10 Ethics

'Morality is largely a matter of geography.' Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915), American writer

OVERVIEW

VOCABULARY Right or wrong?

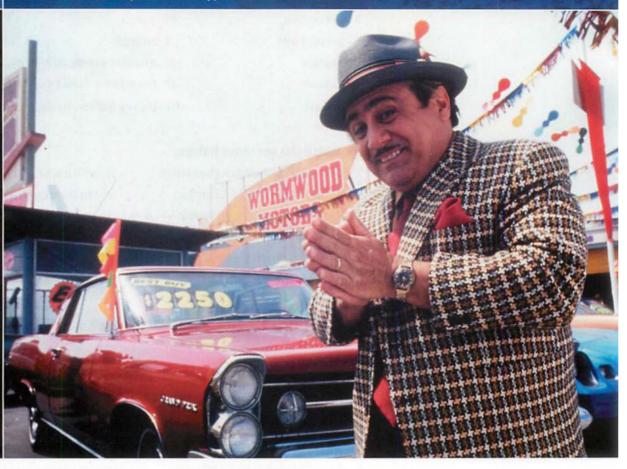
READING The ethics of résumé writing

LISTENING Helping environmental research

LANGUAGE REVIEW Narrative tenses

SKILLS Considering options

CASE STUDY Principles or profit?



STARTING UP

- Discuss this list of unethical activities. In your opinion, which are the worst? Are any common in your country?
 - 1 Finding ways of paying as little tax as possible
 - 2 Using your work computer or phone for private purposes (e.g. online shopping)
 - 3 Accepting praise for someone else's ideas or work
 - 4 Selling something as genuine when you know it is not
 - Using your influence to get jobs for friends or relatives (nepotism)
 - Phoning in sick at work when you are not ill
 - 7 Not telling the truth about your age or experience on an application form
 - 8 Not saying anything when you are charged too little for something by mistake
 - 9 Paying people in cash for jobs done around the home in order to reduce the cost
 - 10 Claiming extra expenses (e.g. getting a taxi receipt for more than the actual fare)
- В Are some jobs/professions more ethical than others? How ethical do you think these professions are? Which are seen as more/less ethical in your country?

accountant civil servant lawyer police officer politician banker estate agent nurse university lecturer soldier car sales executive journalist doctor taxi driver

- Discuss the questions.
 - 1 What is the purpose of a business, in your opinion? Is it just to make money?
 - 2 What do you understand by the term 'an ethical business'?

VOCABULARY

Right or wrong

A Look at the situations. Which do you think are the most serious?

- 1 A new contact suggests that a payment into his private bank account will enable a company to win a valuable supply contract.
- 2 An employee informs some friends about a company takeover before it is generally known so they can buy shares and make a profit.
- 3 A company is making copies of luxury branded products and selling them in street markets.
- 4 An upmarket private airline only employs attractive women under 25 years old as cabin crew and ground staff.
- 5 An industrial company is disposing of waste chemicals in the sea.
- 6 A car manufacturer is secretly taking photos of a rival's new model at a test track.
- 7 A cosmetics and pharmaceutical company tries out all its products on rats and mice.
- 8 Some criminals buy property and expensive cars with money they got from illegal activities. The goods are then sold and the now 'clean' money is used in other businesses and new bank accounts.
- 9 A group of rival mobile phone companies get together and agree to charge approximately the same amount for a range of services and packages.
- 10 A company tells the authorities that it is making a lot less profit than it actually is.

B Match words from Box A and Box B to make word partnerships which describe the activities in Exercise A.

EXAMPLE: 1 bribery and corruption

Α	bribery tax	price counterfeit	environmental money	sex animal	insider industrial
В	and corruption	testing	discrimination	fraud	trading
	fixing	laundering	goods	pollution	espionage

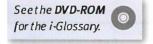
CD2.25 Mark the stress in each word partnership from Exercise B. Then listen to the correct answers.

D Discuss the questions.

- 1 Which of the activities described in Exercise A are illegal in your country?
- 2 Are there any which you think should not be illegal because this damages business?
- 3 In your opinion, which are the easiest or most difficult to control?

Work in groups. What should you do in each of these situations?

- 1 Your boss has asked you to make one member of your department redundant. The choice is between the most popular team member, who is the worst at his job, or the best worker, who is the least popular with the other team members. Who do you choose?
- 2 The best-qualified person for the post of Sales Manager is female. However, you know most of your customers would prefer a man. If you appoint a woman, you will probably lose some sales.
- 3 You work for a travel company which is in serious financial difficulties and will go bankrupt in the near future. Your boss has ordered you to continue to accept deposits and payments from customers until the company officially stops trading. You fear that these people may lose their money or may be left abroad when the company collapses.
- 4 Your company has a new advertising campaign which stresses its honesty, fairness and ethical business behaviour. It has factories in several countries where wages are very low. At present, it is paying workers the local market rate.



READING

The ethics of résumé writing

In groups, discuss the question.

Is there ever a time when it is OK to lie on a résumé?

В Read the headline and subheading of the article. In pairs, predict five words that will appear in the article. Include some words connected to dishonesty. Check the article to see if you were correct. Underline all the words in the article connected with dishonesty.

The ethics of résumé writing

It's never OK to lie on a résumé. But what about stretching the truth? by Clinton D. Korver

How much can you "dress up" your résumé to make yourself as strong a candidate as possible without crossing the ethical line of deception? Consider a few conflicting thoughts:

- Over 50% of people lie on their résumé.
- A Monster.com blog about the dangers of lying on your résumé elicited 60 comments from job seekers recommending lying and only 46 discouraging it. Recommenders justified lying by claiming: everyone else is doing it, companies lie about job requirements, and it's hard to get a good job.
- Executives caught lying on their résumés often lose their jobs.

If you are reading this blog, you probably are not tempted by dishonesty. But what about the following:

- Claiming a degree that was not earned because you did most of the work and were only a few credits short.
- Creating a more impressive job title because you were already doing all of the work of that position.
- Claiming a team's contributions as your own, because other members did not carry their weight.
- Inflating the number of people or range of functions for which you had direct responsibility because you really did have a great deal of influence over them.

These are called rationalizations—constructing a justification for a decision you suspect is really wrong. You create a story that sounds believable but doesn't pass close examination. You begin to fool yourself. You develop habits of distorted thinking.

So where is the line? You need to decide that for yourself. Here are some tests to keep your thinking clear:

- Other-shoe test: How would you feel if the shoe were on the other foot and you were the hiring manager looking at this résumé? What assumptions would you draw and would they be accurate?
- Front-page test: Would you think the same way if the accomplishment in question were reported on the front page of the Wall Street Journal? Or your prior employer's internal newsletter?

But wait, you say. My résumé doesn't quite pass these tests, but there is something real underneath my claims, and I do not want to sell myself short.

When in doubt, ask an old boss. While asking an old boss may be difficult, it has many benefits. Precisely because it is difficult, it forces you to think clearly and sometimes creatively. Asking also checks the accuracy of your claims, trains your old boss in how to represent you during reference checks, and sometimes your old boss may give you better ways to represent yourself.

from Business Week

- Read the article again and answer the questions.
 - 1 What reasons are given for not being totally honest on your CV?
 - 2 What can happen to senior managers who lie on their CVs?
 - 3 Which of the four rationalisations do you think is the most serious? Why?
 - 4 What happens to you when you start using rationalisations?
 - 5 What are the advantages of asking an old boss?
- Discuss the two situations and decide what you would do in each case.
 - 1 You discover that one of your top employees, who has done an excellent job for the last 15 years, lied about their qualifications when she joined the company.
 - 2 One of your employees, who is not a good worker, has asked you to give him a good reference. You would be happy if this employee left the company.

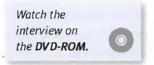
Helping environmental research

A CD2.26 David Hillyard, Director of Programmes at EarthWatch, is describing his organisation. Listen to the first part of the interview and complete the gaps.



David Hillyard

- B (D2.26 Listen again and answer the questions.
 - 1 Where does EarthWatch have offices?
 - 2 How are EarthWatch's field research projects designed?
- CD2.27 Listen to the second part of the interview and answer the questions.
 - 1 Why do businesses need to change the way they operate?
 - 2 What opportunity do companies have with respect to the environment?
- OD2.28 Listen to the final part and write three sentences about the collaboration with HSBC. Compare your sentences with a partner's.



In what other ways could businesses involve their employees in environmental issues?

Narrative tenses

- A CD2.29 Listen to a conversation about a woman who was fired from her job and put these events in the order that they happened.
 - a) She lost her job.
 - b) She felt desperate.
 - c) She lied on her CV.
 - d) There was an HR initiative.
 - e) The company found out she did not have a Master's degree.
 - f) She got a really good job.
 - g) She got strong performance reviews.

We can use different tenses to narrate a story. Past simple The company fired her: Past continuous Everything wasgoing really well. Past perfect She had lied on her CV. Present perfect Since then, I've advised everyone to be honest. Which tense is normally used for: 1 setting the scene and providing background information? 2 events which happen before the story begins? 3 events in the story? 4 saying what the present results of the story are? Grammar reference page 150 (D2.29 Listen to the conversation again. Follow the audio script on page 163 and note down examples of each of these tenses. a) past simple c) past perfect b) past continuous d) present perfect Complete this text about a pharmaceutical company with the correct tenses of the verbs in brackets. when we (launch) our new product. Let me give you the background to the problem. The new product³ (sell) very Everyone was happy. Then it all............ (go) wrong. In August, we (start) to get complaints from some doctors about one of our salesmen. They⁸ (complain) about the methods

D Tell a story about any of these ideas.

- 1 A significant news event you remember well
- 2 An ethical problem you know about
- 3 A memorable event in your life (good or bad)
- 4 An unusual or memorable experience while you were travelling abroad

unethical sales methods. In the end, we 15 (fire) the salesman. As a result of this,

we........... ¹⁶ (recently issue) guidelines to all sales staff about appropriate gifts.

5 Your first or last day in a job or organisation

SKILLS Considering options



- A CD2.30 Listen to two directors talking about a top salesman, Tom Pattison, who is not doing his job properly. Then answer the questions.
 - 1 In what ways is Tom behaving unprofessionally?
 - 2 What two options does one of the directors mention?
 - 3 What do the directors finally decide to do?
- Which of the headings (a-g) in the Useful language box should these comments go under? Some may go under the same heading.
 - 1 I'd say there are two ways we could deal with this.
 - 2 We could have a chat with him about his sales reports.
 - 3 If we take a firm approach, there's a risk he may get upset and look for another job.
 - 4 OK, let's look at it from another angle ...
 - 5 It might be the best way to deal with the problem.
 - 6 Yeah, the problem is, he's a really good salesman, but I agree he needs tighter control.
 - 7 If we just have a friendly chat with him, he may not take it seriously.
- CD2.30 Listen again. Tick the expressions from the Useful language box that you hear.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

a) STATING THE PROBLEM

The problem is, he's a really good salesman.

The way I see it is he doesn't like rules.

b) LOOKING AT OPTIONS

So, what are our options?

There are (two/ several) ways we could deal with this.

c) DISCUSSING POSSIBLE EFFECTS

If we do that, he may come to his senses.

One consequence could be that he gives in his resignation.

d) CHANGING YOUR APPROACH

Let's look at it from another angle.
Let's consider

Why don't we deal with it in a different way?

another approach.

e) EXPRESSING QUALIFIED AGREEMENT

I'm with you up to a point, but it may not work.

You could be right, but it's a risky strategy.

f) MAKING A DECISION

The best way to deal with the problem is to talk to him.

Let's see if we can sort this out.

g) STATING FUTURE ACTION

I'll arrange for Tom to meet us.

The next thing to do is fix up a meeting.

D Role-play this situation.

You are senior managers of a department store. Your business is losing market share. You strongly suspect your main rival is using unfair methods to compete against you. For example, you are almost sure that your rival has been:

- a) trying to obtain information about your marketing strategy from an employee who has just left your company;
- b) offering members of your award-winning window-display team exceptionally high salaries and bonuses to leave your organisation.

Hold a meeting to consider how to solve the problems.

Principles or profit?

An international drugs company is struggling with a number of ethical dilemmas. Its future success depends on making the right choices now.

Background

Universal Pharmaceuticals (UP) is based in Atlanta, Georgia. During the 1990s, it was highly successful thanks to the effective treatments it developed for people suffering from diabetes and Parkinson's Disease. However, the company has been less successful in recent years because its drug for the treatment of asthma turned out to have harmful side effects and was withdrawn from the market. The company's image was also damaged when a newspaper ran a series of articles criticising some unfair methods used by UP's sales representatives to sell the company's products. The writer of the articles questioned whether UP was living up to its mission statement that it was an 'ethical company which will always put principle before profit'.

Ethical dilemmas

At present, the management of UP are faced with three ethical dilemmas which they must discuss and resolve in the best interests of the company. The first concerns a new drug which could benefit poor people in Africa.

**DCD2.31 Two directors of the company, Ernesto and Ingrid, are talking about the problem. Listen and make notes on the problem. Then, working with a partner, summarise the ethical dilemma which the company must deal with.

Discussion topics for the management meeting

The first item on the agenda is the new drug to treat river blindness. Then there are two other problems relating to drugs that the company is developing. They are summarised below in a discussion document which has been circulated to all participants attending the meeting.

Read about the problems relating to two other drugs and note the key points.

>> Test results on PX200, our new drug for treating heart disease

There is great interest in PX200, which is in the final stages of development. Up until now, the test results have been impressive. However, the recent series of tests has produced disappointing results. It seems that some patients have experienced severe breathing difficulties and other unpleasant side effects after taking the drug, while most patients have received significant benefits from it in terms of lower blood pressure and less pain.

Should we make public the results of this test, as we have done with previous test results, or should we withhold the information at this stage?

New dieting product

Our R&D department has been developing a new diet drink which will help people lose weight. The drink has been tested on animals, but some became sick in the early trials. Up until now, we have been reluctant to test new products on animals since we claim to be an ethical company. However, the new drink could be extremely profitable when it is launched. Should we continue to test this product on animals or try to develop it without using them for our research?



You are members of UP's board of directors. Hold a meeting to discuss the three ethical dilemmas. One of you should lead the discussion.

- 1 Use the agenda on the right to guide your discussion. The chairperson starts by briefly summarising each problem.
- 2 In each case, start by discussing the options which are available to UP to deal with the problem. Then decide how to deal with the situation. If you can't agree, take a vote.

Agenda

- 1 The new drug for River Blindness
- 2 Test results for the PX200 (heart problems)
- 3 Animal testing for a dieting product

Writing

Write a short report from the chairperson, summarising the decisions reached at the UP board meeting and giving reasons for them.



→ Writing file page 130

Watch the Case study commentary on the DVD-ROM.