organizational rule or procedure.
- \_\_\_ 13. Explaining behavior with, "No one told me *not* to do this."
- \_\_\_ 14. Failing to follow through on something promised by a date/time without renegotiating the deadline.
- \_\_\_ 15. Withholding work-related information shared in confidence that others may need.
- \_\_\_ 16. Letting someone fail at a task to strengthen your own position.
- \_\_\_ 17. Accepting credit for something that someone else did.
- \_\_\_ 18. Manipulating or withholding information in order to make a sale.
- \_\_\_ 19. Relying on your boss to check your work for errors.
- \_\_\_ 20. At tax time, making two copies of your personal returns.

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 3: SUPPORTING AND DISTRACTING INFLUENCES

People confronted with ethical choices often feel they are under pressure to behave in certain ways. These pressures, or influences, can take on a positive or negative tone. For this exercise, we'll refer to these as supporting influences and distracting influences.

**Supporting influences** are those that encourage or model strong, consistent ethical behavior. Examples would be clear rules, leadership that follows through on commitments, or strong emphasis on product quality and customer satisfaction.

List three to four supporting influences that you've experienced in the workplace:

1.
2.
3.
4.

**Distracting influences** are those that, usually inadvertently, pressure employees to act in a less-than-ethical manner. Examples would include vague rules or procedures open to individual interpretation, questionable product quality, or leadership saying one thing and doing another.

List three to four distracting influences that you've experienced in the workplace, or have observed in others.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Prepare for the upcoming discussion by thinking about ways the supporting influences can be strengthened, and the distracting influences minimized.

**SAMPLE**

## DETERMINING WHAT'S RIGHT

- Let Laws be Your Guide
  - ♦ “Everybody oughta know” laws
  - ♦ Industry or profession-specific regulations
  - ♦ Ignorance of the law is not an excuse for breaking it
  - ♦ Look to the intention behind the actual words and provisions
- Rules, Procedures, and Standards
- Shared Values (of responsibility, integrity, respect, and fairness)
- Your Conscience
- Promises and Commitments
- Role Models/Ethical Heroes

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 4: SOURCES OF GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE

**Directions:** Check the box next to the response in each group that most accurately reflects your feelings about your organization's efforts to help you make ethical decisions. If instructed, copy your responses onto the worksheet the facilitator passes out, and turn in without your name.

### 1. Values

If your organization has a **Values** statement, how familiar are you with it? Could you list at least two-three of the values it includes?

- Not at all familiar/No, we don't have a Values Statement.
- Slightly familiar/I've heard something about it.
- Very familiar, and could list two-three values.

### 2. Rules and Regulations

From your perspective, how are the procedures, standards, rules and regulations regarding workplace conduct at your organization communicated?

- Passively or not communicated at all. Information on standards, rules and regulations is kept in binders in someone's office.
- Partially communicated. Rules and guidelines are distributed, but the reasons behind them are not explained.
- Inconsistently communicated. Information tends to come out only when there is a problem or crisis.
- Actively communicated. Guidelines, rules and procedures are emphasized consistently at staff and other project meetings.

### 3. How I've Used Sources of Assistance

When dealing with ethical questions or concerns in the past, how often have you sought help from each of the following sources?

1 – NEVER    2 – RARELY    3 – SOMETIMES    4 – OFTEN    5 – ALWAYS

- \_\_\_ I have discussed the problem(s) with a spouse or friend who does not work at the organization.
- \_\_\_ I've consulted the employee handbook, organization intranet, or other printed resource.
- \_\_\_ I've discussed this type of situation with a trusted co-worker.
- \_\_\_ I've discussed this type of situation with my supervisor or manager.
- \_\_\_ I have discussed the problem with someone from Human Resources.

**Or, just check if applicable...**

- \_\_\_ I haven't encountered problems or concerns that required assistance.
- \_\_\_ Generally, I let the situation go and do not seek assistance.

**SAMPLE**

# MASTER THE THREE RS

## RESPECT

- Treat everyone with dignity and courtesy
  - ♦ Eliminate offensive words and off-color jokes
  - ♦ Recognize others for their efforts/Give credit where credit is due
- Respect company assets:
  - ♦ Use company time, equipment and supplies appropriately and efficiently
  - ♦ Protect and improve your work environment

## RESPONSIBILITY

- Provide timely, high-quality goods and services
- Work together and carry your share
- Meet performance expectations
- Add value to your work products
- Maintain confidentiality
- Let people know when you are bothered

## RESULTS

- Create right results
  - ♦ The means (the how) are as important as the ends
- Watch out for:
  - ♦ Taking the path of least resistance
  - ♦ The motivation to cut corners in response to the pace of business

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 5: TAKING A STAND

In this exercise, you'll have a chance to practice using statements that can help you resist pressure and stand up for your personal decisions about ethical situations you encounter.

Working with a partner, use the two cases on page 12.

For Case One, Partner A takes a stand; for Case Two, Partner B does.

The partner taking a stand uses wording that includes these four steps:

1. State your objection and concern without accusing the other person of being unethical. Use "I statements" to describe your feelings. For example, "I don't feel comfortable with this," or, "I don't think this is the right approach to..."
2. Propose an alternative action that you feel is ethical.
3. Ask for the person's agreement.
4. If the person does not agree, consult a higher authority for help.

After working through both cases, discuss your best course of action if the "offending" partner continues on the unethical course of action.

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 5 (CONTINUED)

### ROLE PLAY CASE ONE

Project Manager Susan notes that for the third week in a row, the billed hours on one of her client's projects (Project X) are exceeding her estimated budget. Yet, she feels confident that her staff is actually working the hours they are billing. How could she have been that far off on her budget? Considering the cost overruns on the last project she managed for this client, Susan needs for her budget projections to be met for Project X.

She approaches several of her staff with instructions, among them Engineer Harold. She "suggests" that for the next several weeks, he allocate 25% of his hours on Project X to another project—Project Z—that her firm is doing for the same client. After all, she reasons, the fees they pay her firm are all coming out of the "same pot." It's not as if she were charging Harold's time to another client altogether—that would be illegal.

Harold is concerned as he listens to her instructions.

### ROLE PLAY CASE TWO

Rob and Stuart are relaxing at their table after a quick lunch in the employee cafeteria. Rob notices Stacy from across the room, chatting at another table with a few of her co-workers.

"Hey," Rob confides to Stuart, looking over in Stacy's direction, "did you hear about Stacy's latest?" "Latest what?" responds Stuart from behind his newspaper, not particularly interested. Rob continues, "She's after that new manager. Hey, why not! When all else fails, why not go after a manager to get that transfer she's been after for months. She's not bad-looking—she might have a chance."

Rob proceeds to speculate about Stacy's chances, offering descriptive images of what he means by "going after" this manager. Stuart has had about enough, stands up, folds his newspaper. Before leaving the table, he has a few words for Rob.

**SAMPLE**

## MANAGING CONFLICTING RIGHTS

### ***Step One: Eliminate the conflict***

- Change the conditions. Seek permission to grant an exception, make a special case, or otherwise re-define the situation.
- Redefine one of the rights. Change one of the “right things” to help create acceptable options.

### ***Step Two: Decide what’s more right***

Ask yourself which of the conflicting rights...

- Is most in line with laws, regulations and organizational procedures?
- Is most in line with organizational values?
- Provides the greatest benefit for the largest number of stakeholders?
- Establishes the best precedent for guiding similar decisions in the future?

### ***Step Three: Seek assistance***

- Your manager
- Human Resources
- Ethics Officer
- Anyone else who can listen and provide objective feedback

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 6: DESIGN A DILEMMA

In this exercise, you'll work with a small group. Your group will think about difficult ethical situations that could arise at your organization, develop strategies for resolving them, and see how others view your efforts.

### **Step 1: Design a Dilemma**

Create a **competing rights dilemma** based on one of the group member's recalled experiences, or another ethical dilemma you can quickly devise.

Here are some examples of **right vs. right** situations:

It's **right** to apply rules and regulations equally...

But it's also **right** to give special consideration to hard working, dependable and productive people.

It's **right** to communicate information that other people need to do their work...

But it's also **right** to respect the confidentiality of information if you have agreed to do so.

It's **right** to follow through on commitments made...

But it's also **right** to address a higher priority task that suddenly needs to be completed.

Describe the dilemma on a blank sheet of paper, providing enough detail to allow the next group to resolve it. Be sure to clearly identify the two "rights" that are in conflict.

Write legibly so that the next group will clearly understand the dilemma. Provide character names (please do not use names of associates or colleagues, or make it possible to recognize their characters).

**SAMPLE**

## EXERCISE 6: DESIGN A DILEMMA (CONTINUED)

### ***Step 2: Review the Situation***

Review the case prepared by the previous group.

Make brief notes on:

- What rationalizations might the characters be making?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What supporting and distracting influences are most likely operating?

What are the characters' options for response, and what would be the impact of each?

What response does your group recommend?

Be prepared to share the case and your solution with the group. In your presentation, be sure to address the impacts the response would likely have on the individual, the department, or organization.

**SAMPLE**