Pride & Professionalism
Building your own personal code of ethics

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Most organizations have a code of ethics that act as a
 guideline for professional conduct and understanding
 the difference between “right” and “wrong” within the
 organization. The company you work for now probably has a code
 of ethics that you were given when you were hired. The code of
 ethics given to you by your company is a great guide to being a
 professional in the workplace and be a model employee for that
 company.

You are now the walking image of the company and
 representing clients on behalf of the company. Why not take that
 image to the next level and brand yourself? Take pride in what
 you do and how you do it by creating your own personal code of
 ethics. By building your own code of ethics and following them
 you are taking pride in what you do and who you are. You should
 take your professionalism personally and seriously.

Here is how you can build your own code of ethics and how
 doing it will benefit you personally and professionally.

How to build your own code of ethics:

1. Learn what a code of ethics is. It is a comprehensive system
 of right and wrong. It is a set of guidelines to help you make
 decisions based on your own conscience.

2. Research existing codes to develop your own. Look for
 ideas and align your ethics with those of your company’s if
 you see fit. Also, take a look at CAI National’s Professional
 Manager Code of Ethics. Ask yourself which specific ideas
 make sense to you and which do not. Ask yourself questions
 like, Do you believe that it is important to help others, even if
 it is not convenient?

3. Write down your ideas. It’s best to save it on your computer
 or write in pencil, so that you’ll be able to edit it later if you
 need to. Your code of ethics can change to fit the environment
 and situation you are in.

4. Look for patterns and organize your ideas into specific
 principles. Maybe you are against all types of violence, so
 a strict adherence to “nonviolence” would be one of your
 principles. Usually, you will find that most of your opinions
 can be grouped into several principles. This is your code of
 ethics.

5. Adjust your code through trial and error. Once you have
 something on paper, try to apply the guidelines to your real
 life experiences. If you find that you actually feel differently in
 practice, you may need to change one or more of your ideals.

6. Know and understand the law as it applies to you and your
 situation. Take the time to figure out how the law relates
 to you and how it applies to day to day situations. In some
 cases, “the law” may mean the policies of your work place or
 organization. It is important to know how these rules relate to
 you and how they are enforced.

How your own code of ethics will benefit you personally
 and professionally:

- Respect. Visibly living by a specific ethical code will help you
 to gain respect from anyone you come in contact with; board
 members, homeowners, coworkers, etc.
- Trust. Rules promote trust, especially when they are followed
 consistently. When you follow a code of ethics people trust
 you and honesty comes with trust.
- Responsibility. When you take responsibility for your
 actions, everyone benefits. Responsibility is accountability
 and honesty, and holding yourself accountable promotes
 these good character traits in others who see them in you. If a
 board and homeowners see that you are taking responsibility
 for the community and care, then they will start caring and
 holding themselves responsible.

Building your own code of ethics will allow you to grow
 personally and professionally. Start out small with maybe just
 one or two codes to follow. If you do not have time to create your
 own, start by following your company’s code of ethics and CAI’s
 Professional Manager Code of Ethics. You can ask your boss or
 someone in human resources for the company’s code of ethics
 or mission statement and you can find the CAI Manager code of
 ethics at www.caionline.org. Take pride in who you are and what
 you do.

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