



Instructor Guide

Positive Work Ethic



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Unit Description

Overview

This unit focuses on behaviors in the workplace and how an employee's behaviors or actions affect the employee, coworkers, the company and customers. The unit focuses on workplace values such as: coming to work on time, being punctual with regard to lunch and breaks, abiding by rules and policies, respecting coworkers, being productive, and serving customers in a positive manner.

The unit helps participants understand where values come from, the importance of respecting workplace values, and the importance of assuming responsibility for one's behavior. Participants will also learn how choosing appropriate workplace behavior contributes to the success of the company.

Objectives

The information, activities and practices provided in this unit will enable participants to:

1. Define "positive work ethic" and discuss its importance in the workplace.
2. Identify actions which contribute to workplace success.
3. Explain how employers, the company, and customers benefit when employees demonstrate a positive work ethic.
4. Choose actions which will serve as ground rules for the class during CMS training.



Materials

1. Flip chart paper
2. Felt tip markers
3. Masking Tape
4. Value cards

PowerPoint Slides

1. Positive Work Ethic
2. Objectives
3. Definition of Ethics
4. Where Do Our Values Come From?
5. Definition of Collaboration
6. Trends in Business
7. Summary of Learning

Flip Charts

1. Introduction
2. Ethics
3. Best Group
4. Worst Group
5. Our Work Values
6. Employees
7. Company
8. Customer
9. Supplier/Internal Customer



Agenda

Introduction	10 minutes
Ethics in the Workplace	40 minutes
The Ideal Workplace	35 minutes
Summary	35 minutes
Total	2 hours



Introduction



DISPLAY the slide titled “Positive Work Ethic.”



DIRECT participants’ attention to the flip chart with the title of the unit and name of instructor.

Positive Work Ethic
(Instructor’s Name)



DIRECT the class to the “Introduction” in their Participant Guide.

STATE that the unit focuses on behaviors in a business environment. We will look at how our behaviors or actions affect the employee, coworkers, the company, and the customer.

CONTINUE by saying that this unit will focus on workplace values such as: coming to work on time, being punctual with regards to lunch and breaks, abiding by rules and policies, respecting coworkers, being productive, and serving customers in a positive manner.

EXPLAIN that the unit will help participants understand the importance of respecting workplace values and the importance of assuming responsibility for one’s behavior. We will also look at how choosing appropriate and productive behavior contributes to the success of the company.

STATE that today the class will determine the values they would most desire in their class learning group(s) and work environment.



Objectives



DISPLAY the slide titled “Objectives.”

STATE that this unit will enable the participants to:

1. Define “positive work ethic” and discuss its importance in the workplace.
2. Identify actions or behaviors which contribute to workplace success.
3. Explain how employees, the company, and customers benefit when employees demonstrate a positive work ethic.
4. Choose actions or behaviors which will serve as ground rules for the class during CMS training.



Activity: What Ethics Means to Me



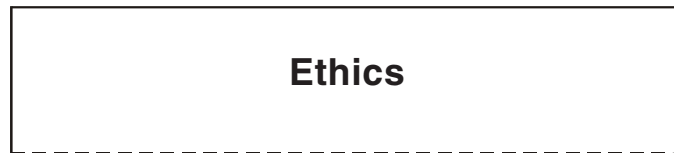
INSTRUCT participants to complete “Activity: What Ethics Means to Me” in their Participant Guide.

DISCUSS the activity when the class has finished.



ASK the following questions and write responses on a flip chart titled “Ethics.”

1. “What does ethics mean to you?”
2. “What are some ethical situations you have encountered and have had to deal with in the workplace?”



DISPLAY the slide with the definition of ethics.

DEFINE “ethics” in context with the workplace.

STATE that ethics is a collection of values and behaviors which people feel are moral. In other words, “ethics” is the name we give to our values or good behavior. So a positive work ethic is the collection of all the values and actions that people feel are appropriate in the workplace.

EXPLAIN that morals relate to right and wrong. Values are beliefs that a person feels are very important. Our behavior, or actions, are most often a reflection of our values.



DISPLAY the slide titled “Where Do Our Values Come From?”

EXPLAIN that our values are influenced by our beliefs, background, experience, religion, training, and personal style. However, in any situation, we should consider not only our own personal well-being, but also that of our family, friends, others in the workplace, customers, and society as a whole.

STATE that the behavior that is considered appropriate and desirable in one group or work environment is not always the same for others. Also, what might be considered appropriate with your friends and family may not be considered equally valid in a work environment.



Ethics in the Workplace

Introduction



DIRECT participants to “Ethics in the Workplace” in their guide.

EXPLAIN that an individual’s ethical values are developed in childhood and youth and are constantly tested in the workplace. The manner in which a person deals with ethical situations reflects his or her beliefs, background, training, and personal style.

STATE that you must be conscious of and respect the values of the workplace because behavior affects not only your reputation within the company, but may also contribute to the way in which you and the company are perceived by your customers.



Activity: Ethical Values



DIRECT the class to “Activity: Ethical Values” in their Participant Guide.

STATE that the following list includes several commonly accepted ethical values in the business environment.

ASK participants to indicate how they feel about the importance of each item in the workplace.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Honesty	_____	_____	_____
Fairness	_____	_____	_____
Helpfulness	_____	_____	_____
Dependability	_____	_____	_____
Compassion	_____	_____	_____
Loyalty	_____	_____	_____
Obedience to policies	_____	_____	_____
Respect for others	_____	_____	_____
Self-control	_____	_____	_____
Punctuality	_____	_____	_____
Productiveness	_____	_____	_____

DISCUSS the participants’ responses when they have finished.

CONCLUDE by saying that you must be conscious of and respect the values of the workplace because behavior affects not only your reputation within the company, but may also attribute to the way in which you and the company are perceived by your customers.



Ethical Gray Areas



REFER participants to the “Ethical Gray Areas” section of their guide.

EXPLAIN that we understand the importance of truthfulness, honesty, respect, and loyalty in a work environment. However, there are often situations that may fall into gray areas concerning ethical behavior.

STATE that we are now going to complete an exercise in which we will read several scenarios and determine if actions support beliefs.



Activity: Positive Actions



DIRECT class to the activity, “Positive Actions” in their guide and ask them to check those actions that reflect positive values for each belief listed in the left column of the chart.

ASK the class to discuss each action as to whether or not they think the actions support the beliefs. *Correct responses are indicated.*

Positive Actions

Honesty

- ___ You occasionally use the company van to run personal errands during work hours.
- ___ You told your boss you got stuck in traffic when you actually overslept.
- T You have a doctor’s appointment so you offer to make up the time you are away from work.

Teamwork

- ___ You are on a team with very productive people. You don’t particularly like the project you are working on, and since you worked so hard on the last one, it’s okay to coast a little since the others can easily pull the weight and not complain.
- T You are working with a person who seems to have a negative attitude about work. You are talking with her during lunch and you find out that she’s never performed the task she’s been requested to do and she’s afraid that she’ll make a mistake. Since you’ve performed this task before, you spend some time with her to get her up to speed.
- ___ You feel that your boss is unfair. During the day, some of your team members are discussing how much they dislike the boss. You join in the conversation since they feel the same way you do.



Company Image

- T** — You are waiting on a customer who seems to be taking too long to make up his mind. In the mean time, the other sales person has made two sales while you've been with this customer. However, you continue to wait on this person until he decides to make a purchase.
- You are at a social gathering and several people you know are talking about your company's competitor. Since you don't like that company, you join in the conversation and talk about the lousy service the company provides compared to the company you work for.
- You've been having a bad day and you get a call from an irate customer. You are not in the mood to listen to someone complain, so you tell the customer that you cannot help her and then transfer her call to someone else.

SUMMARIZE the activity.

EXPLAIN that the purpose of this activity was to help participants evaluate ethical situations they may encounter and assess the behavior options, consider the consequences of their behavior, and choose positive actions.

REMIND the class that the actions we choose can have an affect on the employee, coworkers, the company, and the customer in positive and negative ways.



Activity: Two Groups



DIRECT participants to the “Two Groups” activity in their guide.

STATE that any group of people who live together, spend time together, or work together have a great impact on the group. We all know this from our own experience.

EXPLAIN that the purpose of this activity is to demonstrate from the participants' own past experience, how a group's values affect the actions and performance outcomes of the group.



DIVIDE the class into two smaller groups of about equal size. Give each group a sheet of flip chart paper and a felt tip marker. If the class is small, you may not be able to divide it in half. In this case, have the whole class develop both lists.

TELL participants to think of a group they have been a member of at some time in their life. This could be a family, a group at church, at school, at work, in the neighborhood, formal, informal.

- Assign one group to think about the best group they have belonged to.
- Assign the other group to think about the worst group they've been assigned to.

NOTE: Each person will probably be thinking of a different group.

STATE: “As you think of this group, recall the characteristics of the group that made it the best or worst group you have ever belonged to. For instance, one characteristic of an effective group might be “trust among the members.” A characteristic of an ineffective group might be “members who do not think of the effect of their actions on others.”



SAY: “As you think of these characteristics, list them on the sheet of flip chart titled “**Best Group**” and “**Worst Group**” in letters large enough for the whole group to see. Later I will ask each group to share their lists and explain them to the whole class.”

INSTRUCT each group to select someone who will do the listing and someone who will discuss the list.

ALLOW the small groups about 10 minutes to complete this assignment. *You may need to monitor the groups to be sure they are coming up with appropriate responses. If not, reword the assignment and give them additional examples.*



ASK each team to attach its list to the wall with masking tape when 10 minutes are up and explain the items to the rest of the class. *You may need to ask, “What did you mean by this?” or “Can you be more specific?” Each group report should take about 2 1/2 minutes each to present.*

Best Group

Anticipated responses:

Collaboration

Cooperation

Good communications

Clear purpose

Respect for each other

Harmony

Little friction

All members pull their weight



Worst Group

Anticipated responses:

Competition among team members

Petty quarreling

Negativity

Members leaving, or wanting to leave

Complaining about leadership, tasks, etc.

People trying to get out of doing their share

Disagreements that were not satisfactorily settled

Back stabbing

NOTE: As they share their lists, you may notice that some of the items on one list are similar to others. For instance, on the “positive list” you may see “good communications” and on the “negative list” you may see “poor communications.” It is perfectly all right to see this duplication; it emphasizes that communication is very important when present and very noticeable when absent.



Wrap-up

NOTE: The wrap-up is vital because it helps the participants translate their group activity into a learning experience. Without the wrap-up, the class has merely gone through an exercise during which they may or may not have learned anything. Therefore, it is best not to leave the learning to chance. In your wrap-up you can ask questions of the group to get them to think and respond and you can make observations of your own.

ASK:

“Do you see any similarities in your lists? What are they?”

“Do you see any differences in your lists? What are they?”

IDENTIFY those factors over which the group members had an influence.

ASK which of the positive and negative factors were determined by the group itself, as opposed to circumstances outside the group. As they identify those factors, put a check mark by them.

STATE that we have all had good and bad experiences with groups, and we have seen that many of those experiences are similar, although the groups may have been different. We can see how the values of the group translated into action ... and how those actions affected the performance of the group. Those groups who had positive values succeeded ... the other groups were probably not as successful.

We have also seen that many of the positive and negative characteristics of the groups were largely influenced by the group members, not by an outsider or by external circumstances.



ASK the following questions:

“How can group members influence what happens in that group?”

“How did the characteristics have an effect on you, either positively or negatively?”

“Did the characteristics make you want to do your best or make you not care?”

“Did the characteristic make you want to stay with the group or leave it?”

“How did a characteristic influence how you behaved with other members?”

LEAD the class to understand that groups, although different in purpose and structure, have many similarities in their strengths and weaknesses. These “characteristics” all reflect the values of the group. Also, help the class members see that the values shared by group members are powerful in their ability to influence the behavior and outcomes of the group.

If applicable, you can share your own experience in working with groups as a teacher or facilitator. Describe how groups differed from each other and how the differences had more to do with group behavior than with yours.



The Power of Collaboration



DIRECT the group to the section titled “The Power of Collaboration” in their guide.

EXPLAIN that ethics in a business environment means being conscious of our actions as well as the complications and consequences of those actions. Maintaining ethical behavior in the work setting involves an awareness of:

- the need for complying with rules and policies set by the company and teams, the customs and expectations of the community, and general concerns of others.
- how actions can affect the products and services of an organization, its workers, the community, and its customers either positively or negatively.

EXPLAIN that most problems in a work environment or in working teams are caused by lack of collaboration, which is itself a work value.



DISPLAY the slide with the definition of “Collaboration.”

DEFINE collaboration as “Working together for a common cause or goal.”

EXPLAIN that collaboration is one of the most important values a group can share in the workplace. Collaboration helps alleviate the types of bad experiences you’ve had with teams.



DISPLAY the slide “Trends in Business.”

STATE that we are seeing more and more collaboration in business today with trends such as using self directed work teams, participative leadership, downsizing organizations, Total Quality Management (TQM), and developing partnerships with the customer.



DISCUSS the benefits that collaboration provides:

- Collaboration builds an awareness of interdependence within an organization or within a team. When people realize the benefits of cooperating with and helping each other, they are more interested in working together to accomplish common goals. No one feels threatened nor competitive.
- When working for an organization, you abide by and respect the values/policies/rules established by that organization. When working in a team, members establish and abide by the “rules” set by the team.
- Collaboration builds and reinforces mutual support and recognition. Team members are able to see the results of their personal efforts, the efforts of others, and the overall achievements.
- People work together and encourage each other to achieve greater results. Since no one feels threatened, people are willing to share and test fresh ideas. When working on a team, team members gain confidence and support other members.
- Everyone feels a commitment to accomplish organizational goals, support each other, and provide the best quality possible to customers.



Summary of Learning



DISPLAY the slide “Summary of Learning” and discuss.

- Being a member of a group can be either a positive or negative experience depending on the values of the members of the group itself and how they decide to behave.
- Maintaining objectivity enables you to choose appropriate behavior when encountering ethical situations and working with others.
- Collaboration is a vital element in the workplace which builds and reinforces mutual support and recognition.
- Collaboration ensures goals of the team, organization, and personal goals are successfully accomplished.
- Collaboration benefits you, other employees, the organization and your customers.



The Ideal Workplace

Introduction



REFER participants to “The Ideal Workplace” section of their guide.

EXPLAIN that we have been talking about groups in general. Now we are going to be more specific and apply some of this learning. So let us decide now, in the ideal workplace do we want to be a group that has the characteristics of the “best group” list or the “worst group” list? Why?

REMIND the class how values of a group translate into actions and how those actions affect the performance of the group.



Activity: Our Positive Work Ethic



REFER participants to “Activity: “Our Positive Work Ethic” in their guide.

NOTE: At this point, allow the class to make a conscious decision about the type of group they want and to verbalize why. You want to make this decision a conscious one and spend a little time on it.



DIVIDE the class into smaller groups of four or five participants. Give each group a sheet of flip chart paper and a marker.



HAND OUT value cards.

GIVE each small group an identical assignment:

“Imagine that you have begun working together, as a group, at the same location or department. Look through the value cards and select the top 10 that you like the best and your team agrees on. These would be ones that would help you create one of the “best” groups you have ever been in. You do not need to sort or rate these cards in order of importance yet.”

OBSERVE the groups as they sort through the cards, answering any questions the groups may have.

ALLOW 20 minutes for them to complete the task. As before, ask each group to appoint a person who will list the ground rules chosen from the cards and another who will report out.

NOTE: If you observe that a group is having some difficulty in choosing cards, present a strategy on simplifying the sort. Instruct the group to go through the cards one at a time, deciding if the “value” is more important or less important. Continue until all the cards have been reviewed. Discard the “less important” pile. Once more have the group go through the remaining cards one at a time, once more deciding if the “value” is more important or less important. Continue until all the cards have been reviewed. Once more, discard the “less important” pile. Continue this activity until only 10 cards remain.



(Below is a list of the values printed on the cards, for your reference)

Communication

- We tell the truth.
- We welcome new team members.
- We have a sense of humor.
- We communicate openly.
- We encourage new ideas.
- We think positively.
- We are creative.

Cooperation

- We support one another.
- We are responsible and accountable for our job performance.
- We dress in an appropriate businesslike way.
- We accept differences in opinions.
- We accept each other as we are.
- We help one another.
- We value doing a job well.



Consideration

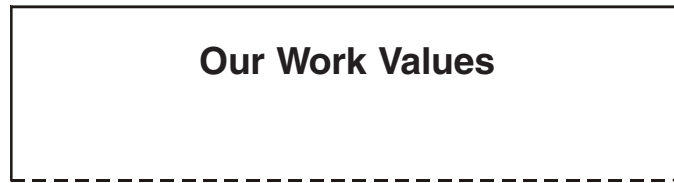
- We arrive at work on time.
- We come back from meals and breaks on time.
- We are at work every day and build a good attendance record.
- We keep our work area clean and neat.
- We maintain high morale.
- We respect our customers and suppliers.
- We respect our company.
- We enjoy our work.
- We treat our leaders with respect.
- We represent our company positively in our community.

Coordination

- We work at a fast pace.
- We exceed expectations of our customers.
- We complete daily tasks.
- We value learning.
- We welcome change.
- We improve continuously.
- We deliver quality products and services.
- We like challenges.



ASK each group to write its list on a flip chart titled “Our Work Values.”



ASK a representative from each group to post its group’s flip chart to the wall and report on its list.

NOTE: You will notice that some of these values overlap. That is intentional because it promotes having the participants discuss and clarify the overlapping items and specify what each one means to them. This is on target with the purpose for the activity. Some of the items are vague. That is also intentional, for the same reason.

ASSEMBLE the class for continuation of the activity.



Activity: Our Ground Rules



REFER participants to “Activity: Our Ground Rules” in their guide.

EXPLAIN that now we have a list of work values. We have to decide how we are going to make certain that they really work and that we will live by them. These will become our “ground rules.” These rules are stated positively, in terms of what we want, not negatively in terms of what we don’t want. They are also stated in the present, as if they are already our value, instead of “We will....”

SAY: “I could try to enforce adherence to these rules, but I don’t want to do that. I would rather that we all be responsible for sticking by the rules.”

STATE that if a member of the class feels that we are not paying attention to the rules, that person can call for a “Rules Check.” That means we stop what we are doing and discuss the fact that a rule is not being honored and how we could improve our performance in this regard.

In this way, we become responsible for our own behavior and are being proactive. We don’t wait until something negative happens, and then have to confront problems. We try to avoid them, or deal with them while they are still small.

ASK: “Does anyone have any other suggestions as to how we can make these rules govern our behavior?”

ASK each group to present their workplace values and give a summary of how these benefit employees, the company, and the customer.



ASK: “How do employees benefit from these ground rules?”



WRITE the responses on a flip chart under the heading of “Employees” as the class responds. Try for one or two responses per value item.

Employees

Anticipated responses:

Without established values or ground rules, people would set their own rules and they would all be different.

People know what is expected of them.

Employees respect other coworkers or team members.

NEXT ASK: “How does the company benefit from having these as ground rules?”



WRITE the responses on a flip chart under the heading of “Company” as the class responds. Try for one or two responses per value item.

Company

Anticipated responses:

It allows the company to schedule its work and forecast completion of projects.

It helps to ensure that everyone plays by the same rules.

They constitute performance standards that are measurable

They help the company control costs and keep customer service level high.



ASK: “How do customers benefit from these ground rules? What would happen if you were a customer of a company that had no ground rules? How would you be affected by this?”



WRITE the responses on a flip chart under the heading of “Customer” as the class responds. (Try for one or two responses per value item.)

Customer

Anticipated responses:

Customers may find that they are not being waited on or get their order filled on time.

Customers might tell their friends and associates about the poor service encountered and this word might spread rapidly.

Customers may eventually go to another company for service.

Customers receive higher quality products.

FINALLY ASK: “How would a supplier or internal customer benefit from these ground rules?” (Inform the group that a supplier or internal customer could be anyone who provides a service or product to a company or department. It could be an external supplier delivering products to be manufactured into goods, or it could be another department that may provide a service you need to complete your job.)



WRITE the responses on a flip chart under the heading of “Supplier/Internal Customer” as the class responds. (Try for one or two responses per value item.)

Supplier/Internal Customer

Anticipated responses:

The supplier would know that the company considered their time and services valuable by having employees there when they were expected.

The suppliers would know that they all would be treated fairly and equally.

The suppliers could depend on the company for steady business if their product or service is of a high quality and at a reasonable price.

SUMMARIZE the activity.

NOTE the similarities and differences of values selected by each group. Make the point that all these values are important or they would not have been listed.

EXPLAIN that just as the individuals of each group have different opinions that were “meshed” to develop each group’s list - the actions of different groups with an organization often reflect different values. This sometimes creates problems. World class manufacturing organizations let the “customer focus” be the guiding value that unites all areas of the company.

REFER to the list of ground rules the class chose for itself earlier in the session.



ASK the class to answer these questions:

“How do these rules benefit you as a student?”

“How do these rules benefit me as a facilitator?”

“How do these rules benefit the school?”

“How do these rules benefit your present or future employers?”

STATE that companies have rules for a number of very good reasons. These benefit everybody. Rules are not made to punish employees or to purposefully make them unhappy. They allow everyone to work better together, provide a higher quality service to customers, and stay in business and be successful, and to continue to offer employment. They, just like we, are setting ground rules so that we can have a positive and productive experience together. That is why we set our ground rules earlier in this session.

EXPLAIN that in some cases, an employee may feel that he or she has been treated unfairly because the supervisor jumped to an incorrect conclusion, or didn't understand the circumstances. But without rules, there would be no standard to go by. The rules have been developed to produce a win-win situation for all parties. It helps them to see that rules are not inhibitors, they facilitate the behavior and outcomes that we all want. They are a means to an end.



Guidelines for Ethical Behavior



DIRECT participants to the “Guidelines for Ethical Behavior” in their guide and summarize.

- Consider the needs of others in general, your coworkers, organization, community, and customers - not just your own needs. View your organization’s value system as a win-win process - you give and you will receive.
- Always be conscious of the goals and values of your organization. You are a part of the community and society. Remember, even when you are not at your place of work, you still represent your company.
- Obey rules, laws and cultural standards. Use common sense and assess the possible damage and consequences of unethical behavior before you act.
- Ask yourself, “Is this the right thing to do?” “Will this hurt fellow employees or the company?” “Is it honest?”
- Put your biases aside and look at any situation objectively. Don’t let your personal opinion cloud the issue or create conflict with others. Assess the situation before you act.



Wrap Up



REFER participants back to the flip charts “Our Work Values” they created earlier.

ASK the following questions for discussion:

“Can these same values guide this group as we continue as a learning group?” Think about your previous experience with good groups and bad groups.

“Would you add any additional values? Are some less appropriate for a learning group?” Let’s decide which values we will choose as our own. These will become our “ground rules” while we are together.

CHECK those the group decides are appropriate learning ground rules, adding others as needed.

FINALLY ASK the class if they felt that we had accomplished the objectives listed in the front of their guide and discuss.

EXPLAIN that we will revisit the “ground rules” set by the class during future classes and that the flip charts, “Our Work Values” will be posted in each class during the course. Periodically, we will take time out to discuss how well we are abiding by the rules and what adaptations we would like to make.

In this way, we become responsible for our own behavior and are being proactive. We don’t have to wait until something negative happens, and then have to confront the problem.



Summary



REFER participants to the summary in their guide.

DISCUSS the summary.

In this unit we have learned that ethics is a collection of values (beliefs) and behaviors (actions) which people feel are important and that our behavior is often a reflection of our values.

A positive work ethic is the collection of all the values and actions that people feel are appropriate for the workplace.

Ethics in a business environment means being conscious of our actions as well as the complications and consequences of those actions. Maintaining ethical behavior in the work setting involves an awareness of:

- the need for complying with rules and policies set by the company and teams, the customs and expectations of the community, and general expectation of others.
- the importance of assuming responsibility for one's behavior.
- how choosing appropriate workplace behavior benefits the employee and coworkers, the customer, and contributes to the success of the company.

Collaboration plays a vital role in the success of an organization. We are seeing more collaboration in business today with the establishment of teams, participative leadership, TQM, and developing partnerships with customers. Collaboration builds and reinforces mutual support and ensures goals of the team, organization, and personal goals are successfully accomplished.

Finally, companies establish rules which benefit everybody. These rules allow everyone to work better together, provide a higher quality product to customers, and stay in business and be successful.



HAND OUT the assessments.