

PROFESSIONALISM (1st Year)

Customer Service:

Have you ever tried to buy something and been treated rudely by the salesperson? Have you ever needed help finding or returning an item and the store employees ignored you? These situations happen every day. Take a moment to reflect on how you feel when you are treated poorly. Think about what should happen. What would have made you happy at that time?

Good customer service skills are vital to the success of a business. Clients or customers may not always talk about the good service they received at a business, but they tell many people when treated rudely or unfairly. Think about your own experience. If you go out to eat and had a nice, uneventful dinner, how many people do you tell? However, if you go out to eat and the wait staff brings you the wrong order, never refills your water glass, and forgets to bring you the ketchup you repeatedly asked for, how many people do you tell? Wouldn't you warn your friends away from that restaurant? The same principles apply to all industries. People will always talk about their unsatisfactory experiences but not necessarily the good experiences.

It takes practice to develop customer service skills. Some components of good customer service are simple, such as making eye contact with clients or customers and greeting them with a smile. Other aspects of customer service may take more work on your part, such as training yourself to listen closely to other people and focus on their needs, or consistently using a positive tone of voice when speaking to customers on the phone. Good communication skills lead to better customer service. If you put yourself in the customer's shoes and think, "How would I want to be treated in this situation?" you will not go wrong!

Read the article "[Being a Professional](#)" by clicking on the hyperlink..

Personal Integrity/Ethics

Defining the components:

Each of us has a set of moral codes we live by. These moral codes can help us succeed or may foretell failure in our life. We need to align our moral codes with our life in order to develop our personal integrity. What is personal integrity? Ask.com¹ defines Personal Integrity as: "... a strongly held sense of commitment to openness, honesty, inclusiveness and high standards in oneself. A person with integrity stands for what is right and acts as a role model to his or her peers." In other words, integrity is doing what you believe to be right, irrespective of the costs, downside, or hardships involved². Oprah Winfrey said it very well when she said, "Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not."³

Is personal integrity natural or can it be learned or taught? The following assignment assumes that one can begin to develop personal integrity through a ten-step process and apply it to life situations.

Once you understand how to develop your personal integrity to align with your moral base, you can begin make informed ethical decisions. You should never lose sight of the fact that your actions may affect many people. There are several things to consider when dealing with making an ethical decision.

1. You must consider the legality of the situation. Is the action you are considering legal or illegal?

2. You must consider the professional standard of ethics within your career field. Is the action you are considering sanctioned in your career field?
3. You must reflect upon your own ethical standards or personal integrity. Do your actions show respect for yourself and others, for truth, for the community, for life, and for the future?

Sometimes your employer may ask you to do something unethical. What would you do in that situation? If you overcharge for a brake repair job, will it cause that person to have too little money to feed their family for that week? Will the barrels of chemical waste you dump by a stream poison an entire community? Will the loss of money you embezzle from your employer cause them to go out of business? One simple action on your part can be devastating to others.

Introduction to Business Ethics

The principles of right and wrong that guide an individual in making decisions are called *ethics*. The use of personal ethics in making business decisions is called *business ethics*. In these Business Ethics Activities, you will have the opportunity to analyze the ethics of common business situations by using the following three-step checklist as a guide in collecting relevant information regarding an action.

- 1 *Is the action illegal? Does the action violate any laws?* Obeying the law is in your best interest and the best interest of your business.
- 2 *Does the action violate company or professional standards?* Public laws often set only minimum standards of behavior. Many businesses and professions set even higher standards of behavior. Thus, an action may be legal, yet still violate standards of the business or profession. Violating these standards may affect your job security or any professional certification you may hold.
- 3 *Who is affected, and how, by the action?* If an action is legal and complies with business and professional standards, you must rely on your principles of right and wrong to determine if the action is ethical. Determining how the action affects individuals and groups – including business employees and owners, customers, the local community, and society – will help you decide if an action is ethical.

In the activity presented below, you will read about a person who overstated information on a resume. Note how the three-step checklist, described above, was used to determine whether the individual demonstrated ethical behavior in preparing the resume.

Situation

Don Sutton applied for a payroll clerk job with Search Services, a market research firm. To improve his chances in getting the job, he exaggerated his work experience on his resume. Based on this resume, Don was hired. After one year, he received above-average ratings during his annual performance review. Shortly thereafter, his boss met Don's former supervisor and learned the truth.

Instructions

Use the three-step checklist to help determine if Don's action demonstrated ethical behavior.

- 1 *Is the action illegal?*
- 2 *Does the action violate company or professional standards?*
- 3 *Who is affected, and how, by the action?*

What can you do right NOW?

Even if you are not working, there are many things you can do **now** to improve your professionalism. Take a moment to consider how you behave and how you present yourself. Do you exhibit good customer service skills? Do you behave ethically toward others? Practicing professionalism in the classroom helps you develop a good pattern of behavior, which is easily transferable to the workplace. Look at the items on the list below and reflect honestly on your past behavior. How many of the things on the list apply to you?

- Use of improper language (swearing)
- Tardiness and absenteeism
- Excessive talking
- Working on outside assignments
- Plagiarism
- Sleeping in class
- Using cell phone in class
- Texting in class
- Difficulty with teamwork
- Reading outside materials in class
- Failure to complete assignments
- Disrespecting teacher or classmates

You will use your reflections on the above list to write a 3 (three) paragraph statement using this rubric:

Introduction: Set the stage for your essay by identifying the behavior you chose. Tell the reader what they are about to read. This paragraph can be as brief as three sentences.

Body: One person's behavior can affect many other people. Describe your behavior in detail. Tell how your behavior affects you and how it affects those around you. Build on your description by telling what differences it could make if you changed your behavior.

Conclusion: Summarize your paper. What was the purpose of this exercise? Why should a successful worker think about and understand work-place ethics? What did you learn about yourself by completing these exercises? Do you believe your personal behavior can actually affect your work place and the people you work with and/or serve?

Professionalism Worksheet (1st Year)

STEP 1: Complete the following quiz.

T	F	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acting with a clear sense of professionalism will cause others to think highly of you.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Everyone uses cell phones these days, so customers will not mind waiting a little bit while you finish an important call.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Customers will talk to more people about bad experiences than good ones.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You should avoid eye contact with your customers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good communication skills lead to better customer service.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tone of voice is particularly important when speaking on the phone.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good customer service means focusing on your customer's needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You do not need to exhibit professionalism in some industries because you do not work with many other people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employees with good customer service skills can help make a business more successful.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer service, personal integrity, work ethic, and conflict resolution are all aspects of professionalism.

STEP 2:

Situation: Don Sutton applied for a payroll clerk job with Search Services, a market research firm. To improve his chances in getting the job, he exaggerated his work experience on his resume. Based on this resume, Don was hired. After one year, he received above-average ratings during his annual performance review. Shortly thereafter, his boss met Don's former supervisor and learned the truth.

Instructions: Use the three-step checklist to help determine whether or not Don's action demonstrated ethical behavior.

1 *Is the action illegal?*

2 *Does the action violate company or professional standards?*

3 *Who is affected, and how, by the action?*

Professionalism Worksheet (1st Year)

Conclusion: Based on the above analysis, were Don's actions ethical or unethical.

STEP 3: Write a 3 (three) paragraph statement about your behavior

Pick **one** item from the following list that applies to you in your school life.

- Use of improper language (swearing)
- Tardiness and absenteeism
- Excessive talking
- Working on outside assignments
- Plagiarism
- Sleeping in class
- Using cell phone in class
- Texting in class
- Difficulty with teamwork
- Reading outside materials in class
- Failure to complete assignments
- Disrespecting teacher or classmates

Write a 3 (three) paragraph statement using this rubric:

Introduction: Set the stage for your essay by identifying the behavior you chose. Tell the reader what they are about to read. This paragraph can be as brief as three sentences.

Body: One person's behavior can affect many other people. Describe your behavior in detail. Tell how your behavior affects you and how it affects those around you. Build on your description by telling what differences it could make if you changed your behavior.

Conclusion: Summarize your paper. What was the purpose of this exercise? Why should a successful worker think about and understand work-place ethics? What did you learn about yourself by completing these exercises? Do you believe your personal behavior can actually affect your work place and the people you work with and/or serve?

Professionalism Worksheet (1st Year)