"Off With Her Head!"

A discussion of moral and ethical dilemmas in the professional workplace.

Talentlogix Inc.
Professional People Solutions

This Discussion as Advertized

As professionals who solve complex problems in our technology driven society how do we react when we're in the middle of day to day situations which just don't feel right? You've probably heard things like, "shorten that test cycle," or "go ahead and submit the expense – the worst they'll do is deny it"" or the often used catch all phrase "don't confuse sell and install."

Your axe may be sharp but if you're told "off with her head" what would you do? This discussion will take your critical thinking about moral and ethical dilemmas to the next level. We'll explore:

- Examples of questionable organizational behaviour
- Individual day to situations where professionals face ethical decisions
- Codes of conduct from our professional associations and what they accomplish
- What you can do to manage your way through situations that cross your ethical boundaries

Come join your peers for a discussion of moral and ethical issues in the professional workplace and how you can be better equipped to deal with them.

Discussion Outline

- ✓ Introductions
- ✓ What is meant by professional ethics and why it's important
- ✓ Common examples of professional ethical situations
- ✓ A theoretical framework for ethical decision making
- ✓ A checklist for action from Harvard
- ✓ A review of "professions" and professional relationships
- ✓ An ethical case study - Ontario e-Health
- ✓ Professional codes of conduct
- ✓ A case study – Google in China

Introduction

Jules Fauteux helps teams and individuals to improve performance. He focuses on people and applies best practices to help teams and individuals to think, plan, change and grow.

Mr. Fauteux holds a Master of Business Administration, is a Certified Management Consultant, a Certified Human Resource Professional, a Registered Professional Recruiter, and a Certified Change Manager.

Jules Fauteux is currently Principal Consultant at Talentlogix Inc. where he provides Management Consulting and Recruitment services. His practice areas include Talent Strategy, Workforce Planning, Business Change, and Recruitment.

What is Meant by *Professional Ethics*?

- **Professional ethics** concerns the moral issues that arise because of the <u>specialist</u> knowledge that professionals attain, and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the public

  - Ruth Chadwick (1998). Professional Ethics.
    Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
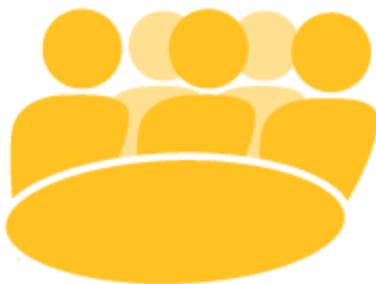
Why is Professional Ethics Important?

- Because the work of professionals has a profound impact on people, organizations, society, the planet, and the universe.

- Because professionals are perceived as having special knowledge that society in general does not possess, and society "trusts" them to use that knowledge appropriately.

- Because understanding the ethical roles and responsibilities of professionals can help to maximize their contribution and maintain the "trust."

- Jules Fauteux, CMC, CHRP, RPR

Why is Professional Ethics Important?

- Because professionals make tough choices

...and sometimes
  - people die
  - people are hurt or embarrassed
  - people are cheated or unfairly enriched
- Because *professionals* need some framework for making choices in their work and lives

Common Professional Situations

- You're working on a **proposal** developing work estimates. There is pressure to price low and change request later. Do you push back or fit the work plan to the target price?

- You're leading user acceptance **testing** for a business application. Test plans are loose and you can influence the users. The Project Manager encourages you to schmooze user acceptance on some key features that really aren't working. It's suggested they don't matter but you think otherwise. What do you do?

- You've started a new job as a Team Leader at a consulting firm. On your first assignment there is a need to engage a couple of analysts. The partner asks you to take on a junior analyst who you know can't do the job. H/she needs the billable hours. The client presents you with alternative **resources** from competing vendors. What do you do?
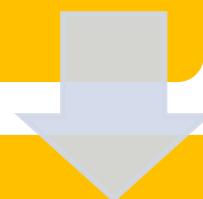
Theoretical Framework - Dialectic

Identify the principle or value in question

State the claim that is connected to the principle or value

Develop a set of relevant and rational reasons that justify the claim

Common Professional Situations

- What are examples of ethical dilemmas you have experienced?
  - What was the issue?
  - What was at stake?
  - How did you work through it?

Harvard Business Review Suggests

- There are many excuses for not acting
    - It's a standard practice
    - It's not a big deal
    - It's not my responsibility
    - I want to be loyal

Harvard Business Review Article
Keeping Your Colleagues Honest
by Mary C. Gentile
6 pages. Publication date: Mar 01, 2010.

Harvard Business Review Suggests_{…/2}

- Confronting the problem
  - Treat the conflict as a business matter
  - Recognize it's part of your job
  - Be yourself
  - Challenge the rationalizations
  - Turn newbie status into an asset
  - Expose faulty either/or thinking
  - Make long term risks more concrete
  - Present an alternative

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A Checklist for Action from Harvard

1. What is the conflict and your position?
2. What's at stake and for whom?
3. What are the countering arguments?
4. What responses are likely to work?
5. To whom should you make the argument?
6. When have they previously had a change of heart?
7. What's the best timing or sequence for your case?
8. Who are your allies?
9. What's the best forum?
10. What communication style fits best?
11. What external support sources are available to you?

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Characteristics of Professions

- Strongly differentiated features of professions
    1. Mastery of an abstract body of knowledge
    2. Autonomy
    3. Formal Organization
    4. Culture of Practice
    5. Code of Ethics

- Not every occupation is considered a _profession_

Professional Relationships

- Employer - Employee
  - Work in exchange for compensation
  - An employment agreement
- Client – Professional
  - Services/ knowledge in exchange for compensation
  - A professional services agreement
    - Agency Model (well defined scope or work)
    - Paternalistic Model (open ended scope with maximum trust)
    - Fiduciary Model (balance between agency and paternalistic – based on trust)
- Other Stakeholders - Professional
  - Right to practice in exchange for "public good" practice
- Professional - Professional
  - Professional "good" practice or adherence to "standards" in exchange for membership, or support

Case Study: Ontario e-Health

- Ontario e-Health was established last year to bring Ontario health records online after its predecessor, Smart Systems for Health Agency, was dissolved

- The agency had awarded about $16 million in untendered contracts to consulting firms

- E-Health was criticized for hiring consultants who earned up to $3,000 per day while expensing minor items such as $1.65 for tea

- The Health Minister resigned

- The e-Health CEO left with a $317,000 severance after 10 months on the job

- The e-Health volunteer chair resigned soon after The CEO's departure

- The Auditor General launched a probe of e-Health

- The government outlawed untendered contracts for consultants and banned consultants from billing hospitality, incidentals and food expenses

Case Study: Ontario e-Health

We will discuss this case as a group

We will learn from the situation...

Professional Codes of Conduct

- One characteristic of professions is that they typically offer a code of conduct to identify obligations which protect the clients and the general public. Codes help to set expectations of members and membership

- Common characteristics of codes of conduct include:
  - Responsibilities
  - General moral imperatives
  - Compliance considerations

- Most Professional Associations have a formal governance process for managing adherence to code. Typically this involves a self policing "Disciplinary Committee" which can temporarily or permanently revoke membership

Final Case Study: Google

- In 2006 Google struck a deal with The People's Republic of China launching google.cn
- The Chinese internet market forecasts growth from 105 to 250 million users and has a mobile phone base of 350 million growing by 57 million annually
- To operate in China Google agreed to self censor
- Previously Google operated google.com in China but became encumbered by "The Great Firewall of China"
- China enforces censorship rigorously
- Google's mission is to…

organize the word's information and make it universally accessible and useful

- In March 2010 Google decided to redirect goolge.cn users to uncensored google.hk
- New Chinese censorship practices restrict google.hk users and the service they receive is worse than it was before the original China deal which launched google.cn
- Google's share price is forecast to fall by 10% as a result of their anti-censorship action

For Further Information

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