

Business Ethics and the Role You Play

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Ethics and Morals

- What are "Ethics?"
 - Ethics is defined as "the moral principles governing or influencing conduct"
- What are "Morals?"
 - "Standards of behavior, or principles of right and wrong."



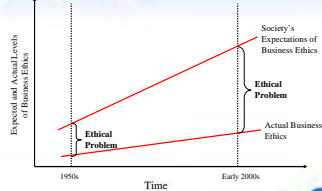
In a recent Wall Street Journal article, Psychology professor Steven Davis says that cheating by high school students has increased from about 20 percent in the 1940's to 75 percent today.

"Students say cheating in high school is for grades, cheating in college is for a career."



Business Ethics: What Does It Really Mean?

Business Ethics: Today vs. Earlier Period



Personal Ethics – Everyday Examples

- Software piracy
- Expense account padding
- Copying of homework or tests
- Income taxes
- "Borrowing" nuts and bolts, office supplies from employer
- Copying of Videos or CD's
- Plagiarism
- Using the copy machine at work



How Can Your Ethics be Challenged

- Types
 - Bribes
 - Gifts
 - Theft
- Grey areas
- Confidential Information

Rationalizing Unethical Behavior

- Everybody does it
- If it's legal, it's ethical
- Likelihood of discovery and consequences



Ethical Dilemmas

- An ethical dilemma is a situation a person faces in which a decision must be made about appropriate behavior.
- How to resolve an ethical dilemma:
 - Obtain the relevant facts
 - Identify the ethical issues from the facts
 - Determine who is affected



What is a conflict of interest?

- Some possible conflicts of interest include:
 - Ownership in a business that may conflict with the company's interest
 - Influence of a supplier or customer
 - Competing employment
 - Employment of family members



What is in a code of ethics?

- Purpose
 - To regulate or to inspire
 - To guide or to mandate
- Tied to organization's values
 - Section of aspirations
 - Section of rules or principles
- Enforcement
- Ordered importance



Reading about ethics is about as likely to improve one's behavior as reading about sports is to make one an athlete.

- Mason Cooley

The bottom line

- No one can make you be ethical
- Your ethics (or lack of it) shapes your person (and your profession) by providing an image by which others see you (and your colleagues)
- People *are* watching what you do
- You represent a unique point of view

What can you do?

- Model ethics
- Talk about ethics
- Repeat organizational stories that promote ethical behavior
- Note ethical behavior on performance evaluations
- Address the topic often, formally and informally. Demystify it.
- Ask for help or clarification if you are ever unsure

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