

## Maplewood Career Center Carpentry

### Off-Site Instruction

*Read the following articles and complete the assignment at the end of the reading.*

## The Importance of Honesty and Integrity in the Workplace

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Both terms, honesty and integrity are to be held in high regards being absolutely essential for success in all the areas of life including profession. Having honesty and integrity not only creates value in every communication, but it also leads to build the foundation of trust and confidence. Honesty does not just imply refusal to lie, but it does to live life with fairness and straightforwardness, whereas, integrity implies the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles.

Etymologically the word Integrity has come from the Latin adjective word, **integer**, meaning entire, whole or complete. Integrity means following moral convictions and doing right things in all circumstances. It plays a vital role in the tenure of one's employment and it has a lot to do in return for it. Let's discuss as to how having honesty and integrity is important in the workplace.

Before we go any further, let's discuss about the difference between the terms **honesty and integrity**. Honesty is the quality, condition, or characteristic of being fair, truthful and morally upright, while integrity is the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles or professional standards. It also means complete or undivided. A person can have honesty without integrity, but he or she cannot have integrity without honesty, so honesty is the basis for maintaining integrity of conduct, as integrity means having moral character and living by possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles.

It must be noted that the attainment of total organizational development is owing to the total organizational competencies and the total organizational competence is achieved if the employees serve the organization having honesty and integrity while working effectively and efficiently. The quality of being honest involves the employees to think in the right manner and behave with integrity. It thus advocates, being loyal to the owners, being punctual to the company, adhering to the rules and

regulations of the company, maintaining the timings of the company and producing the results that are expected of.

Maintaining honesty and Integrity of conduct is a proven virtue that benefits you in many ways. It's nothing but the quality of having honesty and integrity that leads to sincerity gaining trust and reliability from others; enabling you to make commitments and put the efforts with consistency, which, all in all, will lead you to improve the level of competence that in turn results in gaining respect and professional development and success.

An employee who performs his duties maintaining honesty and integrity is to be recognized as one of the best employees, while it leads him to success and to reap better results in lieu of this quality. Such a quality is this that is always preferred and looked for in the employees, as it can lead to the attainment of those results that are wanted or intended. It is implied that an honest employee is the leading exponent of organizational goals and objectives and he can put his earnest efforts accordingly to the total organizational competencies, effectiveness and efficiencies.

## Examples of Integrity in the Workplace

*by Kristine Tucker*



Respect for co-workers demonstrates workplace integrity.

Integrity comes in many forms, but honesty and dependability are two traits that are expected in most workplace situations. Without responsible behavior, distrust can make a work environment tense and uncomfortable. A strong work ethic shows co-workers and clients that you're reliable and take your responsibilities seriously. Polite communication, respectable behavior and fiscal responsibility also help you stand out as a trustworthy employee.

## Work When You're on the Clock

Working diligently when you're on the clock is a clear example of workplace integrity. Socializing, surfing the Internet, making personal phone calls, texting and frequent snacking are activities that detract from work time. Saving those activities for break time will show your boss, co-workers and customers that you work hard when you're on the clock. The career website Calibrate Coaching recommends honoring your work hours by not stealing time from your employer. Even if you don't actually clock in and out with a time card, focusing on your work responsibilities while you're at your desk, work station or production area will showcase your strong work habits.

## Follow Company/Organization Policies

Abiding by company and organization policies is a powerful way to demonstrate integrity. Cutting corners and neglecting to follow workplace regulations can lead to mistakes, problems and even dangerous situations. Your willingness to properly record financial transactions, safely dispense of hazardous or toxic materials, follow company protocol for dealing with clients, perform clean-up or set-up procedures and properly maintain equipment shows others that you're not just looking for the easy way out. Establishing yourself as a trustworthy worker who submits to company policies shows your boss and co-workers that you'll faithfully carry out your duties.

## Respect Co-workers and Build Trust

Respecting those you work with reveals your desire to create a healthy work environment. Polite communication, appropriate interactions and respect for co-workers' thoughts and ideas demonstrate your ability to look beyond your own interests to pursue team-centered work goals. As you deal with co-workers honestly and respectfully, you establish a level of trust with them. According to Amy Rees Anderson, a contributor to Forbes magazine, those who trust you will spread the word of that trust to their associates, and word of your character will spread like wildfire.

## Exhibit Responsible Behavior

Integrity in the workplace often stems from moral and ethical behavior. Making sure there's no reason to question your conduct is one of the best ways to prove that you are an honest and dependable employee. Avoid using company products or equipment for personal use and submit exact receipts for travel or meal reimbursements. Don't over-promise what you can't provide and strive to meet deadlines. Work productively and cooperate during company meetings so you don't appear lazy or apathetic, and don't call in sick if you aren't. By exhibiting responsible behavior, you don't give co-workers or clients the opportunity to question your integrity.

# Civilized & Effective Communication

## 10 Tips to Develop Effective Workplace Communication Skills



By Michael Lewis

Posted in: Careers, Small Business

Has your boss ever treated you unfairly or blamed you for a failure that was beyond your control? Recently, a friend came to me in distress about a critical hand-written memo that he and his colleagues had received from their superior, the manager of a national retail chain store. The chain, formerly a Wall Street darling, had fallen from favor with the failure of the company to renew an annual contract with one of their larger customers. As a result, the stock price had dropped by a third, cash flow had decreased, layoffs were anticipated, and morale was in the dumps. Every employee felt the pressure.

The young assistant, vacillating between resentment and hopelessness, didn't know how to respond to the three-page memo which listed failure after failure of tasks and expectations that had not been met by the group. The memo concluded with a threat that "things had to change or else," and that he, the manager, no longer cared about the individuals due to their shortcomings. My friend, torn between quitting for what he believed to be an unfair assessment or staying when further advancement might be delayed or impossible, asked me, "What should I do? Quit or stay there hoping I will not be fired?"

### Results-Oriented Communication in the Workplace

All communications have a result. But was the result in this case the one desired by the manager who penned the memo? Business relationships, especially those between superiors and subordinates, are often rocky due to poor communication, a lack or misinterpretation of facts, pressurized environments, and a mutual commitment to success. As in sports and politics, many business errors are unforced. Mole hills become mountains, and mistakes become disasters due to emotions and overreactions.

Research has proven that **emotions often overrule intellect**, a consequence of having to fight or flee eons before when beasts ate people who were slow to decide whether they were dangerous. Fortunately, most businesses do not have a "kill or be killed" environment – but we're still conditioned to react to one.

In this case, the manager's effort to motivate his employees backfired. Even though there were apparent shortcomings in the store's appearance and operations that needed to be fixed, the result of the memo was to focus attention on personalities, not performance. While the memo was no doubt cathartic for the manager in the short-term, the long-term impact was a loss of trust and confidence in his ability to lead, an increase in day-to-day tensions between the manager and the other employees, and a likelihood of a

significant loss of future potential managers and their accumulated institutional knowledge. How could the manager have handled the situation differently?

## Communicating Effectively: The Foreman or Manager

There are a number of things a supervisor can do to improve his or her communication skills:

### **1. Consider the Situation Before Taking Any Action**

Our emotions tempt us to make quick decisions based upon superficial evidence which may not reflect the true nature of the problem. The manager assumed that the poor appearance of the store was due to the employees' lack of effort or attention. He failed to consider that several store employees had been terminated due to the financial situation, while the store's workload remained the same. Each assistant manager was responsible for more areas with fewer people to do the work.

Furthermore, each assistant had been required to take a pay reduction due to the loss of the large customer, and each was concerned that the customer loss would slow their own promotion to store manager. Though not intended, their effort probably suffered due to their own worries.]

### **2. Gather and Confirm Information Before Making a Decision**

We have a tendency to confuse symptoms with disease, and consequently treat the symptom rather than the underlying illness. Technology enables us to capture massive amounts of data and slice and dice it to make it appear any way we want. But data is a representation of the problem, not the problem itself. Observing the work of the assistants and talking and listening to them about the aspects of their job might have led to a different conclusion than the one the manager reached.

### **3. Focus on Problems, Not Personalities**

The manager's memo attacked the character of each assistant by implying they were lazy, derelict, or had betrayed him. The implications intensified the emotional context of the memo, overshadowing its factual content and purpose.

The assistants, in response, reacted with emotion without stopping to consider the validity of the facts or attempting to give the manager any explanations. Whenever dealing with any issue that might have emotional content, the "24-Hour Rule" should be in effect: Don't send any email, message, letter, memo, or report to others until you've had a day to reflect upon its content and are sure it communicates the facts and the tone you wish.

### **4. Manage Individuals, Not Groups**

The manager's memo was directed to everyone and no one. The lack of specificity enabled each recipient to avoid personal responsibility, since each felt his own effort had met expectations. As a consequence, the memo failed to get the desired result and aggravated an already touchy work environment. Group

communications are perfect for providing general information, education, and praise; however, they should not be used for individual direction or criticism. Remember, praise in public and criticize in private.

### **5. Meet Subordinates Face-to-Face**

The meaning and intent of written words without the context of a physical presence is often misunderstood, and can lead to confusion and conflict. There is no substitute for looking someone in the eye and seeing their reaction to your conversation to clarify content and assure comprehension and agreement.

Managers often hide behind memos and notes as if their subordinates were robots to be moved into place and programmed. However, successful leaders seek personable commitment and build bridges of trust, mutual respect, and shared experience. Be physically available and “walk the walk,” and let your people know you are with them through the good and the bad.

### **6. Assign Tasks Directly and Clearly**

People work best when they know what is expected of them. Good managers identify the goals and measures in simple, understandable terms, assign responsibility unequivocally, and confirm that the information is understood by those to whom it is directed. Good managers follow up and give corrective input to ensure that each of his subordinates is on the same page and working toward the same objective.

Managers should always remember that no employee takes a job with the expectation that he or she will be overlooked, ignored, or insignificant at work. Employees want to be liked and respected by their peers and proud of their employer. Management’s challenge is to maintain and further develop this employee enthusiasm and commitment, even during times of stress.

Mistakes are part of growing, and falling short and correcting the course are regular occurrences in business and in life. Dealing with subordinates the way you would wish to be dealt with in a similar situation is the best course any manager can take.

## **Communicating Effectively: The Employee**

My friend, the assistant manager, could also learn from this event. His reaction, though understandable, exacerbated the situation needlessly. As a consequence, he and the other assistants suffered from useless worry and wasted time and effort commiserating with each other about the perceived injustice they had experienced. This time and energy could have been better spent addressing the problems of the store and improving customer service. While neither he nor the other assistants could affect the manager’s feelings that led to the memo, their response to it was within their control.

If you are placed in a similar situation, you should:

### **1. Never Personalize Criticism**

Whether you're giving or receiving criticism, it should be based upon observed actions and results, not intent. It is impossible to know the motivations behind any activity, only the physical actions and outcome of the activity. As a consequence, criticism should be given and accepted unemotionally, considered for its validity and pertinence, and implemented when action is justified.

In other words, don't be too sensitive or defensive when you receive feedback. Consider the information received as intended to get a different result, not a personal attack.

### **2. Understand the Situation**

In this case, the precipitating cause for the criticism was the physical condition and appearance of the store. At other times, constructive criticism is part of a regular employee performance review, designed to give both parties feedback. Use both opportunities to build your relationship and get information. Use a review as an opportunity to receive and give intelligence that might otherwise be missed.

### **3. Be Understanding**

Whenever you receive what you consider to be an unjustified personal attack or criticism, recognize the source and their circumstances before jumping to a conclusion. Unfortunately, people have bad days, and they often respond by assailing others for little or no reason. When heads are cooler and pressures are less, contact the assailant to learn more about the problem and how you can be part of the solution. You may discover that the stimulus for the assault was an overreaction on the sender's part or had nothing to do with you or your work.

### **4. Learn From Your Mistakes**

Whatever the stage of your career, you can and should continue to learn. Over your working life, you'll work for and with superiors of varying capabilities and talents. Some you will remember because of their great leadership, while others you'll remember because they were such poor managers. Even the latter can teach you something.

In this case, my friend learned how he felt when unjustly accused of poor performance. Hopefully, he will remember his feelings before he makes the same mistakes with the people who report to him currently or in the future. Sometimes, the bad examples are more effective than the good.

## **Final Word**

Management and leadership is a learned skill. Effective managers have experience on both sides of the spectrum, taking directions as well as giving them. And the success of a company is directly related to the skill of its managers and their ability to lead employees through difficult and testing times.

By analyzing and being thoughtful in your communications with both your subordinates and superiors, you can better learn how to lead in whatever position you have. In this way, you'll not only secure your

future prospects to rise up your company's ranks, but you'll also create a more productive and better working environment for yourself and your colleagues.

## What Does It Mean to Be Professional at Work?

Master this way of thinking and composing yourself early on in your career.

By Alison Green | Contributor July 22, 2013, at 9:55 a.m.

You probably know that it's important to be professional if you want to have a successful career, but what does that actually mean? After all, professionalism is rarely taught; you're supposed to pick it up on your own through a combination of observation and osmosis, but that's not always easy to do. And learning on the job can be fraught with land mines, since you might not even see your mistakes coming.

So without further ado, here are 10 key elements of professionalism that you should master early in your career.

**1. Pay attention to the cultural norms in your organization, and follow them.** If you watch how others in your office operate, you'll learn all sorts of important things about "how we do things here." For instance, you might observe that everyone shows up precisely on time for meetings, that they modulate their voices when others are on the phone, and that people rely on email for non-urgent questions. These are important signals for what will be expected of your own behavior – and you'll come across as tone-deaf if you ignore them.

**2. Be pleasant and polite to people, even if you don't like them.** You will have to work with people whom you just don't care for, and even with people who aren't very nice. You'll look far more professional if you don't let them get under your skin and instead remain cordial and easy to work with.

**3. Take work seriously.** If you make a mistake or something doesn't go well, don't brush it off or use cavalier responses like "my bad." Accept responsibility for your part in what went wrong. Part of taking work seriously leads to...



**4. Speak up when work isn't getting done on time or when there are problems with a project.** Part of taking real ownership for your work means that you're responsible for alerting your boss when things are going off course, rather than trying to ignore it or just hoping that no one notices.

**5. Realize that getting feedback on your work – even critical feedback – is part of the job; it's not personal.** Getting angry or defensive or otherwise taking it personally when your manager gives you feedback can be an easy trap to fall into, but it will make you look less professional. And after all, if you care about doing your job well and advancing, don't you want to know where you need to do better?

**6. You need to write clearly and professionally.** That means no text speak, and correct punctuation and capitalization. This doesn't mean that you need to write as if you were addressing the Queen of England, but you do need to take care that you don't sound like you're texting a friend from a nightclub either.

**7. Be flexible.** Yes, your workday might formally end at 5 p.m., but if staying an hour late will ensure the newsletter goes to the printer on time, you should do it unless that's truly impossible. That doesn't mean to ignore important commitments in your own life, but you shouldn't let important work go undone just because of your quitting time. Similarly, be flexible when it comes to changes in work plans, goals or other things that might evolve as work moves forward.

**8. Show up reliably.** Unless you have pre-scheduled vacation time or you're truly ill, you should be at work when they're expecting you to be there. It's not OK to call in sick because you're hung over, or because you stayed up late last night watching soccer, or because you just don't feel like coming in.

**9. Be helpful, and do more than solely what's in your job description.** The way that you gain a great professional reputation – which will give you options that you can use to earn more money, get out of bad situations and not have to take the first job that comes along – is by doing more than the bare minimum required. That means always looking for ways to do your job better, helping out colleagues when you can, and not balking at new projects.

**10. Don't treat your foreman, manager, or supervisor as your adversary.** If you have even a semi-decent manager, she wants to see you do well and isn't your enemy. But if you instead see her as someone whose job is to enforce rules, spoil your fun and make you do things you don't want to do, it will show – and it won't look good. Treat your manager as a team-mate, one who has authority over you, yes, but one who's working toward the same goals as you are. (And if you're not sure whether this is true of your manager, that's a big red flag to pay attention to.)

*Your task is to write a paragraph sent to me via email regarding the benefits of honesty, integrity, and professionalism in the workplace. The paragraph/letter should explain your view of the advantages of these characteristics being present in your co-workers and some imaginary examples of problems that have arose from individuals not possessing these qualities.*

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