

# How ethics influences leadership assignment

[Business](#)



In order to draw a correlation of ethics to leadership and provide an overview, find that I must first place the elements of the correlation into the following contextual reference: definitions offered in the textbook, the objectives of the lesson(s), and finally our societal or cultural paradigms at play. In our textbook *Supervision by Cert.*, ethics is defined as the principles by which people distinguish what is morally right and leadership as the management function of influencing people to act or not act in a certain way (Cert., 2008).

With these functions in mind, one could make the assumption that this overview might dare attempt to capture the essence of how ethics influences good leadership. Cert. implies that in order for the supervisor to enjoy the benefits of trust that is built by employing high ethical standards such as increased loyalty, cooperation, communication, and results then he must be prepared to consistently model the attributes of an effective leader by his fair and predictable behavior.

An outstanding theme throughout this class has been the focus on the qualities or characteristics of an effective leader. While Maxwell 21 *Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* is an excellent source of devotionals dedicated to the application and development of building leadership skills, I would like to reference Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* as an outside source that not only reflects the sentiments of the objectives to be captured but solidifies their application with his principle-centered, character-based, inside-out approach to effective leadership skills.

Covey's research notes that in our country's last 200-years, it has only been in the last fifty or so years that we have evolved or shifted from character-based ethical standards that measured success with things like integrity, humility, modesty, and the Golden Rule to the state of affairs we are in today that looks to quick-fixes and manipulative techniques to achieve the appearance and trappings of success. It is particularly interesting that Covey suggests that when an individual develops to the level of interdependence in any capacity, he assumes the role of leadership and influence over others.

Ironically he states that the foundational quality by which all interpersonal leadership qualities are dependent upon is character - that is, to be an effective leader one just begins with the very ethical standards that once defined the success of an individual in our country's early years and then true success will follow (Covey, To get a gauge on today's societal concerns we only need look back a 2004). Few years to find an alarming trend of leadership disasters such as Enron, Tycoon, World, and Delphic brought on by corporate greed and the lack of ethical standards in the business world.

Though the signs of ethical decay did not rest with the business world, during this same period Americans also had to face such let downs as the Catholic Church's incidents and cover-ups, plagiarism by Pulitzer prize-winning history professor Stephen Ambrose, and even claims of impropriety and convictions of illegal drug use in the ranks of professional baseball - America's once professed national pastime. People all across this country are wondering why ethics is in such a terrible state.

In an excerpt from John Maxwell's book, *There's No Such Thing As "Business" Ethics*, he suggests that people typically make unethical choices for one of three reasons: 1) We Do What's Most Convenient, 2) We Do What We Must to Win, and 3) We Rationalize Our Choices with Relativism. The third answer is suggested to be the most ribosome as it encompasses the first two. This age of Relativism, or people's choice to do whatever was best at the moment according to their "no-win" circumstances, was spawned in the early 1970s by a book called *Situation Ethics*.

According to the author, love could justify anything including lying, cheating, stealing, and even murder. The philosophy spread quickly throughout the religious, education, government and business worlds culminating in the ethical situation we live with today. The resulting ethical chaos is created when; people demand their right to their own subjective standards that may change from taxation to situation.

This trend of relativism is supported if not encouraged by education and government and is an apparent reversal of our society's paradigm for fair-play whereas once our decisions were based on ethics, now our ethics are based on our decisions - simply put, if it's good for me, then it's good (Maxwell J. C. , 2003). In light of the recent financial catastrophes, there appears to be an increasing desire for ethical dealings in business.

Maxwell suggests that there is currently a trend in the marketplace that seems to be placing more value on integrity, taking a longer view of strategies, and setting more realistic or conservative goals, though the jury is still out regarding the effectiveness of implementation and execution in

changing the corporate money-making climate. Despite the Serbians-Solely Act of 2002, which sets the standard for corporate accountability and penalties for wrongdoing, some experts believe the responsibility for maintaining an ethical environment is up to management (Jackson, 2005).

With the contextual relationship that has been demonstrated, one could conclude that the influences that ethical standards hold with good leadership is they are inseparable. More specifically, ethics lie at the heart of good leadership, whereas good means both morally good and effective (Calculi, 1995). My initial professional leadership experience occurred when I received my first supervisory assignment as a crew foreman for a large electrical construction company.

I had been assigned a crew of eight electricians with the task of installing all lighting fixtures and circuiting throughout a new manufacturing facility. I knew I possessed the technical skills to complete the assignment all right, but my crew could sense that I lacked the confidence to effectively lead them. They proceeded to test the boundaries of my new position for the first week, in response; I sought council from a trusted and experienced mentor on how I might effectively lead my crew.

To this day, I continue the practice of that advice with my employees that I received on that day: Confidently set the ground rules by clarifying your expectations, give them goals or benchmarks to achieve for performance, remove any and all issues that may inhibit performance of their duties (materials, tools, assistance, information, etc. ), then get out of there way and let them perform. Though my style has hanged in my role as a company

owner, I still employ and advocate a Servant Leaders role when appropriate. This has prove to be a very effective method when working with highly trained and independent people.

My personal ethical base is a product of my upbringing, faith, and training in sports. First tier is my dad and my friend, whom I would affectionately describe as a man with an “ old-school” work-ethic that is reflected in his being, he is a man that will look you in the eye, his word is his bond and a hand-shake seals a deal, as well as a great as a great source of inspiration and pride for me. My faith is centered on Christian values and is not something that I would negotiate, though the execution of my daily practice is does prove to be very challenging in business.

My sport of choice is Teakwood-Do, where I am an active practitioner and teacher that consistently works at improving on our sports’ tenets of Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control, and Indomitable Spirit. The nature of my business, and the electrical construction industry in general, today demands that employ a practice of high ethical standards since most customers come by way of word-of-mouth referrals. When sales begin to wane and competition increases in the marketplace, there exists an ever prevalent temptation to cut corners to maintain margins for both management and field personnel.

If we were to cut corners or take advantage of customers we would surely lose our customer base in the end. Our integrity and pride in workmanship is our cornerstone that separates us from the competition in an otherwise competitive commodity-based market. Both management and key field

personnel share an informal mantra that states: “ No matter the price, the conditions, or the task the customer is going o get first rate service that will lead to repeat business. ” The building of trust with my key employees and customer base is what keeps us in business.