Work ethics

Lesson plan

Workplace ethics is a subject that we have all heard of. What most people don’t realize, however, is that there is no such thing as workplace ethics; ethics are the same, (or should be) whether in the workplace or in personal life.

The dictionary definition of work ethic is a set of values based on the moral virtues of hard work and diligence.

- Your work ethic is the portrait of yourself that you display to others in all aspects of your life.
- Work ethic is usually associated with people who work hard and do a good job.

Identifying appropriate work ethics.

Working in a small group (3-4), imagine that you are the employer. On your sheet of paper list work ethic characteristics that you want your employees to have to ensure the success of your company. Have each group discuss responses with the class. On the board, list each characteristic only once. Then as a class try and place them in order of importance.

Individual Questions. On your sheet of paper answer the following scenarios and explain your answers.

✓ What If’s:

1. “The customer is always right.” Do you agree with it?
2. A customer is particularly rude. It isn’t your job to work directly with the customer, but he insists on telling you his problems. What should you do?
3. You work for Best Buy at the cash register, your friends Valerie & Kevin want you to let them shoplift. The two make comments like “Don’t let it bother you. Everybody does it,” and “This store rips everybody off. We’re entitled to get even.”

   a. You tell them no! You will not be a part of that. Do you think that would mess up your friendship?
   b. Kevin went ahead and shoplift against your approval, what would you do?

4. You constantly keep doing other colleagues work because you are ahead of schedule and it helps you feel liked. However, you feel that if you have time to do everyone else’s work, something is wrong. What do you do?
5. A customer starts blustering out racist remarks and has an attitude. Will this cause a problem for you? What do you feel is the best way to deal with this person?
6. Suppose you discover that your supervisor is accepting kickbacks or stealing from the company. Would you report it, ignore it, or handle it some other way?
7. To what extent/circumstances do you think its okay to deal with your own personal affairs on company time?
8. David is your supervisor who instructs you to do something unethical or illegal. What responsibility do you have to that supervisor?
9. You were working as a hostess at a popular restaurant. The waiting list is 30 minutes long. A customer offers you $50 to seat his party next. Would it be ethical to accept the offer?
10. You have some personal problems troubling you; to what extent/circumstances do you think it would be okay to deal with your own personal affairs on company time?
11. You are new on the job; your boss is making inappropriate sexual advances and asking you for a date. You are not sure if this behavior constitutes sexual harassment. So what do you do?
**Scenarios:**

1. Decide whether each scenario is ethical or unethical behavior. If it is unethical, change the scenario to make it ethical.

   a. Jordan works at a fast food restaurant. A drive-through customer orders a burger, fries, and drink. Jordan accidentally drops the burger on the floor, but no one sees it happen. After considering all his choices, Jordan decides to wrap the burger and give it to the customer.
   
   b. Brittany is shopping at the grocery store. Without giving it much thought, she takes a handful of grapes and eats them as she shops.
   
   c. Nikki and Gretchen are out to lunch. Nikki gets the salad buffet while Gretchen orders a sandwich. Nikki proceeds to the salad bar and gets dessert for both since Nikki knows how much Sandy loves dessert.

*answer document next page*

**Resources:**

*Work Place Ethics & the Universal Principles of Work*
*Ethics Resource Center, Washington D.C.*
*Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Get Connected to Families*
*Instructional Materials Laboratory, University of Missouri-Columbia*
Answer Document for Work Ethics

- **Directions for small group discussion:** List names of people in your group. Make sure each person in group jots down the list of characteristics their group came up with.

Members of group: ________________________________________________

Work ethic characteristics:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

✓ **What If’s:**

1. 

2. 

3a. 

3b. 

4. 

5. 

6.
7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

- **Scenarios:**
  1a.

  1b.

  1c.