

# integrity

**the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles**

Integrity is one of the core values that employers look for in potential employees. It's also a core value to the operation of businesses. To act with integrity is to ensure that every decision made is based on thoroughly ethical and moral principles. Trust, honor, and honesty are key elements to the concept of integrity. employees that act with integrity will always tell the truth, are accountable and reliable, and treat coworkers, stakeholders and customers with respect.

**Why is it important?** In the workplace, integrity is one of the key foundations for ethical behavior and accountability. It is one of the basic essentials for business in general – no one wants to involve themselves with a business that cheats and deceits its customers, and employees have no desire to work for bosses who are insincere and fraudulent. Workplaces that are built on integrity thrive – their employees are dedicated, their customers are satisfied, and their profit margins are solid.

Here are some examples of how people can reflect different facets of integrity in the workplace:

**Work When You're on the Clock.** Integrity in the workplace begins by showing up on time and dedicating yourself to your job. Although you don't have to be glued to your screen for the entire working day, you should prove to your employer that you're there to work and not spend hours by the water cooler talking about personal issues with a coworker. After all, you are hired to do a job and work your scheduled hours.

*Example: Helena arrives at the office and, as usual, sees some of her colleagues standing around talking "about work", texting their family or in the kitchen prepping breakfast. Helena gets right to work at her scheduled start time. As much as she'd like to catch up on office gossip or check her personal email, she knows that her work requires her full attention. She focuses and efficiently accomplishes her tasks. Because she worked diligently with no distractions, she's able to leave on time and maintain her much needed work/life balance, while not working unnecessary, fraudulent and costly overtime.*

**Keep Your Promises.** Everyone makes promises at work; whether it's promising your boss you won't be late again or assuring your team that you'll get a report in by the end of the week. Making promises is easy; the important part is keeping them.

*Example: Samantha has been hoping to get a promotion at work, so when her boss asks for volunteers for a new marketing campaign, she quickly steps forward. As the weeks pass, she realizes it's more difficult than she'd realized to juggle her regular workload with this new assignment. She brainstorms with more experienced colleagues and partners up with a designer in another department to help her get the project done on time. Even though she misses out on some plans with friends, she stays committed for a week to get her work in as promised.*

**Follow the Rules.** Part of having integrity in the workplace is living by the rules and regulations that your company has carefully crafted to guide employee actions and behavior. These rules help you avoid bad habits like poor email etiquette, but also help you comply with laws and ethical standards.

*Example: Ned phones a patient at home to let her know about her latest test results. He checks the patient's privacy form and sees she has only given permission to leave a non-specific message to call the doctor back. When the patient's husband answers the phone, he asks to know the reason for the call. He sounds caring and concerned, but Ned cites patient confidentiality and politely ends the call. Sometimes company rules may not make sense to you, and you'll feel tempted to override them. Ned might have been sympathetic to a worried husband and given him details about the test. He showed integrity by sticking to the rules, even if they made him uncomfortable. He put the patient's rights above his own feelings and showed his employers he can be trusted with confidential information.*

Employees have the opportunity to demonstrate their integrity—or lack thereof—every day, as evidenced in actions with each other, with management, and with customers or clients, especially when it seems no one is looking. There should be no exceptions to honesty and integrity. Integrity is a state of mind and is not situational. If you compromise your integrity in small situations with little consequence, then it becomes very easy to compromise on larger situations.



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