



2016 Business Ethics Luncheon

USC Upstate, Campus Life Center Ballroom, Spartanburg, SC
December 8, 2016

“Ethics in the Workplace: Hired or Fired?”

GUIDE FOR JA BUSINESS ETHICS ROUNDTABLE FACILITATORS

As a JA table facilitator your biggest role is to help everyone at your table feel welcome and that their opinions matter – especially the students who may feel reticent or uncertain about the format of the roundtable discussion. **There will be a brief orientation session for all facilitators before the lunch gets underway, so please arrive by 11:10 to meet and receive your materials.**

As the table facilitator we will ask you to observe the following time frame. We will begin the discussions at approximately 12:20, following the panel discussion. Time for reviewing and discussing each topic will be maintained at the podium to keep everyone together. Basically each question will be discussed for 10 minutes, although we will adjust that if necessary.

1. Before the Program

11:20-11:30

- Introduce yourself and your role as facilitator.
- Try to put everyone at ease.
- Encourage all at your table to eat during the awards presentation and panel discussion. We are under a tight timeline so depending on when the guests arrive, there may not be much time for conversation before the program starts.
- An effort has been made to diversify the students at your table in terms of school, gender, and question answered. This sometimes makes them uncomfortable at first, but usually this experience of meeting and talking to students of other schools becomes one of the most positive parts of the program.

2. Following the Panel Discussion

12:20-12:25

- Ask participants to introduce themselves by name and school and/or organization.
- Remind the group that the high school student attendees were required to write an essay on ONE of the questions prior to the event and have the representing students share which question they chose to address (responses will vary).
- Briefly explain the ethical decision-making model identified and explain that the participants are to apply this model to the ethical topics presented to them. *See attached page; also reprinted in the program that will be given to all participants.*
- Share the rules of engagement: listen to others, respect other views, reserve judgments, and take turns.

3. Review of Ethical Topics #1, 2, 3

8-10 minutes each

- Allow participants to read through the ethical topic and jot down notes.
- Encourage them to think critically about both sides of the issue.
- When everyone is done with note-taking, encourage discussion. Remind the group that the objective is not to resolve the issue, but to have an honest dialogue about the topic and its challenges.

4. Wrap-Up

- Ask group to help you complete a brief survey of the experience (to be left on the table).
- Thank participants for their involvement.



Prompts to Help Analyze Ethical Issues*

The following are general prompts to help consider and respond to the questions and to think through the issues.

Identify the issue by asking:

- What is the question, issue, or problem?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What kinds of factors complicate or affect the problem?

Analyze the problem by considering:

- What are the possible choices to address the problem?
- What are the likely effects and outcomes of the various choices?
- What choice would generate the greatest good for the greatest number?
- Do any of the possibilities violate important moral or ethical principles?
- Which option is most just and fair?
- Which option would someone you admire be likely to choose?

Justify your position, and make a plan for action:

- Explain your reasons for your choice in a way that other reasonable people would find persuasive.
- Discuss the positive and negative repercussions.
- Weigh them against other possible actions and explain why the choice you made makes the most sense.

*These steps are adapted from the Rutland Institute for Ethics' "IAJD" model and *Teachable Moments* by Teddi Fishman and Lorilei Swanson

ESSAY QUESTIONS: *Ethics in the Workplace: Hired or Fired?*

Topic #1: **The Reward of the Eager Beaver**

You start work at a cable company. You have been well trained and know what you're doing. You are given a list of eight home connection requests for each day of work. You find the work easy and usually finish your assignments three hours early, before the end of the scheduled work day. You notice that the other installers come back to the shop precisely at the end of the scheduled work day. The oldest, most seasoned installer approaches you at the end of your first week. He tells you, "Look, you need to pace yourself better. You see these other guys?" he says pointing to the other drivers walking into the building. "They're much older than you. They're married and have children. They can't work as fast as you. In fact, your speed is making us all look bad. When we have extra time between work assignments, we park in the shade behind malls and read the paper until the next scheduled appointment. You need to learn to do the same." His tone is a bit threatening.

QUESTION #1: What is your responsibility to your employer? What would you do in this situation and why?

Related questions and issues to consider incorporating into the decision-making and the essay:

Should a worker compromise his work ethic to peer pressure in order to be accepted? If you want to provide for yourself and your family, can you afford to risk meeting that responsibility by "telling" on your co-workers? How do you assess the consequences personally and professionally?

Topic #2: **The Attack of the Herd of Bullies**

You work in an office setting with many others. One of the best workers in the department is a large, gregarious fellow who many consider to be a bit of a "dork." You notice that recently he has become much quieter. Your co-workers seem to gather in groups laughing at something secret. You overhear one of the groups talking about the latest rumor they spread on Twitter about "the dork." Another tells what she posted on Facebook about him. They go on to laugh at him, hoping he'll soon leave the company. Later, you walk into the breakroom and see him sitting in the corner, his hands over his face.

QUESTION #2: As an employee, what is your responsibility to uphold the culture of the company? What would you do in this situation and why?

Related questions and issues to consider incorporating into the decision-making and the essay:

Should you offer comfort to your co-worker? Should you confront those who are harassing him? Should you report the behaviors to your supervisor? Assess the consequences to the bullied co-worker, those who are harassing him, your company, and yourself.

Topic #3: **Who Owns Your Cell Phone?**

You've just been hired for a job that could lead to the type of career that you've been planning for. After two-weeks on the job, you get called into your supervisor's office. She tells you that although your work is satisfactory, she has noticed that you are always checking your phone for messages and sending Snapchats of yourself at work. She explains that these breaks, while very short in duration, result in a loss of concentration, and the cumulative downtime is causing a detrimental impact on your productivity. Furthermore, she states that each time you use your phone, you are conducting personal business on company-paid time. Ultimately, she asks that you leave your phone in your desk and check it only during planned breaks in your day. You have not seen a cell phone use policy in the employee handbook.

QUESTION #3: Is the supervisor's position unreasonable?

Related questions and issues to consider incorporating into the decision-making and the essay:

Do you think the company "owns" your time and attention during your working hours? Can a phone create such a distraction that it leads to a loss of productivity in the workplace? Does or should a company have the right to limit access to something as personal as a phone? Are there valid reasons to check your phone fairly frequently? In what way does personal phone use violate company policies that prohibit conducting personal business when the company is paying for your time and attention? Should you look for a job in a company that has less restrictive policies? Is there a compromise position?