

THE SOLUTIONS' INSIDER

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 7

FEBRUARY 2007

ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE

For millennia, humankind has strived to understand the essence of ethics, and what it means for people to act ethically. The Greek philosopher Aristotle once said this regarding the nature of ethics, "*I have gained this by philosophy: that I do without being commanded what others do only from fear of the law.*" As anyone can clearly observe, even to this day, his sensible words retain their relevance.

Now consider if you went to dinner at your favorite restaurant and found that the server dropped your food on the floor just prior to serving it? Or perhaps you discovered that the new appliance you just purchased had been previously bought and returned by another customer. I suspect that most of us would feel angry or cheated, and probably would not want to frequent either place again. With this in mind, we must ask ourselves what it means to act ethically today? Simply put, possessing ethics or acting ethically is to act in accordance with accepted cultural values, fairness and honesty. As we all know, stealing money or merchandise from our employers is clearly unethical.

In spite of that, why do some people expect employees of businesses they shop at to be

ethical, but then feel it's entirely acceptable to violate ethical principles while they're at work? Isn't it fair to assume that we'd all like to be treated ethically and fairly when we're making purchases, or when we're going to our favorite restaurant? Of course, so why do some employees possess a double-standard when it comes to acting ethically while they're at work?

According to one theory, some employees have a flexible or low standard of property rights, and while at work they engage in dishonest and unethical acts. Some employees may rationalize that they're not getting paid enough; that the company owes them, or they engage in dishonest acts simply because they believe the company can afford it.

So what are some simple things we can do to ensure that we and those around us are acting ethically and in accordance with our company's established policies and procedures? First of all, we must demand higher standards from ourselves. The Golden Rule, *Do unto to others as we'd have done to us.* Employees shouldn't be acting ethically because they have to, they should act ethically because they want to.

Secondly, we all have a duty to protect our company's assets; certainly this will include not pilfering items that belong to our employers or our coworkers. If you observe a customer or a coworker engaging in theft, you should immediately notify a member of management, loss prevention or call the anonymous toll free hotline.

While working at the cash register, all cashiers must ensure that every transaction is properly recorded, and that any and all point-of-sale discrepancies are reported to management. Furthermore, sales associates must ensure that every customer is provided friendly and superior customer service.

Just remember, if we don't insist that our personal actions are ethical, how can we insist that others act with ethics and integrity when it pertains to us? We can't and that's why it's so important to ensure that while at work we're accurate and, above all, honest. Furthermore, we must insist the same from those we work with, so don't hesitate to ask your manager about ways you can help to reduce theft and shrink causing activities in your store.



WORKPLACE ETHICS:

- Demand honesty and ethical behavior from yourselves and your coworkers.
- Protect your company's assets.
- Report dishonest or shrink causing activities to your manager, district manager, loss prevention or the anonymous hotline.
- While working a cash register, ensure that all transactions are properly recorded, and be certain to provide excellent customer service.
- Get involved with shrink reduction efforts.

Hotline: (800) 581-1400

Fax: (909) 854-7975

www.plsolutions.net

Phone: (760) 887-4800