

ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE

INTRODUCTION ENG 112

Professor Katherine Delhagen

□ A group of moral principles, standards of behavior, or set of values regarding proper conduct in the workplace



*No sound; read each slide and click to proceed

Why Ethics?

Why talk about Ethics? Everyone is ethical, everyone knows how to behave at work. Everyone gets it about not stealing stuff or harassing people or...

Well...

Ethics is more than not committing a crime. How about...

Being a little late to work occasionally?

Surfing the Web when you run out of things to do?

Downloading some music to your computer?

Installing software that isn't approved by the company?

Forgetting to handle a couple of tasks you were given?

Getting stuck on a problem but not asking for help?

Ethics in the Workplace

There are lots of things that might seem “OK” with a casual glance but which can actually be “Not OK” for the employer.

The secret to not getting on the wrong side of your boss is to have a proactive attitude to your job. Even a job that isn't everything you want.

1. Be Dependable

Nothing is going to be as important to your supervisor as your dependability. This isn't glamorous, but it sure is key to developing a trust relationship with your manager. Be there, on time, every day. Stay there until the job is done, every day. Finish every task as quickly and completely as you can consistent with doing it right. Become a resource that the employer can depend on.

2. Be Curious

Take an interest in the job, in the company, in the products, and in the markets for those products. Ask for training or advice when you encounter something new. Get a book and read up on the technologies you are using. Understand your assignment both technically and how it fits into your manager's goals.

3. Be Realistic

In every job there are four or five elements of drudgery for every element of interesting work. Accept the need to do the dull, simple stuff as well as the fun stuff. Remember that most co-op students, like most other new employees, start off with some simple assignments so the employer can see if you are Dependable, Curious, Realistic...

4. Be Fussy

Good enough usually isn't. Try to always do the whole job well, including all the loose ends and "what-ifs". If it has your name on it, or associated with it, you absolutely want it to be right, complete, and properly executed.

5. Be Professional

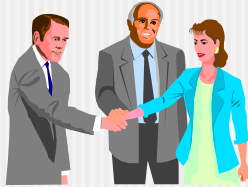
You are a party to a contract. The employer is paying you and devoting resources to extending your education. In return, you owe it to that employer to put in a full day, every day. Use the Web and Internet as resources for the job when appropriate; don't use them to kill time or avoid having to do something that isn't interesting. See No. 3.

6. Be Balanced

It's a job, not your whole life. Work hard at work, but keep your family, friends, significant other, and yourself in balance. You will do better at work if you exercise every day; you will do better at home if you know you are doing your best at work. Balance.

Relationships at Work

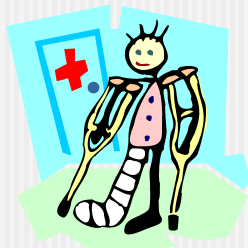
- ☐ Management/owner toward client/customer
- ☐ Management/owner toward employees
- ☐ Employee toward Employer, Co-workers, or Customers



Ethical violations can occur in any of these relationships and can be committed by any person

Business Abuse

- ☐ Business Abuse is any
 - ☐ illegal
 - ☐ unethical
 - ☐ irresponsible Act done *against an Employer* (by an employee or client)



Results of Business Abuse

- ❑ Higher prices
- ❑ Business Failure
- ❑ Fewer Jobs
- ❑ Unpleasant Working Conditions



Examples of Business Abuse

- Stealing (merchandise, money, unauthorized discounts)
- Time (being late, long breaks)
- Vandalism
- Falsify Records
- Break Confidentiality
- Ignore Safety Rules
- Misrepresent Merchandise
- Poor Client Service
- Irresponsible Behavior
- Gossip (causes poor work environment, lowers productivity)



What if I Make a Mistake?

Your supervisor just told you that you made a mistake, or need to improve something, or some other criticism. What do you do?

•Don't panic, feedback is a routine part of every job.

•It's what you do with the feedback that matters.

•Rule number one: Listen and learn. Don't get mad, pout, go off in a huff, or exhibit other behavior that would make matters worse. Feedback is essential to learning, accept it in good humor and set about changing what needs changing.

•When you think you have the subject of the feedback in the right kind of shape, ask for more feedback to see if the boss agrees.

How to Handle a Problem

Be thoughtful about your activities and you probably won't have a problem, but if you should make a mistake...

Be **HONEST**; let your supervisor know in a timely way so he/she isn't taken by surprise.

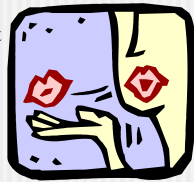
ANALYZE the problem; why did it happen, what will prevent it from happening again?

CORRECT the problem as quickly and completely as possible. Don't sweep it under the rug.

Harassment

Harassment of Co-workers or Clients includes

- ☐ Any unwelcome or overt sexual advances
- ☐ Requiring compliance as a condition of employment
- ☐ Interferes with work performance through intimidation



If you're unsure, before your act, ASK

- Is this legal?
- Is it against co. policy?
- Could the action cause loss or harm to anyone?
- If everyone I knew saw me, would I feel uncomfortable?



As Employees, What Are Our Choices?

If you think you witness an ethical violation, you can:

1. Ignore it
2. Rationalize it away
3. Speak Up
4. Discuss to Clarify Issues
5. Blow the Whistle!



Which do you think are the best decisions?

See Module 4

For more information on Ethics in the Workplace, see Module 4 and read About Ethical Decision Making and Practicing Ethical Decision Making. Participate in the discussion forum.

End
