

# MKTG 4600 – Advanced Selling Strategies

## Code of Ethics Assignment Description

**The Assignment Intent:** Ethics matter; especially in sales. The American Marketing Association's code of ethics (<http://www.marketingpower.com/content435.php>) attempts to offer a set of ethical guidelines that marketers can adopt. It is geared towards marketing as a whole, but it is still useful. However, sales is not exactly marketing and vice versa: so my question to you is: what will your selling code of ethics be?

Why is this question important? Because the time to think about and declare your ethical intentions is not when you are faced with an ethical challenge. It is best to address ethics when you are not being pressured. Thus, this assignment gives you the opportunity to craft an ethical pledge without the inherent pressure that an actual ethical dilemma creates. In the future, when an ethical dilemma arises you can refer to your code to remind yourself of the key ethical standards you vowed to live your professional life by.

Many of you will have a career that spans many jobs, many companies, many industries and many locations. That is normal nowadays. This will mean that you will learn many skills, many products, many industry practices, but all of that learning will be relatively short lived. As you move through your career these factors will change, but won't change is your integrity and reputation in the business community. This assignment is a small but important first step towards establishing a base line ethical approach that can define you and stay with you as your career progresses. To boil it down: your integrity will define you, so it is time to define your integrity.

**The Actual Task:** Start by reviewing existing code of ethics or value statements from either professional organizations (such as the AMA) and/or from individual companies (such as Stryker). Take those resources and combine them with any personal insights, thoughts, or feelings that you have related to ethical behavior and create a one page personal code of ethics for your selling life. Ethics will matter in all areas of your life, but this code should be tailored specifically to your life in the selling realm. Your Code should be something you are willing to present to your boss, your customers, and even your mother! It should also be something you are truly committed to.

**The Specifics:** You will turn-in a single sheet of paper with different things on each side: Side (1) should have your Code of Ethics (COE), and Side (2) should have a current version of your resume. Both your COE and your Resume should have a production quality suitable to a job search environment (that means flawless grammar and production quality). For the COE you must follow the basic structure and formatting guidelines indicated on page two of this document (as an illustration, page 4 of this document has an example code). Your resume can be formatted as you wish. However I would strongly encourage you to review the WMU career search manual (available via HCOB's Career Center in Schneider Hall and via the Career Center web site at <http://www.wmich.edu/business/thecareercenter/>) for ideas and guidelines related to an effective resume.

**There are some other rules you must follow:** your Code must NOT exceed one page and your resume must not exceed one page and combined they should be on a single sheet of paper (front/back). This assignment should not have a cover page, plastic cover or be laminated. One 8.5" x 11", plain white sheet of paper with printing on both sides – that is all!

**COE Grade Diminishing Problems:** The biggest problems I have seen in the past are:

- Too Long – Not Concise: Work hard to be brief, clear, and concise – that is, use the fewest words possible to clearly convey your message.
- Redundant: Students list five sections, but 2 or 3 of them are really the same thing. Think it through carefully and avoid this problem.
- Undefined: The words/phrases used lack a clear meaning. For example – what is “integrity”? Don’t throw out terms without well thought out definitions.
- Work Ethic vs. Ethics: Be sure that the Code deals mostly with ethical issues and not just work ethic issues. Ask yourself, can you be a “hardworking” thief, the answer is yes. But you really can’t be an “honest” thief. Thus honesty is ethical, and hardworking is more work ethic oriented. The majority of your factors need to be ethical in nature.

### **The Grading:**

- Points off for each and every grammar, spelling, or typing mistake within either document.
- Doesn’t follow formatting requirements – point loss for each deviation from requirements
- Either document (COE or Resume) exceeds one page – loss of points
- Late assignments receive zero points – see syllabus for due date
- After I apply these criteria I will look at whether the code is clear and concise, has depth of thinking, is well written, and is a good statement of ethical (versus work ethic) intent. In addition I will evaluate whether the resume is well presented and suitable for distribution to employers.

### **RESUME POINTERS**

Keep the language active and consistent.  
Use the space wisely – both vertical and horizontal space.

For Jobs/Internships (“Experience” section) consider the following approach:

#### **Sales Intern ABC Company**

**Summer 2009  
Chicago, IL**

Responsible for selling training services to sales organizations that had purchased software from ABC in the past. Position was highly goal driven and involved cold calling through closing.

- **Sold \$27,900** worth of training in a 60 day period
- Was **ranked #2** among 14 interns
- **Improved closing rate by 36%** from month one to month two
- Honed my prospecting skills by making an average of **75 cold calls each day**
- Facilitated phone based sales calls with good questioning and listening
- Handled significant numbers of objections and closed strongly when appropriate.
- Improved my teamwork and learned the importance of good reporting and follow-up

The approach above explains the position in plain English, then highlights the specific, number-driven accomplishments, and finishes with the transferable skills learned in the position. For less important jobs/internships the number of bullets can easily be reduced. This basic format (description, accomplishments, and transferable skills) can be used for non-work activities such as student organizations and volunteer activities.

**Note:** please do not put your student number, the class, the date and all of that other unnecessary information on the document. Your document should look like a professional document, not an assignment from a class. As long as your name is on it you are OK!

## **Required Format of Document:**

Your code should be a personal expression of your ethical pledge, however, you must follow the guidelines below when it comes to the structure and layout of the document. This uniformity will ensure a strong layout to your document and make my life easier when it is time to grade all of these!

### **1. Name and “Code of Ethics” Title (e.g. Jim Eckert’s Code of Ethics)**

The recommendation is that you use the heading material from your resume in the exact format of your resume but add the phrase “Code of Ethics” or “Personal Code of Ethics”. That will clearly identify your document and also give it a unifying element with your resume.

### **2. Introduction Paragraph**

It is required that your document starts with a short, relevant introduction paragraph. This paragraph creates a strong start to the document and helps the reader understand the intent and structure of the document.

### **3. 4 or 5 Ethical Words or Phrases with Definition and Elaboration on Each.**

You must use four or five short sections that are themed by a word or phrase that represents an ethical behavior or concept that you are committed to. After the phrase or word is identified, you must clearly define that word or concept and then elaborate on how you will bring that word or phrase to life through your actions.

For the formatting of each of these sections, one of the two formats below must be used.

#### **Bullet Format:**

**Greed:** inordinate or insatiable desire for gain

- I will always maximize my gain when considering decision options
- I pledge to think first of how I might be able to gain more of what I desire even if that leads to actions that hurt or hinder others

#### **Short Paragraph Format:**

**Greed:** inordinate or insatiable desire for gain

When I have decisions to make, or options to consider, I will always take the path that will result in the greatest gain for me. I will seek such gains at the expense of others.

NOTE: I used greed as a lame joke and also to avoid using an appropriate ethical concept thus rendering it off limits for your Code. Notice that in either style of formatting I first made the key word or phrase stand out via the use of bold and underlining. Then I gave a relatively clear and precise definition of the word. After that I explained how the concept would influence my behavior. When you construct your sections, I would recommend a similar commitment to both the format and structure of what you present. One last note: don't mix formats.

### **4. Citations (Required if needed)**

If you directly use, or strongly paraphrase the words from one of the corporate or organizational codes that you came across in your research you must properly cite that. No specific format for these cites is mandated but it should be clear where you got your information and should allow the reader to locate your source independently. This standard also applies if you utilized a dictionary for your definitions.

NOTE: As this is a personal code of ethics I encourage the use of the first person in your writing style.

**Example Code of Ethics.** You are required to follow the formatting and structure guidelines documented on the previous page. In addition, your final document must look professional and be clear and concise.

# James A. Eckert

## Personal Code of Ethics

269-387-5799 [jim.eckert@wmich.edu](mailto:jim.eckert@wmich.edu)

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The document that follows captures my ethical commitment. As I enter and function in the business world I will live these concepts through my actions and remain committed to these ideals even when such commitment is inconvenient or personally harmful. I have identified and defined five key ethical concepts and captured how I intend to bring these concepts to life through my actions.

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**Greed:** inordinate or insatiable desire for gain

When I have decisions to make, or options to consider, I will always take the path that will result in the greatest gain for me. I will seek such gains at the expense of others.

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**Gluttony:** the act or habit of eating to excess

I will seek out unnecessarily large quantities of food and devote significant time to eating and enjoying this food. The quantities I consume will be well beyond what is required for nutritional reasons.

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**Sloth:** habitually avoiding labor or work; being lazy

The only thing I will work hard at is avoiding any real or productive work. I will go to great extremes to avoid accomplishing anything relevant or worthwhile.

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**Rudeness:** behaving impolitely, discourteously, and crudely

When interacting with others I will strive to behave in a way that creates the greatest discomfort, disservice, inconvenience, and annoyance for those people. I will shun as many customary rules of polite behavior as possible.

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**Sarcasm:** bitter and cutting satirical expression

When offering my comments or opinions I will ridicule as many people and ideas as I can. I will always look for the folly in others and be sure to point that out in a sharp, yet occasionally humorous way.

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**Note:** All of the definitions were developed by referring to "The Pocket Webster School & Office Dictionary," Pocket Books/Simon Schuster, New York, 1990