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Ethics and Morals in the Realm of Information Technology:

How personal beliefs can be expressed in the IT professional workplace

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### Ethics and Morals in the Realm of Information Technology

Knowledge should enlighten the mental, emotional, and spiritual state of an individual. Education provides this knowledge and prepares individuals for entering the professional workplace. Such education is important, but it also may be necessary to look within the self and define one's morals or core belief systems so one can be confident with whom they are as a person and have a sense of pride in their identity. Furthermore, investigating the relationship between one's beliefs or morals and how those translate into the definition of professional ethics is also worthwhile. Relating personal philosophies to an organization's set of codes, missions and objectives is important so that an individual can better define and distinguish the work-life balance, ensuring harmony between the employee and the employing company.

Proper education of the advancements and complexity in information technology is necessary to ensure relevant, honest, and appropriate contributions to the field. Through this research individuals can better understand how one can contribute to a future place of employment. It is beneficial to integrate one's beliefs into behavior and actions in the workplace so that one remains true to his or her self and can be honest in all areas. This honesty and loyalty will serve to benefit the individual as well as his or her organization. Through investigating the meanings of the words ethics and morals and looking at how they relate to each other and the field of information technology, individuals can better themselves to enter the professional workplace. Due to the nature of this discussion, personal opinions are presented alongside the investigation of the terms ethics and morals. Nonetheless, the formation of one's own opinions is truly important in order to understand the relationship between ethics and morals as well as how individuals should formulate their definition and integration of those two concepts.

### A Look at the Term Ethics

Ethics may not have been considered a relevant topic in the scope of technology in the past, but that certainly is no longer the case. In fact, ethical considerations and issues are becoming more prevalent and more of a concern in all aspects of technology and business together (Pierce and Henry, 1994) because of the increased use of technology in general business practices. From processes involving producers and consumers to internal issues of an organization, ethics are truly important and everywhere. As Saia states (as cited in Smith, 2002, p. 8), “Ethical issues rarely pop up on meeting agendas and in hallway conversations, but they’re always present in information systems.” As such, this broad concept called ethics should be carefully examined on an individual basis so that the balance of an individual’s versus a company’s needs, also considered micro versus macro needs, can be found.

What exactly is encompassed in the definition of ethics? An online dictionary defines ethics as “the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group; a guiding philosophy” (Merriam-Webster, 2010). An example can be found in how businesses operate, or the way in which they define what is in the best interest of not only their organization but also of society. Ethics can be an organization’s definition of right and wrong. The concept encompasses how things are done on an internal and external basis, how items such as communication, contracts, purchases, and sales are conducted. The actual implementation of ethical policies and procedures are usually defined by organizations, but ethical dilemmas can still be difficult to navigate. “...There are many ethical quandaries in I/S, and there is not always a single ‘right’ answer. Indeed, it does appear that the I/S community is operating in an ambiguous ethical space, in which clear definitions of right and wrong are often elusive ones” (Smith, 2002, p. 8). As a result of this ethical ambiguity, ethical guidelines as a broad entity are outlined by various leaders.

Specific to computing and information technology, one of the leaders in setting ethical standards is the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). Pierce and Henry (1996) assert that the ACM was one of the earliest organizations to provide guidance in the form of ethical content and form. The ACM has written an ethical code of conduct by which computer and IT professionals abide. This Code of Ethics, hereby referred to as the Code, covers four specific categories containing key principles and appropriate action items to follow. A selection of two of the categories of the Code and details can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Selection of the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Practice*

1. GENERAL MORAL IMPERATIVES.

- 1.1 Contribute to society and human well-being.
- 1.2 Avoid harm to others.
- 1.3 Be honest and trustworthy.
- 1.4 Be fair and take action not to discriminate.
- 1.5 Honor property rights including copyrights and patent.
- 1.6 Give proper credit for intellectual property.
- 1.7 Respect the privacy of others.
- 1.8 Honor confidentiality.

2. MORE SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

- 2.1 Strive to achieve the highest quality, effectiveness and dignity in both the process and products of professional work.
- 2.3 Know and respect existing laws pertaining to professional work.
- 2.4 Accept and provide appropriate professional review.
- 2.5 Give comprehensive and thorough evaluations of computer systems and their impacts, including analysis of possible risks.
- 2.6 Honor contracts, agreements, and assigned responsibilities.
- 2.7 Improve public understanding of computing and its consequences.
- 2.8 Access computing and communication resources only when authorized to do so.

Association for Computing Machinery (1992). *ACM code of ethics and professional practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.acm.org/about/code-of-ethics>

The Code outlines the general standards that computing professionals and employing companies collectively should use as a guideline. This aligns with the denotation of the word ethics, with an added emphasis on concern for others. These standards indeed focus on others, including concern for the common good and public interest, as expressed particularly in sections 1.1 – 1.4. The Code is adapted by members of the ACM society, companies that seek to maintain professional computing standards, and it provides a solid basis for ethical guidelines. However, it must be noted that the Code is merely one set of guidelines; it does not define all ethics nor guide all dilemmas, it does not define measurements to determine if the Code is being upheld, and it does not provide any enforcement mechanisms should the Code not be followed.

The final ethical code that any individual adheres to is determined by that individual. I would argue that it should be in accordance with this Code, because of its structured focus on serving others and its widespread acceptance in the professional computing society, but one's personal definition of ethics does not stop there. According to Pierce and Henry (1994), the code of ethics of an individual related to information technology is developed from experience and observation. Ethics develop over time and through influencers such as family, education, and experience, are solidified into scripts which individuals can call their code of ethics (Pierce and Henry, 1994). Essentially every individual's code of ethics is unique and formed from external factors such as observation, experience, and religion. Granted, work is one such experience as are the principles that govern that workplace, such as the Code, but ultimately ethics are formed in the mind of each individual and their actions correspond accordingly.

Even though laws exist and certain situations are defined as illegal, technology and business ethics are still often difficult to define. Miller (1966) implies that the law does not define ethics nor does it circumscribe the businessman or his actions, but it rather merely protects

and aids the individual. The law, even other defining authorities, does not limit an individual (in this case business professional) to a set of actions and ethical formulas, but rather protects and aids in that process of determining ethical outcomes by the individual. In other words, the laws and codes regarding ethics are not intended to define an answer to every situation but rather assist and protect in the search for that answer. This also shows that there is more to the formation of one's ethics than merely any one law, guideline, authority, or other influence; ethics of an individual are defined from a multitude of influencers.

The realm of ethics discussed thus far has pertained primarily to general business topics. Nonetheless, business ethics and information technology ethics definitely relate. According to Pierce and Henry (1994), computer technology is becoming more prevalent in business and education, and as such the opportunities for unethical uses of that technology is increasing. Since I am studying Information Systems and Business and will soon enter the information technology professional workplace, ethical dilemmas will surround me on a regular basis. As Pierce and Henry (1994) continue, "...ethical dilemmas related to computer technology face technology users everyday in the work place" (p. 21). Ethics involve the decisions made by professionals in any field, and my field of information technology indeed has its share of unique and complicated ethical situations. It is for this reason that I, as well as others entering or already active in this field, need to prepare myself and analyze my ethical and moral standards.

Business professionals portray ethics in the professional information technology workplace of today as decisions made in questionable situations. Issues surface when "personal values come into conflict" (Marchewka, 2009, p. 348). Similarly, when actions requested of an employee go against personal values, ethics comes into play. For example, if an individual is asked to lie about a project's progress in order to please a supervisor and ensure continued

progress, the individual is clearly faced with an ethical dilemma. Though this example is a simple one, the situation should still be approached with caution, poise, and discernment. The individual should use their ethical compass – developed from experience, scripts, laws, and the Code – in reaching their decision. Furthermore, this entity identified as an individual’s definition and practice of ethics should also come from a well defined personal compass, or morals.

#### A Look at the Term Morals

One dictionary definition of morals is “moral practices or teachings: modes of conduct” (Merriam-Webster, 2010). In other words, morals are a way in which one behaves or acts, and these things are influenced through culture, religion, and conscience. A set of morals are ultimately chosen by the self. Morals are more personal in nature in how they are formed, practiced, and translated into actions, whereas ethics, for the sake of simplification, are more external in nature and pertaining to how one acts in various situations in the professional workplace. Morals can also be defined as clear rights and wrongs, a conscience, or a calling to higher standards that guide our decisions in work and in life. As Lehmann proposes (as cited in Bartel, 2009), the conscience, or specifically morals, are best understood as a theological outline rather than mere permission or forbiddance of thoughts or actions. In essence, morals, like ethics, are not specifically defined for every human being, but are rather determined and interpreted from one’s theologies and other influencers.

#### A Look at My Morals

My set of morals and core beliefs are based on my Christian faith and on the Holy Bible. My moral compass stems from the scriptures in the Old and New Testaments, as well as from the behavior of my Savior, Jesus Christ. In the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, the notorious 10 Commandments are given to Moses to govern the Israelites, and these laws defined the basic



moral code that many cultures and religions adhere to still today. These well known commands include honor your parents, do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, and do not lie, for example (Exodus 20:3-17, New International Version). I believe in and live to adhere to these foundational commandments, but I will also point out that my morals extend beyond this non-exhaustive list.

Most Christians believe in and accept the Bible as a basis for their belief system and moral practices. Many others not associated with the Christian faith do as well. In fact, according to Taylor (1988), even humanists and atheists praise the ethical ideals associated with Christianity, “particularly those attaching great value to human beings” (p. 163). Humans in general, even apart from religion, recognize the worth of human life and seek to live in ways that respect others. Some of these values and ways of upholding ethics and morals in regards to respecting others are found in the Bible. The New Testament of the Bible discusses the teachings of Jesus Christ and much of how He lived and what He said has also become a model for Christian morals and ways of life. “He [Jesus of Nazareth] remains a point of reference for the ethical program of contemporary Christianity” (Hoffmann, 1988, p. 58). It is through His words that many people build their moral compass on.

Some of these teachings include Jesus’ summary of the law, definition of morals, and description of how morals influence a person’s behavior. In discussing the root of people’s behavior, Jesus says that “the good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him,” (Matthew 12:35). He also shares how morals should guide individuals and not control them. When talking of human nature and the summation of the moral law, he declares, “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire

law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’,” (Galatians 5:13-14). This verse of the Bible clearly sums up the Christian ideal of morals; that is, to love others as yourself, to treat others with equal respect and love. This sums how I strive to live, and in that my personal morals are expressed.

Some may argue that professional information technology ethics are outlined by governing authorities and professionals and are limited to the workplace, and that personal beliefs or morals are separate and distinct. If this is the case, ethics and morals do not need to cooperate with each other. After all, the definition of the words themselves coupled with the sources of these philosophies can separate the two, as ethics are guiding group philosophies and morals are merely modes of conduct primarily of the individual. One might even consider workplace decisions and their influencing factors to be completely unrelated and separate from personal decisions. However, these two need to complement each other and be similar in nature, stemming from the same common ground. Ethics and morals are expressed by the individual in several ways, and they should both be built on the same philosophies. Due to a study of the root of the word ethics, Lehmann discovered that the term originated from a barnyard stall or similar dwelling (as cited in Bartel, 2009). This place is literally a structure providing warmth, food, shelter, and security, and it metaphorically speaks of an inner peace. In other words, when actively practicing proper ethics, happiness and peace are felt due to the actions of honesty and goodwill. These emotions are similarly evoked when one is moral, and it is in this way that ethics and morals of an individual relate.

#### A Need for Something More

Why, though, should personal morals influence an individual’s ethics and thus behavior in the workplace? The answer to this question lies in the importance of being true to one’s self. It

is no surprise that most people need to live for something more than this life. Human beings are hungry for meaning and have a desire to grasp a greater truth (Bartel, 2009). This longing is most often expressed in the form of an individual's religion, or in faith. Moral compasses stem from this belief system and faith in something more. In the book of Romans of the Holy Bible, Paul speaks of having joy that comes from hope in Jesus: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

An actual example of this need for hope comes from an experience of a businessman who left his practice to pursue deeper meaning in his life. In speaking of his decision to leave his dream job to pursue the study of theology, Miller (2007) talks of the reactions of some of his colleagues: "Despite external measurements of career and financial success many of these executives were feeling a deep emptiness and a disconnect from the beliefs, people, and things they valued most in life" (p. 63). These highly successful individuals were not happy with mere wealth and business success; they desired something deeper and wanted a hope for something more. Even though some may have a faith in God or other religious foundation, they were not able to experience the joy in living out one's faith in their work. Since morals define how one lives, and a primary influence on the development of one's morals is religion, then an individual should be free to express his or her beliefs and live those out in the way they act even at work. It is in the respect for humanity, the desire to do good, and the aspiration to be professional and create value in the workplace that ultimately bring ethics and morals together. These values are both a part of an individual and there is no need to separate them.

### Faith at Work Movement

The results of these needs for hope, purpose, and integration of work and self culminate into the Faith at Work movement. Miller (2003) suggests that individuals are becoming tired of compartmentalizing their personal lives and their work lives. Spiritual identities comprise an individual and these should not be distinct and separate from work identities. These ideas are a part of what is known as the Faith at Work movement. Miller (2003) discusses this as working towards the integration of, literally, faith and work, as business professionals seek to become more holistic. Furthermore, the movement correlates with seeking, discovering, and practically applying faith to daily life (Miller, 2003). It is not enough to simply work at a job in which one has no touch with the rest of his or her life. Since so much of an individual's life is spent in the workplace, desires to combine faith and work surface. "A movement such as this could influence and give new ethical shape to businesspeople, marketplace activity, and business institutions" (Miller, 2003, p. 309).

The Faith at Work movement began in the 1980s as Baby Boomers sought to find meaning and purpose in their work as well as challenge old customs and transform society (Miller, 2003). Many advances in society and technology during this decade propelled the desire of a more complete, related, and balanced life. Miller (2007) argues that the integration of faith and work is broken into four quadrants which he calls the Integration Box. As outlined in Table 2, the Four Es are Evangelization, Experience, Ethics, and Enrichment. If one is able to "get in the box," as Miller (2003, p. 308) notes, then they have successfully integrated their faith and work through means of communication, action, and tangible deliverables in one or more quadrants. Individuals wishing to bridge the gap between work and faith will participate in at least one of these categories. As such, it is beneficial to discuss these categories for a better

understanding of the Faith at Work movement and how to participate in it. The two most relevant categories to this discussion of ethics and morals are Ethics and Experience.

Table 2

*The Integration Box of the Faith at Work Movement*

EV: Evangelization	EX: Experience
ET: Ethics	EN: Enrichment

Miller, D. W. (2003). The faith at work movement. *Theology Today*, 60(3), 308.

Experience is the perception of work (Miller, 2007). It involves the whole work experience and attempts to find value beyond the tasks at hand. People who seek to integrate their work experience into their faith will strive to find deeper meaning in what they are doing and consider their place of employment as more than a job. For some, their work is their spiritual calling and their faith and work integration is fulfilled through that fact. The Experience category can easily crossover into other quadrants, as some individuals consider the workplace as a means to reach others and evangelize. They may put their whole heart and positive mentality into their work because they consider it their mission field, and in their optimism and honesty they demonstrate their faith.

Ethics are another category of the Integration Box in which people may combine their faith and work. Miller (2007) defines ethics in this context as how business professionals manifest their faith at work. People working to integrate their faith into ethics attempt to apply Biblical teachings and philosophies to complex ethical dilemmas (Miller, 2007). They can connect ethics and morals in the Bible (or in another religion) to practical and relevant

applications in the business world. When this is done, they use their moral foundations and translate them into ethics in order to solve difficult problems, make proper decisions, and do the right thing while maintaining professionalism and adhering to organization standards and protocols. This quadrant of the Integration Box is the thesis of expressing personal beliefs at work. It is how morals and ethics, faith and professionalism, home and work, come together.

The Faith at Work movement is spreading as more and more people are striving to integrate their faith and their work, or get in this Integration Box (Miller, 2003). Many people from different belief systems and religions are participating in this movement, including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, Confucians, and participants of Islam, and this number continues to grow. On the whole, this movement has not been met with opposition from the corporate world because there are in fact many benefits of the faith and work integration. Character development, motivation, ethics, honesty, creativity, and respect for others are all recognized benefits of philosophies and integrations such as these (Miller, 2003). The Faith at Work movement provides a practical outline of how to better balance and relate spiritual and workplace identities.

#### Ethics and Morals in Data Mining

Recognizing the significance of ethical and moral integration at work is important, but it is likewise valuable to examine how that integration can be done. Just how easy is it to apply morals to ethics, and ethics to making proper, professional, and beneficial decisions? To illustrate interactions with personal morals and professional ethics as they relate to critical business and information technology decisions, two practical examples will be discussed. The first example of an IT-related situation involving ethics is in data mining.

De George writes about data mining and its relation to privacy where he defines it as computer programs that access and analyze databases and other information sources to discover patterns, trends, relationships, and ultimately discover new information (De George, 2003). These programs use statistics and other mathematical algorithms to uncover and interpret vast amounts of information which is otherwise uncollected. One primary use of data mining pertains to marketing strategies. Companies can use data mining in marketing to search current customer databases, discover unifying characteristics and patterns, and apply those formulas to other databases to target potential customers with similar interests (De George, 2003). A primary vehicle of data mining is the Internet, as website visitation and online purchases are becoming more common. Other uses of data mining are less intensive and involve concepts such as one-on-one marketing. Here, as De George (2003) states, websites may keep close track of product views and purchases made by a customer and use that information later to offer better customer service and a more convenient shopping experience on that website.

Van den Hoven (1997) offers other similar benefits of data mining, particularly in terms of information accessibility and community involvement. A community will benefit by having knowledge about its inhabitants that is easily and freely accessible because fraud can more easily be detected, organizations can save money, and other savings exist within database management that are limited only by the limits of our imagination (van den Hoven, 1997). The amount of good that can come from data mining and public access is vast. These results seem honorable and beneficial to the individual consumer and the community at large, so why are there privacy and ethical concerns related to this topic?

The topic of data mining and privacy management is not in itself an ethical dilemma. Few people would object to having personalized e-service when browsing Amazon.com or to

permitting access to public records to ensure community safety and harmony. The ethical issue related to data mining is in the abuse of the information and the miscommunication to the user as to how the information will be used and distributed (De George, 2003). All too often, companies tracking website visitor's information will sell the data to third parties for marketing or other purposes. This is done through means of website cookies, or strings of data saved on a hard drive by a website for tracking purposes, and herein lies an abuse of technology and an ethical issue is raised. A large majority of internet users are totally unaware that their actions online are cross-referenced with purchases made and related personal data and sold to other companies for target marketing objectives. This raises concerns for privacy because most consumers do not like the idea of having their browsing and purchasing information sold around and being available to unauthorized parties, especially when this action is not properly communicated with that consumer.

The ethical nature of data mining is debated because although benefits to businesses and consumers exist, many view the costs of data mining to be too high. If the purpose of the data mining is to provide ease in information access and consumer convenience, then it is considered by most to be acceptable and even ethical. However, as De George (2003) continues, most of the time technology such as cookies track user's actions without their knowledge and thus without their consent. Though this technology has the capability of being controlled, the default setting in most cases is to accept all cookies and allow any website to monitor and track personal activities and information, and harm can come when this information is abused. This is an invasion of property and privacy and is thus unethical (De George, 2003). In order to be considered ethical, cookies and other data mining technology related to potential invasion of consumer privacy



should be defaulted to “opt out,” or off. In terms of personal beliefs and how this tool is actually implemented, my morals also agree that data mining is not a legitimate practice.

I do not consider the actual implementations of data mining to be ethical or moral. The fact that it is sometimes abused and unethical is enough grounds to consider it as generally unethical and immoral. My morals guide me to do no harm to others, and it is clear that this technology can and occasionally does just that. “Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10). Uninformed and non-consented tracking and gathering of personal information is sneaky and dishonest, whether intentional or not, and this act is something clearly not done in love. Also, the fact that this technology is easy to implement and use does not make it okay to do so. The concept of data mining, along with how the technology is implemented, needs to be more closely investigated regarding its questionable ethical nature because it is sometimes viewed as unethical and immoral.

This practical example illustrates that my morals can be translated into business ethics and that they can suitably align. It is from my moral foundation that I base my ethical guidelines, and from my opinions regarding debatable technology topics my decisions are made. As a result of integrating my faith and work, I can remain true to my beliefs and experience joy and hope while still having a grounded and respected opinion from a business professionalism stance as well. For even more investigation into the alignment of ethics and morals as well as the positive results therein, another practical information technology subject is presented.

### Ethics and Morals in Project Management

Ethical dilemmas also exist in the management of information technology projects. The Project Management Body of Knowledge, or PMBOK, (as cited in Marchewka, 2009, p. 13) defines IT projects as “temporary endeavors undertaken to accomplish a unique product, service,

or result.” The PMBOK goes on to define project management as “the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements” (p. 13). This definition lends itself to the importance of project managers in how they relate to IT. As advances in technology are made, new systems are implemented, and business processes become more efficient with new technologies, many large-scale IT projects are undertaken. In addition to project managers, ethical and moral dilemmas in project management exist for any employee. The scope of a project, actions taken, and decisions throughout are influenced by many individuals because many people collectively work together to step through a project and create deliverables at various phases.

Project management dilemmas are often difficult to discern and there is no set formula to come to a proper decision. Sometimes, according to Berenbach and Broy (2009), situations occur which are difficult to even identify as being an ethical issue. Results from decisions made in common IT project situations can be considered commonplace, yet those actions may be unethical without even realizing it. Berenbach and Broy (2009) say that any decision that is made in which the individual knows that they lack the knowledge or wisdom to make a sound professional decision is an unethical one, and this notion only further complicates the definition of what is ethical or unethical in project management. Even so, Marchewka (2009) argues that although there is no single approach to dealing with ethical dilemmas, individuals can still prepare themselves through education and awareness of the common issues. In an attempt to better define these common situations and temptations, Berenbach and Broy (2009) give a name to and discuss several of these issues. Though they do not give a solution to these temptations, they hope to better prepare IT professionals to properly deal with these dilemmas and, after a

careful approach from moral and ethical influences, reach professional and righteous ethical decisions.

One of the common ethical dilemmas in project management that Berenbach and Broy (2009) discuss is called red lies. Red lies surface in project management meetings with clients or managers, where an individual working on the project makes statements that are known to be untrue (Berenbach & Broy, 2009). This can be a false statement regarding a schedule, for example, and is usually rationalized as being okay in hopes that other people can make up the burden of extra work required to get back on track (Berenbach & Broy, 2009). If that assumption is made, then there is no need to state a deviance from schedule and thus a lie is told in hopes of keeping management or other stakeholders happy. This is not an acceptable solution and is indeed unethical.

Another dilemma is identified as rush job. Berenbach and Broy (2009) discuss this situation as pressures to meet a deadline or a poor work ethic pushing an individual to finish a project or product in compromise of quality. In a rush job dilemma, a programmer may feel rushed and work to meet milestones on time rather than focus on quality (Berenbach & Broy, 2009). The product may include full functionality, but the quality may be poor and it may not meet the correct specifications (Berenbach & Broy, 2009). Berenbach and Broy (2009) say that when the product is delivered, it is likely that all will appear well on the surface since it works and is delivered on time, but this is merely deceiving the customer since the quality was clearly comprised. Again, this is unacceptable and an unethical choice.

A final relevant IT ethical dilemma is called sweep it under the rug. This situation is perhaps the easiest to fall subject to, especially for project managers themselves. This syndrome involves an unexpected issue or problem that arises at some phase of the project which

developers or even managers ignore (Berenbach & Broy, 2009). Fear of delays, extra costs, or the need to keep the project running smoothly cause individuals to sweep the problem under the rug and pretend that it does not exist (Berenbach & Broy, 2009). Berenbach and Broy (2009) continue by saying that the hope is that the problem will merely vanish because the potential impact of the defect is low so the assumption is that it will not be worth the extra effort to fix it. An ignored issue or flaw is never okay, because the actual implications and negative impacts cannot be fully known, and sweeping the problem under the rug is deceptive to stakeholders. The commonality of this dilemma does not excuse it from still being unethical.

These three examples illustrate that project management involves many situations that need to be carefully approached and evaluated on a regular basis. These dilemmas occur quite frequently in project management, and too often individuals fall into the temptation of choosing the easier or more convenient, yet unethical, solution. This harms not only the individual but also the organization and society (Marchewka, 2009). By preparing one's self to identify and deal with these situations in advance, the hope is that these unethical decisions will decrease as well as their related negative consequences. The moral and ethical compass that an individual has developed needs to be used in all ethical situations, and awareness and discernment of such problems needs to be more prevalent.

Unethical decisions in project management dilemmas such as those outlined above also are immoral, according to the morals I live by. The ethical dilemmas named rush job and sweep it under the rug facilitate deceit, and the dilemma named red lies facilitates lying. According to the scripture I live by, we all are instructed as follows: "Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another" (Leviticus 19:11). Engaging in these activities is wrong, by moral and ethical standards, and individuals should strive for higher standards for the betterment of themselves and

society. In order to be ethical in project management, one must make sound decisions in all phases of a project. The decision should be made by what is right and in the best interest of the organization based on the individual's morals and ethical influences. In investigating project management ethics, it is clear that my moral compass can be used and I can remain true to my beliefs and act ethically in a professional organization.

### Conclusion

True success in life goes beyond material abundance. People need to have a faith and hope in something and feel a sense of personal worth that comes from a peaceful spirit. This happens not when faith and personal beliefs and characteristics are separated from workplace professionalism, but rather when the two are integrated. Ethics are primarily influenced by education, experience, governing authorities, and the workplace and are developed over time. Morals are primarily influenced by religion, culture, and personal conscience. Ethics are usually limited to behavior in the workplace, and morals are generally thought to be more of a personal characteristic. However, as the increase in participation of causes such as the Faith at Work movement indicates, these two principles should be more related and integrated.

The formation of an individual's moral and ethical compasses should be related. The development of ethics should stem from the formation of morals and be a transitive development and definition process. One's upbringing and influences of religion and culture culminate into a person's definition of what is right and wrong, making up the foundation for their moral compass, and as an individual matures and progresses through higher education and into the professional workplace, ethics begin to form. Ethical definitions and interpretations are likewise ultimately decided by the individual, and they too are further influenced through factors such as the workplace, industry leaders, and professional guidelines and actions. However, the basis of

an ethical compass should remain grounded from one's moral compass. Finally, the formation of these moral and ethical compasses should apply to all aspects of life, and should influence and direct decisions and actions personally and in the workplace. The final decision when facing an ethical or moral dilemma should be carefully evaluated and generated from a combination of ethical and personal moral standards that seek to serve the betterment of others, including individuals internal and external to the company and society as a whole.

My belief in and identification with Christianity defines the morals I live by. I am able to successfully translate those into the workplace in accordance to the ethical guidelines outlined by my organization and other professional ethical standards and make good decisions through their application. These decisions are the right choice and give me peace that I adhere to what I believe in. I am already successful, and others who are able to integrate their morals and ethics in the workplace can be as well.

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