

## Four Small Steps to Exemplify Integrity in the Workplace

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According to Amy Anderson, founder of REES Capital, *“We live in a world where integrity isn’t talked about nearly enough. We live in a world where ‘the end justifies the means’ has become an acceptable school of thought for far too many”*. Hence, reading an article about integrity can be uncomfortable. It will remind you of the times you could have exemplified integrity at work, but did not or perhaps the times when you tried to justify your actions which lacked integrity. May it be the few hours you slacked off at work yesterday because you just feel like it or that one time you lied about the status of your deliverables just to keep your performance rating on top. May it be the minutes you extended your work breaks because your boss is not around or that one time you said something untrue about your officemate just because you disagree with him or her. The list could go on and on.

But don’t worry, the first step to acting with integrity is admitting (and not justifying) that you may have done embarrassing (or perhaps dishonorable) acts. Next, start small steps in exemplifying integrity at work.

*“Great things almost always start small”*, says Joel Gascoigne, CEO of Buffer. Indeed, we can start small because small acts of integrity almost always lead to great acts of integrity. Below are four small tasks you can apply to your job this week to grow your character of integrity in the workplace:

1. **Avoid over-extending work breaks.** Did you know that over-extending breaks is a form of stealing? In an article of ePay Systems, it is said that, *“extending authorized meal times and breaks is another common form of time theft”*. Truth is, long lunches and extending breaks cost company money in loss of productivity. We can exemplify integrity in the workplace by complying to the allotted time for work breaks regardless if someone is eyeing on us or not.

2. **Refuse the gossip.** Gossips are intended to undermine, harm, or destroy another person’s reputation. Whether we do it intentionally or unintentionally, gossip is gossip and it greatly reflects one’s stand on integrity. A study by the Georgia Institute of Technology proved that gossips can destroy an entire organization. Gossips do not only spoil trust and morale, it can also hinder teamwork and productivity. So the next time you are approached with workplace gossip, set an example for others to follow. Do not participate in the gossip, and let your action send a message to others that gossiping is an undesirable behavior.

3. **Don’t take office supplies home.** Another form of company theft is the misuse of pens, bond papers, highlighters and even post-it notes that are considered to be the company’s assets. This includes taking them home without company permission. A source from Boston.com wrote that *“More than 40 percent of workers confessed to borrowing an item from a colleague and never returning it, and more than 50 percent to taking office products for use at home”*. Isn’t that alarming? We can exemplify integrity in the workplace by valuing even the “smallest” form of company resource.

If we consider the amount of money spent for office supplies as our own money, we won’t waste it away. Our empathy for the Company makes us trustworthy.

4. **Remind yourself that integrity is valuable.** Are you familiar with the “Mere Reminder Effect”? Basically, it concludes that we are more likely to stick with a core value (for instance, integrity) if we get reminded of its importance once in a while. For example, you can post a note on your computer monitor saying, *“Be a person of integrity today”* so that you can get reminded of it before you start checking your work e-mails on that day. Or maybe you can dwell on Luke 16:10 which reminds us that, *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much”*.

Together, we can start with practical acts of integrity more than building a good reputation for our own selves. After all, integrity nurtures image, image nurtures character, character nurtures reputation, and not the other way around. And although we can never be a person of perfect integrity, we can still strive to be one. We can transform and help an organization with one small act of integrity at a time.

*Did You Know?*

In 2008, the CGO released an in-house developed music video entitled ‘Wag Kang Pasaway’ [Don’t be a violator]. The four-minute presentation encourages all company personnel to be aware of the Company’s Conflict of Interest Policy and its application to day-to-day activities.

View Link: <http://www.pldt.com/videos/default-source/default-video-library/huwag-kang-pasaway.wmv?sfvrsn=2>

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