



Ethical behavior influences every aspect of our lives and our relationships, but it's especially important in the business world for a number of reasons:

An ethical company is a more positive and more effective company.

Employees of businesses that actively promote ethical behavior report higher levels of job satisfaction and thus employee retention, make decisions more readily, and are less afraid of making mistakes. Their focus is on doing the work to make the business successful.

Good ethics is good for business.

Ethical behavior has become an absolute necessity for corporate success. In this day and age of unethical behavior at the highest levels on the corporate ladder, an ethical lapse by any employee not only undermines a company's reputation, but also carries the risk of potentially damaging lawsuits, scandals, and even criminal charges accompanied by jail time for the guilty.

Business is inherently competitive.

Without a clear sense of ethics, pressure to hold down costs and meet sales targets can all too easily cross the line into a willingness to cut corners or overstate earnings. On the other hand, by exhibiting consistently ethical behavior under even the most pressured circumstances, you'll stamp yourself as a trustworthy, confident, and reliable person- the type of individual others will want to do repeated business with.

In a business setting, unethical behavior can affect the lives- and livelihoods- of many other people.

When Enron went under because top executives engaged in fraudulent bookkeeping, thousands of employees lost their retirement savings as a result. Because a junior staffer on *The New York Times* lied about his work, two senior managers resigned. The examples go on and on, but the conclusion is basic: You not only owe it to yourself to hew to a strict ethical approach- you owe it to your coworkers as well.

Your own behavior on the job influences the way others act in the workplace.

An active commitment on your part to ethical behavior in all aspects of business life- from honest accounting practices to seemingly minor issues like taking credit for a colleague's idea- will help set a positive tone for your entire firm. High personal standards send the message that you expect only the finest business ethics from yourself, your coworkers and/or employees, and your company.

Ethical behavior is simply the right thing to do.

The fact in itself is truly the key reason to behave ethically- at all times, both professionally and personally.

For more information on [Emily Post Business Etiquette Programs](#) contact Director of Sales and Relationships, Dawn Stanyon at Dawn@emilypost.com.