

# Understanding Essentials of Work Ethics in Global Perspective

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**Abstract**— An organization's success or failure largely depends on its employees work habit and the employee-employer relationship. So, it is important to look beyond surface reactions and understand the deeper implications of employees visible work habits. This is a descriptive paper in which author emphasizes on the understanding of importance of essentials of work ethics for employees and employers both.

**Index Terms**— ethics, work ethics, dedication, hardwork, commitment

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ethics is the study of right or wrong behaviour. As Grieg Easterbrook defines "Ethics is a set of principles of right conduct or a system of moral values. Etymologically ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos* or *ethica* which means habit, custom, disposition or character. Therefore, we can say that ethics evaluates our customs, habits, or character that whether these customs, habits, or characters are right or wrong or good or bad. Therefore, ethics is a branch of Philosophy which examines the moral standard of individual and society by asking questions that whether these standards are reasonable or unreasonable.

### Work Ethics

Work ethics on the other hand is application of ethics on workplace. It is defined as the set of principles based on hard work and diligence. (Black, 2007) It is also a belief in the moral benefit of work and its ability to enhance character. A work ethic may include being reliable, having initiative, or pursuing new skills (Training Program on "Work Ethics for Development Professionals) T. Merek et.al defines Work ethics as a "set of values centered on importance of work hard. Social ingraining of this value is considered to enhance character through hard work that is respective to an individual's field of work". (T.Merek, 2014, pp. 276-77) Among staff ethical behaviour ensures work is completed with integrity and honesty and staff that are ethical adhere to policies and rules while working to meet the aims of the enterprise. An ethically positive, healthy work culture enhances morale among employees. (Black, 2007) Those employees who have a strong work ethic have inculcated principles that guide them in their work behaviour.

Individuals with a good work ethic are usually very productive people who work at a faster pace. They regularly accomplish more work, more quickly than those who lack a work ethic. They do not quit until the work that they are tasked is completed. At least in part, this is also because they

wish to appear to be stronger employees, and thus, they wish to appear to be of more benefit to their managers and the company.

## II. ESSENTIALS OF WORK ETHICS FOR EMPLOYEES

- **Honesty:** This is the core element of work ethics; all the other elements are based on employee's honesty. Work ethics demands that employees should be honest in his/her work. Only he/she can judge that whether he/she is doing his/her work honestly or not. Also employees should be honest in his/her successes and failures, take credit only where due, do not steal other's works or ideas, and own up to their failures.
- **Integrity:** Integrity demands the translation of ones thought into action. Only believing good is not enough but whatever an employee believes as good or right he/she should do all his/her efforts to bring that goodness. Do not let people down, try to fulfill his/her commitments, and be consistent in his/her thoughts, action and behaviour.
- **Impartiality/Fairness:** Be fair to all, do not practice favouritism. Treat everyone as equal and he can treat people equally only when he/she takes his/her decision with open mindedness.
- **Openness:** An employee should share his/her ideas, results and resources with the other team members, so that everyone will have the same opportunity, and will that know what he/she is doing. Being secretive is counterproductive. It is neither good for employees nor for the organization.
- **Respect for others:** It is obligatory for an employee that he/she should be respectful to everyone in the organization. He should always remain diplomatic and poised and show grace under pressure. Whether serving a client, meeting a customer or meeting with management, do the best to respect other's opinions, even in stressful circumstances. It shows one values other's individual worth and professional contribution.
- **Reliability and Dependability:** Means being punctual for work and meetings, delivering assignments within budget and on schedule. Be reliable about keeping promises for reputation precedes one so that clients, customers, and colleagues do trust in ones to do all that he/she says he/she will.
- **Take initiatives:** An employee who has strong work ethics is always ready to take challenge. Obstacles cannot stop him/her as they are a challenge to be overcome. Embrace challenges positively and know that his/her role is to solve problems with purpose and resilience. He should always push on the things. No matter how far it is necessary to go. It means he/she always keep trying.
- **Dedication:** Work ethics demands that an employee should always do his/her work with full commitment and dedication. He should continue the work until the job is

complete and delivered. The attitude of “It’s good enough” is not sufficient for him/her as well as for the team. He should always aim to be “outstanding” in content and quality. If needed put in the extra hours to get things right by attending to detail and excellence.

- **Accountability:** An employee should accept responsibility personally for one’s actions and outcomes in all situations. He should avoid excuses when work does not proceed as planned and admitting mistakes or oversights are used as a learning and should not be repeated again. Employers expect employees to attain to high standards, and they should fully support staff who accept responsibility, instead of passing the responsibility.
- **Legality:** It is obligatory for an employee that he/she should always work within the legal boundaries. He/she should not break or twist the law to fit his/her agenda.
- **Competence:** An ethical employee is always flexible and believe in lifelong learning. It improves the performance and competency-of the employee. His continuous efforts of gaining excellence opens the avenues of new learning and innovation in the work.
- **Professionalism:** From how one dresses and presents oneself in the business world, to how others are treated, professionalism is such a very broad category that it encompasses all the elements of a work ethic.
- **Humility:** Work ethics demands that an employee always acknowledge the other’s contribution and share credit for successes. He/she should have integrity and are open to learning from mentors and others.

### III. ESSENTIALS OF WORK ETHICS FOR ORGANIZATIONS:

- Following a good work ethics is not only important for employees but it is equally important for the organization as well. As golden rule suggests that we should do to others what we would want others to do to us. Therefore, if organization wants that their employees should be ethical so, they should also be ethical in their affairs. Basic work ethics for any organization should include:
- **Uniform rules and regulations:** An ethical organisation; example is the common treatment of all staff, i.e., with the same respect, regardless of race, culture, religion, or lifestyle, with equal chances for promotion. Therefore, small company managers should desist from favouring any one employee, for it can lead to lawsuits and is also highly counterproductive.
- **Communication of the rules and regulation to all employees:** Company policies must be clearly communicated to each employee with a transparency at all levels of the hierarchy. Employees are the spine of all organizations and should have a say in the goals and objectives of a firm.
- **Respect for Employees:** Respect employees and in return receive the same. Regulations should not be so rigid, and therefore, don’t expect staff to attend work two days before a marriage. If somebody is not well, don’t ask them to attend office unless or until there’s an emergency.
- **Allow a degree of freedom to employees without constant micro-management:** Key roles of responsibility need to be established on the first day of joining with responsibilities commensurate with a

person’s expertise. Employees should be inducted into training if needed.

- **Clear cut salary and promotion policy:** Employees feel cheated and exploited if they are underpaid. This is the organization’s duty to make sure that they get what is deserved. And it should be decided in the presence of the person. A major attrition factor is a poor appraisal, promotion prospects are ideally based on merit, not favour etc.
- **Clear and uniform holiday schedule:** It is the responsibility of human resource professionals to prepare the holiday calendar at the beginning of the year and circulate the same among all employees. Apart from annual leave the employees should get the other kinds of leave also as per their needs. This is the organizations responsibility to make an environment where employees should feel comfortable in asking for a leave. It will give them mental peace and they will be more productive.

### IV. STEPS TO INCREASE EMPLOYEE WORK ETHIC

A work ethic is typically something ingrained within a person. There are, simply put, lazy people who are impossible to motivate. However, other factors, both economical and psychological, can affect an employee's work ethic. Most people can be encouraged to greater performance, once the right motivating factors are found. This can be a process of trial and error because each individual may have different motivators. However, there are some basic guidelines you can follow to increase employee work ethic. As Kate McFarlin, beautifully explained in training programme conducted by National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management in Hyderabad, India. The steps are:

**Step 1:** Expect your managers to set a good example. Employees tend to mimic the behavior of authority figures. If your managers are not doing their jobs or are spending most of the day coming up with inventive ways to avoid working, chances are your employees will follow suit. Make sure your managers know exactly what is expected of them, and follow up with them regularly to make sure they are serving as role models for the rest of your employees.

**Step 2:** Create a public recognition system. Rewarding an employee's good work ethics can be a great motivator for other employees who may not be as productive. Employee of the month competitions and special rewards for those who do their job well may encourage those with a poor work ethic to try harder. Human beings thrive on recognition and feeling appreciated, and these are very powerful motivating factors. *Work Ethics for Development Professionals 37*

**Step 3:** Set clear goals and milestones. In some cases, employees may feel overwhelmed with a project if they are not entirely sure how to complete it or if it looks insurmountable. Break apart projects into tasks that have clear goals. Set milestones with clear target dates so employees know exactly what you expect of them and how long they have to complete the task.

**Step 4:** Monitor potential troublemakers. Almost every office has at least one person who is there for the paycheck and not much else. These people can cause dissension among the

ranks and bring down not only the morale of the rest of the staff, but also the productivity levels for the company. Weed through new applicants to make sure they will have job dedication. Monitor current troublemakers, set strict guidelines they must follow or encourage them to seek employment elsewhere.

**Step 5:** Create a monetary award system. Some employees will be motivated only by the promise of receiving a bonus or a raise if they complete certain tasks and improve their performance. While not all companies may have the resources to give large monetary awards to their employees, even simple gift card challenges and free products can encourage lackadaisical employees. (Kate McFarlin)

## V. CONCLUSION

Ethics in the work environment means those positive facets that accumulatively, define the staff of a company, e.g. Integrity, determination, dedication, initiative and so on. Work ethics is all about how employees implement them his/her work and that being in a job that satisfies him/her, and ensures that employees are productive in their current job performance. Preferably a workplace ethic culture will ensure that employers guide and mentor staff appropriately while management treats all as equal and take care about the employees and their family in all respect.

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