

ETHICAL INSIGHT 1.1

Quick Test of Your Ethical Beliefs

Answer each question with your first reaction. Circle the number, from 1 to 4, that best represents your beliefs, if 1 represents “completely agree” and 4 represents “completely disagree.”

1. I consider money to be the most important reason for working at a job or in an organization. 1 2 3 4
2. I would hide truthful information about someone or something at work to save my job. 1 2 3 4
3. Lying is usually necessary to succeed in business. 1 2 3 4
4. Cutthroat competition is part of getting ahead in the business world. 1 2 3 4
5. I would do what is needed to promote my own career in a company, short of committing a serious crime. 1 2 3 4
6. Acting ethically at home and with friends is not the same as acting ethically on the job. 1 2 3 4
7. Rules are for people who don't really want to make it to the top of a company. 1 2 3 4
8. I believe that the “Golden Rule” is that the person who has the gold rules. 1 2 3 4
9. Ethics should be taught at home and in the family, not in professional or higher education. 1 2 3 4
10. I consider myself the type of person who does whatever it takes to get a job done, period. 1 2 3 4

Total your scores by adding up the numbers you circled. The lower your score, the more questionable your ethical principles regarding business activities. The lowest possible score is 10, the highest score is 40. Be ready to give reasons for your answers in a class discussion

1.4 FIVE MYTHS ABOUT BUSINESS ETHICS

Not everyone agrees that ethics is a relevant subject for business education or dealings. Some have argued that “business ethics” is an oxymoron, or a contradiction in terms. Although this book does not advocate a particular ethical position or belief system, it argues that ethics is relevant to business transactions. However, certain myths persist about business ethics. The more popular myths are presented in Figure 1.5.

A myth is “a belief given uncritical acceptance by the members of a group, especially in support of existing or traditional practices and institutions.” Myths regarding the relationship between business and ethics do not represent truth but popular and unexamined notions. Which myths have you accepted as unquestioned truth? Do you agree that the following myths are indeed myths? Do you know anyone who holds any of these myths as true?