

Ethics Awareness Month

Facilitator's Guide

Materials Needed

- ▶ Flip Chart
- ▶ Markers several different colors
- ▶ Enough copies of "Ethical Decision Making" developed by the Insurance Institute for Applied Ethics.
- ▶ Enough copies of "The Computer Modem" for each attendee

1. Introduction

- A. *Introduce the session with the following:* "Today we're going to look at what is ethics or being ethical, what are the qualities an ethical person has, and give you some guidelines to help you when you're faced with a tough ethical decision."
- B. Ask "What are *Ethics*?" (answer: The rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or members of a profession.)
- C. *Next, ask "What does it mean to be *Ethical*"* (Answer: Being in accordance with the accepted principles of right and wrong that govern the conduct of individuals or a profession.)
- D. *Share the following with the group.* "Lord Moulton, a British lawmaker in the 19th Century, described Ethics as obedience to the unenforceable. It's the idea that people just don't do those things." "Rushworth Kidder, head of Institute for Global Ethics, has pointed out that laws result from the breakdown of Ethics." *Example: In the 1950's there were no littering laws; no one threw trash on the highways. Today all 50 states have laws regarding littering.*

State "Self regulation is ethics. Imposed regulation is law."

"Laws = minimum standard of behavior – addressing only those aspects of human nature that make society unsafe. Laws set minimal standards of acceptable conduct. "

"Ethics go way beyond the letter of the law, you could say, they address the spirit of the law. "

2. A brief look at ethical values – *ask the group to share values they consider ethical. Write them on the flip chart. Then compare their list with the following. Be sure to read the definitions we have included.*

- A. **Honesty** – cornerstone of ethical behavior – means telling the truth. Goes hand in hand with trust. *Ex – Due to an accounting mix-up, Liz gets credit for several accounts actually handled by Fran. Fran recently retired. Getting the credit makes Liz eligible for a quarterly bonus.*
- B. **Integrity** – similar to honesty but carries with it the connotation of being incorruptible – no matter what. Does the right thing regardless of the consequences. *Ex. Amanda going back to work.*

- C. **Responsibility** to be reliable and trustworthy. Specialized knowledge of the ins. industry not easily accessible or understandable by the general public. Rely on you to determine what is needed and how much.
- D. **Respect & Caring for others** – A person who acts ethically has a commitment to carry out their responsibilities with an understanding of, and a consideration of the needs of others. *Put others first (Re-written golden rule)*
- E. **Promise-keeping, trustworthiness & fairness** – Underlying strength of a promise is the performance.
- F. **Courage** – It takes courage to stand up for principle and do the right thing.

3. Ethical Decision Making

- A. Review the handout “Ethical Decision Making” with the group. These are self-explanatory.

4. Exercise

- A. Break the group into small groups of 5 or 6 depending on your room set-up. Ask each group to appoint a note taker and someone to report the group’s analysis back to the entire group at the end.
- B. Pass out the situation “The Computer Modem”
- C. Ask each group to read the situation and, using “Ethical Decision Making” as a guide, determine if it would be unethical to take the salesperson up on his offer. Allow 5 – 10 minutes for discussion. (Walk around the room as the groups are working to determine if more or less time is needed.)
- D. Bring the groups back together and ask each group to share whether they thought the salesperson was being ethical or unethical and why. If anyone thinks the actions were ethical, lead the group in the following reasoning.
 - 1) Who are the stakeholders? *Owners of We Have It All, employee's who want to keep their job, possibility the manufacturer.*
 - 2) What would result in the long term if everyone bought modems, or computers, etc. and used them while they needed or wanted them and then brought them back? *Company would eventually go bankrupt because there would be no sales.*
 - 3) Could you defend your decision to take the modem and use it for a week, and then bring it back without having to pay anything for your use of the modem to the Board of Directors of We Have It All, or the media? *We think it would be rather difficult to justify using the modem for week and then bringing it back. This is really a short term rental situation and We Have It All should be entitled to some compensation for the use of the modem.*

Our conclusion based on the above analysis is that the salesperson was wrong to make the offer in the first place and it would be unethical to go along with it.