

# 'Work Ethic' and 'Employer Ethic'

Extended Version

## To Begin With... The Broad, Overall View of Economic Ethics Up to This Point, has meant...

...producing products and services with both *life* and *economic* basic purpose value and trading them in symbiotic exchange with value for value equity...

...*all produced, consumed, and traded in a manner contributive to long term well being for all people, populates, other life forms, and environmental conditions included in, contributing to, or effected by any economic activity.*

[Yeah, I know, that's a mouthful.]

*Generated From That Standard*, comes the everyday **ethics** we think of as...

## 'Work Ethic' and 'Employer Ethic'

defined here as...

The ethical disciplines and behaviors of  
*creating, operating, or contributing to or within*  
a group productivity.

or, if you like,

The behavior and disciplines required  
of a *creator, operator, or member* of a productive group.

We call ourselves **productivity class** because we earn our livings **productively** as **specialized producers** [**working producers**] or **organized producers** [**businesses** or other types of **organizations**]. That means we earn our livelihoods as *productive contributors* in the world around us and operate to the standards of **productivity class ethics** [otherwise we are not **productivity class** but rather a bunch of self-serving '**inverts**' (look *that one* up in the book)]. And that means we are never *substandard, predatory, degrading, corruptive, or harmful* in our **productive** disciplines or group/social behaviors. In order to live up to that standard, we abide by '*codes of productivity and behavior*' called a **work ethic** and, for a **business**, an **employment ethic**.

Further, the relationship between an **employee** and an **employer** is a **trade** relationship – a *symbiotic exchange of specialized service by a working producer for pay in tradeable currency*

from an *organized producer* – and as such is subject to the highest **ethical** standards of **symbiotic exchange** and *civil human behavior*.

In order to create and maintain *positive* and **productive** conditions, we have developed the **employed's 'Work Ethic'** and the **business's 'Employment Ethic'** given below. Each is a set of simple behavioral disciplines that over time have been proven to maintain the proper standards of *behavioral* and **productive** responsibilities by each party. A standard which abides by both *life* and *economic* **ethics** in the **employee/employer** relationship. [Contributions to improve upon these standards (or at least the writing) are always welcome.]:

## **Basic Work Ethic:**

Or

'On Being a **Human Resource**'

[The **employed's** responsibility toward the **organization** in meeting the '**trade agreement**' of an **employee** '**producing** for pay'. For general **labor** and all levels of **specialized working producers** – '**employees**']

[**Important Note:** '**Work ethic**' up until recently had been a simple code of...

- '*be punctual*',
- '*work hard and well*',
- '*be worthy of your pay*',
- '*work well with others*', and
- '*serve the best interests of the **company** or **business***'.

Such personal **ethical** 'policies' fell out of favor for a while when too many companies began using **employees work ethic** to *exploit employees while abandoning reciprocal consideration*. The trend is now swinging back toward *reciprocal ethical agreements* by companies, but only because of the **consumer market's demand** for it – **consumers** want the companies they buy from to treat their **employees ethically** and morally, and provide a safe (in every way) working environment.

Below is an attempt to codify a common set of principles and policies, personal and professional, intended to establish a base for **employment** and workplace standards that will benefit both **employees** and **employers** in any economic populace. We establish this set of principles and policies as **Producer Class® Work Ethic**. Better or additional standards (or better written) are always welcome.]

### **Timeliness**

'Punctuality'

**Show up for work in time to *actually start work when it begins*.**

- Don't just be *showing up* at the company or department when work is supposed to begin.
- *Be at your work station prepared and ready when work is supposed to begin*.
- You are not getting paid to hang up your coat.
- Allow time for unusual traffic delays on the drive to work.

### **Return from breaks and lunch *within* lunch and break times.**

- *Going to and from* where you break and eat lunch is part of break and lunch time.
- You are not getting paid to come and go.
- Allow time for social delays on the way.

## **Productivity**

'Diligent Industriousness'

### ***Produce, produce, produce – in volume and in value.***

- *Get a lot done, done well, and in a timely fashion.*
- *Follow instructions* from superiors or advice from more knowledgeable, highly respected peers.
- The application of all the principles of **produce** apply here. *Read the book.*
- Your **productivity** and the **value** of it has to **earn your employer a profit**, or **profit your employer** in *the purpose for which you were hired.*
- Learn how the '**organization**' is **organized**, and in concert with others, align your work with those whose **productivity** is connected to yours so as to *also compliment the overall flow of productivity.*
- Understand the purpose of the **organization** as a **business** (or other type of entity) and **produce** in a manner *contributive to that.*

## **Productive Education**

'Responsibility for **Education** in Your **Specialty**'

### ***Educate yourself to produce at the highest required or desired standards [of volume and value].***

- **Learn** what is expected of you and what is required to do the job in your particular **organization**.
- **Learn** *what is taught to you about the job, and then what may not be taught to you but is still necessary to **operate** and **produce** at the highest required standards.*
- Take responsibility upon yourself to continually **educate** yourself in your **specialty** to the ability required to **operate** and **produce** at the highest *industry* standards. (If it doesn't help at one **employer**, it will help at the next.)

### ***Earn your increases in pay and responsibility by providing the highest standards of productivity and effective people skills.***

- It is not enough to **produce** at the highest standards. For promotions to **leadership** or **management**, you must also *earn the respect of others* – both those of **management** and the **workforce**.
- Get **educated** on people skills and/or **managing** people if necessary. [Besides, '*Does not work well with others.*' is an **unacceptable attribute** in any **employment** circumstance.]

## Contribute to the Group Culture

'Working Well with Others'

### **Contribute to the unity, forward motion, and purpose of the group.**

- *Be positive in your communications with others – be encouraging, supportive, and uplifting. Be a positive contributor in suggestions and in group participation toward the organization's achievement of its purposes.*
- *Do not create, propagate, or abide negative attitudes and behaviors – no demeaning, undermining, or playing head games with others; no back-stabbing, gossiping, or socially disruptive, destructive, or corruptive behaviors.*
- *And most especially, zero tolerance for mentally, emotionally, physically, or sexually disrespectful or abusive behaviors.*

## Fair Consideration

'Due Consideration When Terminating the Trade Agreement'

### **Giving fair notice before leaving a company for another job?**

- The original intention here was to be fair and *give a company time to hire your replacement* so as not to leave them in the lurch – usually considered 'two weeks' notice'. Times have changed, however, and since new employers are usually in need of your immediate participation and frown on waiting two weeks for you to arrive, and since that probably includes the company you are leaving, this **ethic** becomes a judgement call. You might also want to consider whether or not your company gives notice before laying people off, or whether it provides two weeks layoff or severance pay – 'reciprocation' is the key consideration.

## Ethics Is Not a One Way Flow.

'Require Employer Reciprocation'

### **Require fair pay for your productivity.**

- *Know the going rate for competence in the work you do.*
- Know your **actual value** and require it for your outstanding **productivity**. (But only if you are living up to it. Also, some jobs don't require your best and don't pay more than the job itself is worth.)
- Remember, *the cost of your 'benefits' are a part of your pay.*

### **Require respect, good regard, and attendance to safe, healthy working conditions and equipment.**

- Require from an **employer** – in fact, *all personnel* – reasonable considerations for your physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and the same behaviors *toward* you as they require *from* you.
- **Employees** should require that **employers** do not exploit or take advantage their position of power to withhold fair and reciprocal **ethical** behaviors. Remember that **employment** is a **trade agreement** – **value** in **specialized service** for equal **value** in **currency**.
- All considerations should be on a reciprocal basis – favor *toward* you should be reciprocated with favor *from* you, and favor *from* you should be reciprocated with considerations *for* you.

## A Little More on Work Ethic:

[Symbiotic Exchange equates to much more than **productivity** alone.]

Always remember, **employment** is a '*trade agreement*' between the **employed** and the **employer**. Therefore, in order to meet your '*trade agreement*' as an **employee** '*producing for pay*':

### **Produce, produce, produce – in value and in volume!**

- This is your number one responsibility to your **employer**. **Businesses**, small and large, are *economic organizations*. They are created for the purpose of serving **consumers** in exchange for serving the **basic purpose** economic pursuits of their owners, operators, **administrators**, and **employees** – '*all things economic begin with produce*'. Your **productivity** is the *primary* purpose of the '*trade agreement*' between you and your **employer**.

### **Between your own standards and those set by the organization, maintain the *higher* set of standards.**

- If none specifically exist in the workplace, or if they are less than your own personal operating principles, *maintain your own set of high standards of working and operating conduct, principles, and practices* – this is your '*personal professionalism in trade*'.

### **Come to work *on time and ready, capable, and prepared to produce*.**

- That should be 'enough said'. But it does also include several disciplines not always considered when thinking of one's **employment** responsibilities or *personal professionalism*: such as taking care of one's health and personal condition; maintaining up to date knowledge and skills in one's **profession, specialty**, or type of work; maintaining the necessary personal logistics and routines that keep your personal life and work life synergistic and contributive to each other.

### **Come to work understanding your role\*, willing to *contribute to and forward the purposes of the organization***

\*(SOED\*) noun **ROLE** -- **2. The characteristic [and/] or expected function of a person or thing, especially [...]** in a particular setting or environment.

- Every **organization** is built with its own *organizational structure*, its own *infrastructure*, and its own *culture* all designed to achieve its purpose. Every **owner, administrator, manager**, and **employee** has a specific and **specialized role** to fulfill beyond the simple functions of the job itself. This is an *additional required role* that also contributes to the accomplishment of that purpose – working well with others – which really means '*working well in and as a group*'; offering more efficient **productive** and **operating** methods when you can; participation in group contribution of ideas and extra **productive** activities; etc. Again, the standards you live up to under this agreement is

your '*professionalism in trade*' [i.e. those *professional standards* you bring to the **trade agreement**, beyond that of your '*personal professionalism and specialty*'].

## Basic Employer's Ethic:

Or

'On Being a *Human Resource Consumer*'

[For **organized producers (business or other) – employers**]

[**Important Note: 'Employment ethic'** up until the 1980's had included policies like...

- promote from within the **organization** from career diligent, dedicated **employees**;
- '**company** paid' long term retirement programs [usually based on **company** and outside **stock investments**];
- working through temporary **unprofitable** times to keep people **employed**;
- severance pay when layoffs were permanent due to moving or restructuring;
- **company** training from the bottom up – apprenticeship programs, etc.;
- providing for the bulk of health care benefits, with a *small* percentage paid for by the employee
- etc.

And those were just the *common* benefits provided by the *average business*. This was back in the time when a '**company**' was called so because it was a '*body of people*' brought together for **productive** purposes' [meeting the definition of the word '*company*'] and when **employees** were '**personnel**' ['persons' and not '**human resources**' – i.e. people were thought of as '*people*', not '*resources*'].

Starting in the 1970's, and culminating fully in the 1980's, such **company ethical** 'policies' fell out of favor as **companies** began thinking of **employees** as '*resources*' and no longer as '*personnel*' – as a '*resource expense*' rather than '*persons who worked for the company's benefit*'. Cutting payroll means lower expenses. Lower expenses mean record **profits** for **companies**. And record **profits** mean record **stock** prices. This kind of thinking justified exploiting **employees** while *abandoning reciprocal considerations for those who worked hard for the company*. This trend is now swinging back toward *reciprocal ethical agreements* due to the **consumer market's demand** for more **ethical corporate** behavior from the **companies** they buy from. It is unlikely, however, that company benefits will ever return to those days.]

**Employers**, however, do still have **productivity** and *behavioral* standards:

### Productivity Ethics

[Aka: 'no-harm productivity']

**Produce at maximum productivity while safely protecting people, life, and environmental conditions.** [also see '**Responsibility for Health and Safety**' below]

- This is the **ethical** consideration for '*long term well-being for all people, populaces, other life forms, and environmental conditions included in, contributing to, or effected by any productive activity*' [as stated in the definition of economic **ethics** in **GAIN The Dynamics of Successful Economic Outcome: The Twelve Elemental Activities: Ethics**] employed by a **company, manufacturer, or organization**.

- **Productivity ethics** also includes **symbiotic consumer relationships** and **agreed upon standards of fairness and 'value for value' exchange** where all **values** are known and clearly understood by both parties.

## **On Employment Equities**

**'Fair Pay', and 'Equal Pay for Equal Work'** ['pay commensurate with **productivity**'].

- **Employee** pay must not be a separately negotiated deal for each **employee** or group of **employees**.
- Pay for **productivity** must not be determined by individual or community conditions, situations, or circumstances. Considerations for pay is a **symbiotic trade** based on consideration for fair **value** of the work and **basic purpose** benefit by both parties. Once such a standard is set, it must apply to everyone who provides that same **productivity** – by **volume** and by **value**.

**Equal Employment and Advancement Opportunity for Everyone, Regardless of Human Genetic or Cultural Variables** [– i.e. race, gender, sexual preference, age, ethnicity, etc.]

- This is really just an extension of above. And for the same reasons. Bias, bigotry, prejudice, and favoritism are not **employment** factors or hiring, or advancement considerations. Anyone who can do a job must have equal consideration for that job.

**Security of Ethical Treatment** ['ethical cultural conditions']

- **Companies – businesses, corporations, organizations** of any kind – must provide all **employees** with a guarantee that they will always be treated with **ethical**, moral, and culturally acceptable behavior. Mutual respect and good regard must be required at all levels of **management** and **employment** [not just from subordinates toward positions of authority] – a **company's demand for ethical and moral behavior must not be a one way flow**.

**Appropriate methods of corrective actions.** ['productivity and behavioral penalties']

- This is 'policy one' that protects the above. In most cases of corrective behavior, 'zero tolerance' is inappropriate. The appropriate method of correction is a gradient increasing of penalties, ending, if remaining uncorrected, in eventual termination. 'Zero Tolerance', however, must be required toward certain inexcusable, abusive behaviors: Some offenses are so egregious and well known as unacceptable as to justify immediate firing of an employee – but they are actually in the few: physical sexual contact; uninvited solicitation of sex; sexual relations between a superior and a subordinate; racist or ethnic demeaning remarks toward others; general racist or supremacism behaviors; any type of physical abuse, etc.

Policies forbidding these inappropriate behaviors are mostly designed to protect **employees**, but also fulfill the need to create an effective working environment, as well as protect the **company's** or **organization's** effective working *relationship* with their **employees** and the **consuming** public. Mostly, however, 'zero tolerance' actually means 'immediate and effective corrective action', *not* 'immediate termination'. An offense may not be so egregious as to warrant immediate firing.

A first offense may only require a harsh rebuke from **management** [a hard dressing down' / 'reading the riot act']. A second offense may require demotion or permanent removal from authority over others. A third offense might then be a termination of employment. Corrective actions are almost always judgement calls: what level and intensity of correction, admonishment, or rebuke is appropriate for the offense and effectively corrective of it; and should it be wielded *fairly* toward, and in consideration of, *all* effected parties.

### **Protect Employees That Speak Up About Ethical Problems** ['no retaliation' policies]

- This is 'policy two' that protects 'Security of **Ethical Treatment**'. And there must be 'zero tolerance' of retaliatory behavior as well. Additionally, any retaliatory actions taken against an employee should be made up for immediately upon notice of it.

## **More on Employer's Ethics: Standards Employees Should Expect from Organizations, Administrators, and Managers and An Organization's Required 'Basic Human Standards for Conditions and Treatment of Employees'**

### **Responsibility for Employees Health and Safety as Pertains to the Workplace**

- An employer's **management ethic** must include ensuring the *safest* and most *healthy* procedures, equipment, and conditions for their **employees** work and work environment. Substandard health and safety conditions, putting **employees** at even remote risk of harm or ill-health is *an egregious neglect of responsibility* and a *reprehensible betrayal* to those who work to an **employer's** benefit.

### **Genuine Leadership**

- The very term '**leadership**' implies there is someplace to go, a **process** to get through, or something to accomplish in which an individual or group may need guidance or a central, directing, or **managing** influence – a **leader**. **Leadership** is always a necessity in getting an **organization** built and in operating it. Since **working producers** are dependent upon right direction for their own success in an **organization**, the quality of **leadership** is therefore as important to the **working producer** as it is to the **organizing producer** [the **owners, operators, administrators, and managers**].

Within the proper relationship frameworks [mutual respect, honest intention, clear communication, etc.], **employees** and **employer** must together fulfill their '**trade agreement**' to **produce** and contribute to the success of the **organization** and its mission – each through their particular **specializations** and as a contributing member of a coordinated group or team.

As such, those responsible for **leadership** must include direction of **working producers** toward consistent development of *knowledge, skill, and profitably productive capabilities* – commensurate with the **organization's** needs\*. It is the **employer's** [manager's, administrator's, etc.] responsibility to be able to *translate* that increase in **productive** skills into **profitable productivity** and the success of the **organization** – including **leading** all



*qualified employees* toward available *upward mobility* [in **productive or management** responsibility] based on their **productive** contribution and the **organization's** growth.

[\***Note:** It is the **working producer's** responsibility, not the **employer's**, to be able to *translate* that increase in **productive** skills toward *other employment* should the need ever arise – protecting the community from unnecessary unemployment taxes.]

## Successful Management

- Every member of an **organization**, from the owners to the least vital **employee**, who have **invested** their hard earned **gain**, or **basic purpose** efforts, into that **organization**, deserve to have that **organization managed ethically, correctly, and successfully**.

Definition [*for our purposes*]:

**Managing: The activity of controlling or directing any or all of the aspects of an organized [in this case *economic*] activity [or any part thereof].**

The success of an **organization** depends upon every member of the group doing their part successfully. However, **unmanaged**, each or any individual of a group can function in a manner *successful for their own task or specialty*, yet incompatible with the **organization's** 'clockwork of effort', or any of the other **productivities** inter-related to their own, and thus end up inhibiting, or out-and-out working against, the *efficient* completion of the purpose of the **organization**. In other words, the way a **working producer** can do their own work can be in a manner incompatible with a group or team effort, and thus distort, slow, or cripple the overall **organized productive** efforts.

Therefore, every **organization** requires an *effective controlling and directing authority* – **management** – that knows how to **a) create an organized system of activities that accomplishes the productivity** – **productive organizing** – and with it **b) motivate the cooperative effort by working producers** – **leadership** – that is required to accomplish that **productivity** effectively and efficiently.

*Creating the motivated, cooperative effort  
is where effective **managing leadership** comes into play.*

Without the **management** and **leadership** required to **operate** the **productive** system and the cooperative efforts of the personnel, the entire endeavor becomes *inefficient* or can even operate in a manner that prevents its own purpose from being accomplished. When that happens, *everyone* experiences the loss of **gain** and, therefore, loss to their **basic purpose** objectives.

*The number one reason for people losing their **employment**  
is unsuccessful or mis- **management**.*

## Quality of Productive Capital Resources

- This sounds like something that only concerns the **organization** and the **organizing producers**. However, poor quality **productive capital resources** limits the **productivity** of a **working producer**. This limits the **productivity** of the **specialized** activity, and therefore, the whole **organization**.

The effect on the **working producer** is to limit opportunities within the **organization** [as well as further career advancement beyond their current **employment**], as well as limiting development of **specialization skills** and the improved **productivity** that would be accomplished with the better **quality**, more advanced **capital resources**.

### ‘Quality of Standards’ of Working Conditions

- This is more than health and safety conditions. This is an extension of **basic purpose** ‘*improved living conditions*’. People ‘live’ one quarter or more of their lives at work.

Therefore, the quality of general working conditions should also be consistently ‘*improving*’ – equaling as closely as possible the quality of general living conditions of the surrounding society. Usually clean, neat, orderly, and furnishings in good repair is sufficient. Therefore, clean, well cared for and functional facilities [restrooms, break rooms, parking, work floor environment, etc.] should be maintained consistently, and periodically upgraded to keep up with the standards of the surrounding society.

### Fair Pay – Symbiotic Exchange

- The current *primary determining factors* in how much ‘*payment in trade*’ for **employee productivity** are as follows:
  - the **supply** and **demand** of the **employment market** for the particular **knowledge, skills, and productivity** needed [see ‘**Supply and Demand**’ in the book];
  - the predetermined **value** of the particular **productivity** to the particular **employer**;
  - the actual **value** or **profitability** of the **product** or **service** to be **produced**;
  - the current rate paid by other similar **organizations** for the particular **knowledge, skill, and productivity**.

These four factors above need not all be considered by an employer when making **employment** wage or salary decisions.

Remember, too, that depending upon the **symbiotic** or **inverted\*** approach to the expense of **payroll** vs. **profits**, an **employer** can be fair or unfair – **symbiotic** or **inverted**. [see definitions below; and see book for ‘**symbiotic**’ vs. ‘**inverted**’]

\*Definition: **SYMBIOTIC EXCHANGE**, *for our purposes...* [short version] ‘**exchange of ‘mutual benefit’ for all effected parties’ in a trade.**

\*Definition: **INVERTED**, *for our purposes...* [short version] ‘**to alter or change the direction of flow or activity so as to produce the opposite effect’ is to invert that activity’.**

\*Definition: **ECONOMIC INVERSION** *For our purposes...* [short version] **Perversion or corruption of the innate human intent to ‘contribute to’ others for ‘mutual benefit’ in exchange, into an inverted human intent to ‘draw away’, ‘take from’, or ‘deprive’ others for self-serving gain.**

**Ethical employers** usually [but not always] consider all four of the above factors in determining the exchange in **wage** vs. the **knowledge, skill, and productivity** contribution of an **employee**. Few come up with the same results, but they do fall within a ‘pay range’ for that **specialization** or **productivity**.

Many larger employers sometimes consider other economic factors also, but they are beyond the scope of this primer and are based on higher levels of economic principles – not necessarily ethically intended.

### 'In House' Career Routes [Advancements in Training and Position]

- Routes forward in **knowledge, skillsets, and competence** levels come best from 'in house' **apprenticeships** and **training** attached to exterior formal **educational** sources, and are best incentivized by *raises in income* and *promotions from within* whenever appropriate and possible.

[**Important Note:** At the time of this writing these kinds of 'in-house' **educational, training and apprenticeship** career routes are becoming extinct. This is mostly due to **employers** obligations to upgrade to higher and higher technological means in order to improve efficiency and **compete** in an ever more rapidly advancing economic culture. The new jobs being created require higher and completely different **skills and educations** than any **employer** can themselves deliver as advancement **training** for **employees**. These new and more advanced **educations and skills** require extended time, effort, and money to obtain and are mostly out of reach of the average **employee** losing their jobs to the new technologies. The time and expense of **retraining**, as well as the poor **educations** delivered by the current **educational** methodologies, are going to more and more leave entire segments of modern societies in permanent poverty. *If you can recognize this, **get started now** upgrading your **education, specialization, or career pathways.***]

### Meritocracy

- Selecting people for promotions or raises in pay are usually decided by one, or a combination of four primary considerations:
  - **Education** [including skills, training, experience, etc.]
  - **Merit**
  - **Time invested**
  - **Politics**

These determining factors actually work in harmony with one another, and they are *all* legitimate considerations. *Education and merit, however, are the primary determining factors for pay increases and promotions.* 'Time invested' and 'political' considerations must bow to 'education' and 'merit' if any **organization** is to survive or maintain the loyalty and trust of those it **employs**. [Politics in pay raises and promoting is usually looked upon as unfair by **working producers**. However, the ability to network in **management** and work well with superiors is paramount in **organizational** culture, making politics part of the equation. Sorry.]

## SUMMARY

*For our purposes...* **An Ethic is a set of personally adapted principles one uses to conduct themselves in life; often named as a type of ethic when applied to a specific activity or dynamic in living. In our case work.**

**Work ethic is the standard for how you deliver your service to the employer paying you.** It is the set of acceptable 'work and employment disciplines', 'behavioral disciplines', 'competence levels'

and '*standard of work produced*' adapted and adhered to by a person or group – in this case, *you*.

The dynamics of living and working require that everyone of us have an **industrious and well principled work ethic**. In fact, the very concept of a **work ethic** by definition requires that we have the personal character and self-discipline to hold true to **ethical** workplace behaviors, disciplines, and **productive** principles while steeling ourselves to provide and contribute what is *needed* and *wanted* for our **employers**, ourselves, and those who are dependent on us.

These have all been **standards** that could be grouped under the heading of *Professionalism*: "**a body of qualities... as competence, skill, [behaviors], etc. characteristic of a profession or professional**" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary\* brackets mine). A professional is really only a person who works at a particular profession. ***But the words professional and professionalism connote a person operating at the highest standards of their chosen field in every aspect related to performance, presentation, and behavior.***



## The Dynamics of Successful Economic Outcome

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