



## Ethics in Professional Communication

Dr Chithra G K<sup>1</sup>, Dr. B. Sivakami<sup>2</sup>, Dr Saravanan.V<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Associate Professor, Division of English, SSL, VIT University, Chennai

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor (Sr), Dept. of English, VIT University, Vellore

### ABSTRACT

*Ethics in Professional communication should be considered important for effect business. Professional ethics begin at the top of a company. Employees will behave like the mirrors the leader. Therefore, a company has to practice honesty with employees, business partners and customers for successful profession.*

*Companies fall victim to the unethical behaviour of their officers, managers and employees if a breach of ethics is motivated by simple greed. This is caused since the employees follow the example of the business's leaders.*

*The best way for a Professional to ensure that their employees behave ethically in their work activities is to promote clear, honest and complete communication in the organization and with customers and Professional partners thereby developing a deeper understanding of ethics and honing Professional communication skills. This paper deals with the ethical aspects of Professional communication for success in Profession.*

**Key Words:** *Ethics, Professional communication, workplace Etiquette, Code of Ethics, decision making, Effective communications, Ethical Context, Cultural Context*

### INTRODUCTION

ETHICS is the study of moral principles or values that determine whether actions are right or wrong and outcomes are good or bad. It is a science that deals with the ideals involved in human conduct. In fact, it is the rules or standards, governing the conduct of a person or the conduct of the members in a profession

COMMUNICATION is a process by which information and ideas or feelings are exchanged between individuals through the use of sufficiently mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic conventions.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION is the written, oral, visual and digital communication within a workplace context.

ETHICS IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION is generally the understanding that two people may have different perspectives on a situation in the business and may come to a cordial mutual understanding without being ridiculed or discriminated.

Ethics makes the employees to understand the standards in the Profession especially, in the communication aspect, by respecting and protecting the rights of all human beings, to reduce discernment and lead people along the path of upholding policies and practicing honest behaviour in a Professional setting.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION is important to communicate the right information, in the right way



### **The Core of Ethical Communication**

Honesty and forthrightness are the core values in professional dealings throughout all the operations of a company.

A professional should start by devising a plan, which usually takes the form of a code of ethics. Practising a code of ethics into practice across an organization requires educating employees about its specifics and importance in work-related communications. Poor communication in business risks not only the company's success, but also the success of entire industries and even people's lives.

Being honest, accurate, obeying all laws, protecting personal information, respecting free speech, honouring all cultures and beliefs, giving credit when due, and never profiting personally at the expense of the company, its employees or partners are all very important aspects of Ethics in profession.

The purpose is to make life easy, make others life easy as a result making society more effective.

The following are the steps for Professional communication

1. Know your Subject
2. Communicate only the truth
3. Make sure you have the necessary language skills
  - (a) Words (b) Grammar
4. Have the features of good communication in mind
  - (a) Simple (b) precis, (c) concise (d) relevant

### **Code of Ethics in professional communication**

A professional must adhere to the code of Ethics in professional communication. One must be honest so that their actions bring respect for and trust in the communication profession, communicate accurate information to promptly correct any errors, obey laws and public policies and if violated any law or public policy, act promptly to correct the situation, protect confidential information while acting within the law, support the ideals of free speech, freedom of assembly, and access to an open marketplace of ideas, be sensitive to others cultural values and beliefs, give credit to others for their work and cite my sources.

They must not use confidential information for personal benefit, represent conflicting or competing interests without full disclosure and the written consent of those involved, accept undisclosed gifts or payments for professional services from anyone other than a client or employer, guarantee results that are beyond my power to deliver.

### **Do's and don'ts in Professional communication**

#### **Do's**

1. Should Communicate fact-based messages truthfully and completely and respect freedom of expression, diverse perspectives and dissenting opinions.
2. Should never offend or provoke others.
3. Should make the facts and resources on which the communication relies accessible to others.



4. Should consider the ability of the audience to understand the message (for example, anticipate language barriers and eliminate distractions that may impede the message).

5. Should never communicate anything that may be construed as demeaning, intolerant or hateful.

On the whole one should commit to promote professional and personal ethics

### **Don't s**

1. Don't "Reply All" to an email chain

2. Don't have personal conversations at your desk. Don't bring your emotions into the office.

3. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

4. Don't gossip about fellow co-workers...or your boss.

5. Don't use emojis or multiple exclamation points (if any) in work emails.

6. Don't talk back to your boss.

### **Workplace Etiquette**

1. Arriving early.

2. Networking with people outside of one's cubicle.

3. Willing to help out a co-worker.

4. Creating a proper personal email address.

5. Creating a good rapport with co-workers

6. Willing to do a new task.

7. Being flexible.

8. Dressing appropriately for the office.

9. Being open-minded.

### **Ethics and the Individual Ethical decision making requires three qualities of individuals**

1. Competence to identify ethical issues and evaluate the consequences of alternate actions.

2. Self-confidence to seek out different opinions and decide what is right.

3. Willingness to make decisions when there is no unambiguous solution.

### **Ways to deal with pressure to compromise one's Ethics:**

1. Considering one's personal value system early.

2. Becoming aware of a tendency to rationalize.

3. Learning to analyse ethical dilemmas.

4. Communicating Ethically with Responsibility

5. Stating information as truthfully and fairly as possible.

6. Not exaggerating facts and expressing ideas understandably

7. Stating ideas with consideration that preserves receiver's self-worth.

8. Making sure that the information is accurate and researched.

9. Understanding that values differ in cultures.



10. Maintaining and sustaining relationships with Co-workers.

It is Essential to develop an effective communications program. A program that delivers a clear & consistent message regarding responsible business enterprise should include of all employees; agents & all other stakeholders as appropriate to the corporation.

A professional shouldn't have any hidden agenda that affect other's purpose. The sources should be reliable, recent and unbiased. One should have gathered information from all avenues that is relevant to the subject/purpose. One should have to avoid the propaganda technique of card stacking. Should be logic & reasoning enough avoiding propaganda techniques that omit, exaggerate, or distort information

The listeners must easily understand the language, without ambiguities, and show respect for the listeners.

**Ethical Context:** A professional must consider the listeners values, feelings and attitudes. Should avoid using communication strategies that would take advantage of one's role, status or background.

One must feel comfortable with the purpose and development of one's presentation and sincerely believe that what one has communicated is important and true. The message must be within one's ethical comfort zone.

**Cultural Context:** A Professional should must consider the other individual's values, feelings, and attitudes from his/her cultural point of view. Must attempt to understand the context of the transaction from the other person's position. He/ she must believe that all the other people involved fully understand the context of the transaction and all its implications.

Misunderstanding: Have I attempted and tried to correct any possible misunderstandings that might occur? Have I attempted to gain an understanding of the other party's culture and what their expectations might be? Cross-Cultural Ethical Guidelines.

**Language:** A Professional must use language that is clearly understood by others, taking care not to use language & expressions that might be offensive to another culture. He/ she must be aware of the nonverbal aspects of my message and the ways they might change the message in a different culture.

Representation of the product or event using clear, straight forward language, taking care not to make exaggerated claims should be followed. The Graphic/print used in the advertising must accurately depict the product. No key details must be omitted, that may affect the way the customer views the advertised product.

**Accountability:** A Professional must completely fulfil his/her own standard for cross-cultural ethics. He / she must be fair to all involved assuming how would he/ she feel if the events were published.

A professional must conduct so that he/ she should be comfortable if their advertising techniques, if those were scrutinized by a customer products magazine and the results printed for the public to read. It should be confirmed that a face- to-face meeting with a group of customers who purchased my product be comfortable.

**Truth:** The product or event must live up to the claims made in the advertising. The quality product must fulfil all the expectations of the customer.

### **Conclusion:**

The difference between right and wrong is a basic tenet of life. Integrity is choosing the right thing, even if the choice results in unpleasant consequences. A business with integrity displays honesty, morality and quality in its products, services and actions.



It will be evident in every department, within every employee and throughout its business relationships. The true test of this leadership is in the decision-making process when there is a choice between what is ethically responsible and what will result in profit or gain.

An ethical profession has concern for anyone and anything impacted by the business. This includes customers, employees, vendors and the public. Every decision made by the business is based on the effect it may have on any one of these groups of people, or the environment surrounding it.

In the journey to professional success, the temptation to engage in unethical practices can become very strong. Too often, companies place profit ahead of all other considerations, engaging in dubious practices and creating a culture devoid of business ethics. The results can devastate entire economies, as well as causing irreparable harm to both the business itself and its customers.

The most important aspect of an ethical business culture is to keep promises and honour self- commitments. The importance of Professional ethics reaches far beyond employee loyalty and morale or the strength of a management team bond. As with all business initiatives, the ethical operation of a company is directly related to profitability in both the short and long term. Effective communications of a company's ethics to its workforce are key to creating an ethical environment.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Tompkins, September 2018. Practicing Communication Ethics, 2nd New edition, ISBN: 9781138233942, Routledge.
2. William W Neher and Paul J Sandin, February 2017. Communicating Ethically Character Duties Consequences And Relationships, ISBN: 9781138221017 Taylor & Francis.
3. Blokdyk Gerardus, 3 May 2018. Communication Ethics, ISBN: 9781717448392, 5STARCOOKS
4. George Cheney, Steve May, Debashish Munshi, 18, 2011. The Handbook of Communication Ethics, ISBN 9780415994651, Routledge.
5. Breit, Sep 2011. Professional Communication, 2nd New edition, ISBN: 9780409327328, LexisNexis Butterworths.
6. Breit, Jan, 2011. Professional Communication Legal and Ethical Issues, 2nd Edition, ISBN-10: 0409327328, LexisNexis Butterworths.
7. M Neelamalar, 1 January 2009. Media Law and Ethics, ISBN: 9788120339743 Amazon Asia-Pacific.