

***ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE***



**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

**1/2-DAY COURSE**

**HRDQ®**

***ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE***

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2002 Renaissance Boulevard #100

King of Prussia, PA 19406

Phone: (800) 633-4533

Fax: (800) 633-3683

Web: [www.HRDQ.com](http://www.HRDQ.com)

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# Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

## Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

## Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

# Course timing

## Module One: What is Business Ethics?

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Course objectives	5
	Introduction: What is ethics?	10
	Myths about business ethics	15
	Benefits of an ethical workplace	10
	The ideal ethical workplace	10

## Module Two: How to Create an Ethical Workplace

	Guidelines for achieving an ethical workplace	15
	Decision making steps	20
	Decision making analysis	15
	Decision confidence assessment	5



Reading



Written Exercise



Facilitation



Group Activity

## Course timing (cont.)

### Module Two: How to Create an Ethical Workplace (cont.)

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Common excuses and what to do about them	10
	Dealing with unethical people	10

### Module Three: Tools to Support an Ethical Workplace

	An ethics policy	10
	Issues addressed in an ethics policy	10
	Code of conduct examples	15

### Module Four: Applying Ethics in the Real World

	Ethical dilemmas: What would you do?	75
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Reading



Written Exercise



Facilitation



Group Activity

# Contents

Module One: What is business ethics? .....	1
Course objectives.....	2
Introduction: What is business ethics? .....	3
Myths about business ethics .....	4
Benefits of an ethical workplace .....	5
The ideal ethical workplace .....	6
Module Two: How to create an ethical workplace .....	7
Guidelines for achieving an ethical workplace .....	8
Decision making tools: decision making steps .....	10
Decision making analysis .....	11
Decision confidence assessment .....	12
Common excuses and what to do about them.....	13
Dealing with unethical people.....	14
Module Three: Tools to support your ethical workplace .....	15
An ethics policy .....	16
Issues addressed in an ethics policy .....	17
Code of ethics example 1 .....	18
Code of ethics example 2.....	20
Code of ethics example 3.....	22
Module Four: Applying ethics in the real world.....	23
Ethical dilemmas: what would you do?.....	24
Appendix.....	29
Code of ethics and professional practice (long version) .....	30
Action plan .....	38
Course review .....	39

Suggested resource list.....41  
Course evaluation .....42  
Solutions for every training challenge.....44

## ModuleOne



# ***WHAT IS BUSINESS ETHICS?***



[Review the course objectives.](#)



## Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- ◇ Dispel common myths about business ethics
- ◇ Describe the ideal ethical workplace
- ◇ Implement ethics guidelines and policies in your organization
- ◇ Identify and resolve typical ethical dilemmas
- ◇ Recognize common excuses for unethical behavior, and what to do about them
- ◇ Deal with unethical coworkers, customers, and vendors

# Introduction: What is ethics?

## Standards of right and wrong

- ◇ What people ought to do
  - Behaviors to engage in
  - Behaviors to refrain from
- ◇ Specific values
  - Honesty
  - Fairness
  - Integrity
  - Your organization:

## The development of ethical standards

- ◇ Utilitarian approach
  - Do the least harm
  - Look at consequences
- ◇ Fairness or justice approach
  - Treat all people equally
  - Treat each person with dignity
- ◇ Common good approach
  - Interlocking relationships are the basis for decisions
  - Look at common conditions that affect the welfare of everyone
- ◇ Virtue approach
  - “What kind of person will I become if I do this?”
  - Look at traits and habits that foster our development to our highest potential



Ask participants their definition of ethics or ethical behavior. The most common understanding of ethics is that is has to do with standards of right and wrong, and how people should behave. Most people usually include a description of specific values that support ethical behavior, such as honesty, fairness, integrity, etc.

Activity: Take a few moments and ask participants to fill in the values they feel their organization believes in that foster ethical behavior.

Ethical standards are developed using different approaches:

Utilitarian approach: Like medicine, “do no harm.” The goal is to produce the greatest good and the least amount of harm. Looks at consequences—at what behavior will produce the greatest benefit and least amount of harm.

Fairness or justice approach: All people should be treated equally—or fairly based on a defensible standard, for example, paying people more based on harder work or greater contributions to the organization. However, people may question the standard on which this is based when CEOs earn salaries hundreds of times more than regular employees. Considers what is reasonable.

Common good approach: Decisions are made based on improving the welfare of everyone. Police and fire departments, public education, recreation, and health care are often created based on the common good approach (or trying to achieve the common good approach).

Virtue approach: A virtue approach answers the question, “What kind of person will I become if I do this?” It looks at what behaviors bring out the highest potential in people. These would include virtues such as, truth, honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, tolerance, integrity, fairness, self-control, prudence, etc.

Ask participants what approach they feel would best suit their organization.

Being ethical does not mean following your feelings. Your feelings can misdirect you.

Being ethical can be related to religious beliefs and can motivate people to act ethically, but every person can behave ethically, even if they don't have any specific religious beliefs.

Being ethical is not the same as following the law. In most cases, the law is derived from ethical standards. However, behaving ethically may require doing MORE than the law demands. And in rare cases, such as when slavery was legal, following the law was unethical.

Being ethical is not necessarily behaving in a way that society or your organization finds acceptable. Sometimes societal or organizational norms get out of whack, such as in Nazi Germany or Enron or the financial meltdown of late 2008. Often, there isn't consensus on what society accepts, such as abortion or gay marriage.

Being ethical isn't simply doing what's right, because what's right is in the eye of the beholder. Two people can be faced with the same situation and make two different decisions about how to behave and both claim they are doing what's right.

Ethics can be managed and trained; however, a business needs to specifically communicate its expectations and standards of behavior.

Activity: Divide participants into six groups and assign each group one of the myths. Ask them to come up with an example that dispels the myth.

## Myths about business ethics

- ◇ Ethics has to do with my feelings about what is right or wrong
- ◇ Ethics has to do with my religious beliefs
- ◇ Being ethical is not breaking the law
- ◇ Ethical is behaving in a way that society/the organization believes is acceptable
- ◇ Ethics is simply doing what's right
- ◇ Ethics can't be managed or trained—people are either ethical or they're not

An example: For the myth, "business ethics is behaving in a way that is acceptable"—an employee asking other employees for sponsors for a charity run. In the absence of a written policy that specifically prohibits it, some people may feel this behavior is perfectly fine and even worthy because it is for a good cause, while other people may feel this behavior puts undue pressure on employees to support the effort, even if they don't have the financial resources or they already support other charitable causes.



# Benefits of an ethical workplace

Doing what's right is reason enough; however, here are a few more:

- ◇ Attention to business ethics gives employees a foundation during times of change
- ◇ Attention to ethics cultivates teamwork and productivity
- ◇ Attention to ethics creates greater consistency in standards and quality of products and services offered by the organization
- ◇ Attention to ethics helps ensure corporate policies are legal and proactively enforced
- ◇ Attention to ethics supports employer and societal growth



The benefits of fostering an ethical workplace go beyond simply doing the right thing (although that is important).

Foundation during times of change: In today's business environment where change is constant and senior management can be a revolving door, attention to business ethics makes people consciously decide how they want to/should behave.

Teamwork and productivity: Ongoing discussions about business ethics builds trust, openness and community—important ingredients of effective teams in the workplace.

Great consistency: Attention to ethics can actually improve the quality and performance of the organization. There will likely be more satisfied customers when they know they can have confidence in the quality of the product/service and how it is offered/delivered. And employee satisfaction will be higher, thus reducing turnover, lawsuits, etc.

Ensure legality of corporate policies: Attention to business ethics can decrease the potential for lawsuits related to hiring, firing, harassment, etc. It can close the gap between stated policies and actual behavior. In bottom line terms, this can save the company money by minimizing lawsuits.

Employer and societal growth: Attention to business ethics has prompted changes over time, such as appropriate length of work days, hiring and firing based on reasonable standards, etc.

Review the description of an ethical workplace.

The ideal ethical workplace

- Equality is essential
- Fairness is fanatical
- Integrity is integral
- Vision is vital
- Individual accountability is authentic
- Collective responsibility is common



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Activity: Ask participants to describe their own ideal ethical workplace.

## The ideal ethical workplace

- ◇ Equality is essential
- ◇ Fairness is fanatical
- ◇ Integrity is integral
- ◇ Vision is vital
- ◇ Individual accountability is authentic
- ◇ Collective responsibility is common

Description of your own ideal ethical workplace

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