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Temptations of the Sirens: Ethical Issues in Libraries

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Temptations of the Sirens: Ethical Issues in Libraries[*]

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In this article, librarians are challenged and encouraged to integrate ethical analysis into all aspects of library decision making. An approach to ethical issues in the work-place is outlined, and difficult ethical situations are viewed through the prism of a culture of ethical behavior.

[E]thical transgressions . . . tempt us like the Sirens in Greek mythology: we find it hard to escape all their seductions.

—Ron Howard and Clint Korver[1]

Introduction

¶1 Whenever there is an avoidable catastrophic event in the business world, media coverage almost always contains an ample measure of moral and ethical judgment. For example, as the news poured forth after the 2010 British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the stories of the disaster were invariably colored with accusations that BP's lust for profits superseded the most basic protections for both employees and the environment.[2] When the schemes and shenanigans of Bernie Madoff came to light, the reports in even the most objective venues dripped with accusations that the financier's morals had plummeted long before his Ponzi scheme collapsed.[3] And when Brown Williams knowingly "pumped" its cigarettes full of chemical agents to heighten the addictive effects of the nicotine, the news-papers blasted the tobacco company for increasing the health risks of unwitting consumers to fuel higher corporate profits.[4] Although one could argue that the

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   1. Ron Howard & Clint Korver, Ethics for the Real World 13 (2008).

   2. *See, e.g.*, Cain Burdeau & Holbrook Mohr, *BP Downplayed the Possibility of Major Oil Spill*, Boston Globe, May 1, 2010, at A2; Clifford Krauss & Elisabeth Rosenthal, *The Price and Who Pays: Updates from the Gulf*, N.Y. Times, May 13, 2010, at A18; Steven Mufson & Michael D. Shear, *Pressure Grows for Action by BP; Spill Remains Uncapped; Firm's Plan Minimized Risk of Such an Accident*, Wash. Post, May 1, 2010, at A1.

   3. *See, e.g.*, Julie Creswell & Landon Thomas, Jr., *The Talented Mr. Madoff*, N.Y. Times, Jan. 24, 2009, at BU1; Robert Frank et al., *Madoff Jailed After Admitting Epic Scam*, Wall St. J., Mar. 13, 2009, at A1; Diana B. Henriques, *U.S. Proposes 150 Years for Madoff*, N.Y. Times, June 26, 2009, at B3.

   4. *See, e.g.*, Alix M. Freedman, *"Impact Booster": Tobacco Firm Shows How Ammonia Spurs Delivery of Nicotine*, Wall St. J., Oct. 18, 1995, at A1; Jan Crawford Greenburg, *Big Tobacco Feels*

business world, due in large part to heavy state and federal regulation, should generally be an ethical environment, these incidents are not uncommon occurrences. The business world is flush with illegality and immorality. And such behavior is not isolated to businessmen; lawyers, doctors, clergymen, educators, and even librarians[5] have engaged in unethical, if not always illegal, behaviors.

¶2 Despite this reality, and the prevalence of a media focus on ethical issues, most professional graduate programs place a relatively low priority on ethics, particularly those concerns that are morally questionable rather than blatantly illegal. Even in law schools, which are accredited by the American Bar Association and thereby required to incorporate ethical training into their curricula,[6] the emphasis on ethics as opposed to substantive matters is minimal. Ethical issues are usually addressed through the lens of what is legally impermissible rather than what is morally reprehensible. Too often, actions are analyzed with the assumption that if the behavior is legal it is ethical and vice versa. Perhaps even more disturbing are discussions that support ethical behavior primarily because it is good for the bottom line or because unethical behavior might result in unacceptable financial risk.[7]

¶3 Unfortunately, this absence of ethical focus is reflected in the training of library professionals just as it is in that of other professionals. Ethical issues are usually addressed in library and information science graduate curricula within the context of legislative directives such as those found in the Freedom of Information Act and the USA PATRIOT Act.[8] Even in management courses, personnel issues such as hiring, compensation, and performance evaluation are usually approached as purely administrative matters (albeit with possible legal considerations) and are rarely discussed with an eye to possible underlying ethical concerns.[9] Also given little attention are the ethical aspects of interactions between a library and external institutional administrators such as deans, donors, vendors, and individuals who use the library's services.

¶4 Undoubtedly, part of the reason for this is that ethical issues are much more nebulous and individually specific than matters that can be approached primarily as legal operational concerns. Also, many ethical issues that arise within libraries

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the Heat, CHI. TRIB., Feb. 11, 1996, at 1; Warren E. Leary, *Cigarette Company Developed Tobacco with Stronger Nicotine*, N.Y. TIMES, June 22, 1994, at A1.

5. *See, e.g.*, *Former Penn Librarian Gets Probation for Downloading Child Porn*, AM. LIBR., Apr. 2004, at 20; Norman Oder, *GA PL Director Convicted*, LIBR. J., Nov. 1, 2005, at 19; *Ex-Director Gets Six Months for Library Thefts*, LIBR. J. ARCHIVE (Jan. 12, 2005), http://www.libraryjournal.com/article /CA493454.html.

6. AM. BAR ASS'N, STANDARDS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF LAW SCHOOLS 2011– 2012, at 20, 22 (2011) (Standard 302(a)(5) and Interpretation 302-9).

7. Ethan B. Kapstein, *The Corporate Ethics Crusade*, 80 FOREIGN AFF. 105, 107–10 (2001); Ulf Henning Richter, *Drivers of Change: A Multiple-Case Study on the Process of Institutionalization of Corporate Responsibility Among Three Multinational Companies*, 102 J. BUS. ETHICS 261 (2011).

8. *See, e.g.*, Chris Matz, *Libraries and the USA PATRIOT Act: Values in Conflict*, 47 J. LIB. ADMIN., no. 3, 2008, at 69.

9. *See, e.g.*, HERBERT S. WHITE, ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN LIBRARIES (1992). This collection of case studies, involving ethical dilemmas in varied library settings, is widely referenced and in many ways a valuable resource. However, the case studies are focused primarily on common management concerns and do not delve into rarely addressed ethical matters such as the undermining of a colleague through malicious gossip.

may be viewed as relatively minor or open to multiple subjective interpretations, and therefore not worthy of much critical analysis. Take, for example, the hiring of a valued library employee's bright and mature teenage son for a summer shelving project in an academic law library. Assuming there are no institutional policies precluding such a hire, at first blush the decision looks easy. The son is intelligent and hardworking and may be more reliable than some of the undergraduate student workers applying for the position. Also, the parent employee would be pleased that her son has a paying summer job and thus might become even more loyal to the organization. The hire would result in efficiencies since the shelving supervisor would not have to worry about posting the job, interviewing a host of unknown applicants, and risking a "bad hire." An administrator might see a downside in that a supervisor might feel awkward disciplining the son of another employee if performance problems arose, but if this possibility were fully explored prior to the hire and all parties involved still felt comfortable about it, this concern would probably not be considered to be a deal breaker.

¶5 Thus, many managers might not think to put this hiring decision to the broader ethical test: Is it ethical to give preference to an employee's son? Wouldn't it be fairer if the position were open to a larger pool, including university students who are already part of the institutional community and who might be struggling to pay tuition? If these questions were asked and carefully considered, providing an undue advantage to the son over others could be seen as unethical. Unfortunately, it is easy to dismiss this thought and argue that hiring the son is not only indisputably ethical but is "the smart thing to do."

¶6 The purpose of this article is to challenge librarians, as well as others involved in the management of libraries and the delivery of information services, to integrate ethical analysis into all aspects of operations and decision making. We begin with a general discussion of ethics in professional environments and how to incorporate appropriate reasoning into assessing actions which, although not illegal, may be unethical. We then discuss how library administrators as leaders might approach developing a realistic framework of ethical principles that can be embraced by a wide spectrum of individuals within an organization and can be integrated into the wider culture of the institution.

Sliding Down the Slippery Slope

¶7 Attempting to live an ethical professional life is somewhat like trying to sustain a well-balanced diet. Most of us strive to monitor our daily caloric consumption and maintain a healthy weight because we know we should—we will likely live longer, have more energy, avoid many chronic diseases, and optimize our quality of life. Nonetheless, even the most disciplined and health-conscious individuals have succumbed to the lure of a McDonald's Big Mac Extra Value Meal (complete with "world famous french fries" and an "icy cold" sugar-laden soda).[10] Usually, within

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10. A McDonald's Big Mac Extra Value Meal contains 1140 calories, 48 grams of fat, and 1280 milligrams of sodium. *See Extra Value Meals*, MCDONALDS, http://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en/food /meal_bundles/extra_value_meals.html (last visited June 24, 2012).

a reasonable amount of time we are back to our regular dietary routine, perhaps reflecting on what changes to our schedule, external pressures, or lapses in judgment caused us to get off track. However, the longer we indulge in poor eating habits, the harder it is to return to a more disciplined routine. Sometimes, even with obvious signs, such as a suit jacket that no longer fits or a reluctance to weigh ourselves, we fail to admit that we are no longer sustaining a healthy diet.

¶8 Similarly, most of us strive to lead highly ethical lives—we attempt to follow the Golden Rule, adhere to the moral axioms learned at our parents' knees, honor the highly principled precepts of our professions and religious faiths, obey the teachings of the world's great spiritual leaders, and abide by Thumper's sage counsel.[11] However, much like our attempts to maintain a well-balanced diet, we have occasional slips. Most individuals at some point in their lives have made a catty remark about a relative, repeated a malicious piece of gossip, hidden behind a white lie to avoid a boss's displeasure, or failed to keep a promise. But just as with dieting, once we begin a consistent pattern of ethical lapses, no matter how minor, we can easily find ourselves living a life of small and large ethical indiscretions. Perhaps most disturbing is that we may not even realize that our lives have become riddled with lies, malfeasance, and mistreatment of others.

¶9 According to Howard and Korver in their book *Ethics for the Real World*,

> Ethical compromises both big and small hurt us, and we underestimate how much. . . . [O]ne compromise can lead to another as we let our standards slip. Once we cross one line, we may find it hard to resist crossing the next. We can get started going downhill on the proverbial slippery slope, where each compromise becomes easier, and we fall asleep to their consequences. As we develop bad habits, no matter our accomplishments and virtues, we may find ourselves in shocking situations.[12]

¶10 Conscious and unconscious consideration of ethical principles has been prevalent in all civilizations since prehistoric times. The members of almost every society "have oriented their lives according to a series of principles, decrees, rules, or laws. . . . Individuals are acculturated, trained, or frightened into accepting and affirming these tenets and they live accordingly."[13] Philosophers as varied in viewpoint as Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Benedict de Spinoza, John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, and the fictional boy-feline twosome Calvin and Hobbes have exhaustively reflected upon ethical values and decision making. Tomes, more often pedantic than not, have been written on these interrelated topics. Howard and Korver, though, have analyzed these topics with refreshing pragmatism, candor, and clarity. According to those authors, "[m]ost ethical transgressions fall into roughly three categories: deception, stealing, and harming. Although there are many variants, these three encompass most wrongdoing."[14]

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11. In the 1942 Walt Disney film *Bambi*, the young rabbit Thumper is instructed by his parents, "If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all." This has become known as the "Thumperian Principle." COMPLEX PROBLEM SOLVING 383 (Robert J. Sternberg & Peter A. Frensch eds., 1991).

12. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 12.

13. ROBERT HAUPTMAN, ETHICS AND LIBRARIANSHIP 6 (2002).

14. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 13.

¶11 Deception embodies a broad range of behaviors, including lying,[15] offering or failing to correct an inaccurate impression, accepting credit for someone else's work or ideas, "[f]eigning ignorance, not telling the whole truth, withholding information, sugarcoating the truth, or overusing tact."[16] It is disturbing to note that many types of deception are legally permissible and are such a common part of our lives and work environments that they have become accepted as "business as usual." A significant number of employees periodically call in sick when they have tickets to attend a sporting event, describe a colleague's work performance in only the most negative light without referencing positive contributions, submit a report without acknowledging a subordinate's contributions, or utilize work time for professional or personal activities without administrative approval. Another common form of deception in the workplace is for an employee to interview for a position at another institution with no real intention of changing jobs but rather with the goal of using an offer as a bargaining chip for a salary increase or some other benefit.

¶12 As with deception, stealing, varied in form and magnitude, is disturbingly pervasive. What is most alarming is that usually stealing is "not conducted by 'just a few bad apples' within an institution. A study conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce suggests that 75% of employees had stolen from their employers at least once, and half of them stole at least twice."[17] Despite its prevalence, this topic is rarely addressed in professional literature or conference programming except in regard to the misappropriation of significant sums of money or the theft of valuable property such as unique works from rare book collections. Little attention is given to stealing that may have comparatively minor financial ramifications and be hard to track, such as the taking of office supplies or the theft of time. Although technically illegal, and certainly unethical, these infractions, once again, often fall into the "business as usual" category.

¶13 The third ethical transgression identified by Howard and Korver is harming.[18] Physical harm is, of course, relatively simple to identify and address. If an employee is assaulted or, worse yet, killed by a colleague, the action is usually quickly discovered and dealt with through clearly defined legal processes. Similarly, there are legal remedies for indisputable cases of defamation and unfair employment practices. Most harm inflicted by employees, though, is not physical and is frequently so subtle that it cannot be easily recognized: ruining someone's reputation through the perpetuation of subtle false rumors, undermining another staff member's efforts to excel in her position, or failing to provide a worthy subordinate with professional development opportunities out of jealousy all can be hard to uncover and even harder to remedy. They are unethical because they are harmful to an employee's personal well-being and career but difficult to address because often no laws have been violated.

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15. *Id.* (Howard and Korver consider lying such a common form of deception that in their book they separate it from their general discussion of deception.)

16. *Id.* at 17.

17. Elizabeth E. Umphress et al., *The Influence of Distributive Justice on Lying for and Stealing from a Supervisor,* 86 J. Bus. Ethics 507, 507 (2009).

18. Howard & Korver, *supra* note 1, at 23.

How to Approach Possible Ethical Issues

¶14 On a daily basis, conscientious librarians are faced with countless situations where they could ask themselves, "Am I acting in an ethical manner?" They may also encounter with equal frequency the question, "Is the action being taken by my colleague ethical?" Howard and Korver have designed an approach that is practical, logical, and unambiguous. The authors postulate that all actions can be separated into three dimensions: prudential, legal, and ethical. "Within the prudential dimension [individuals] distinguish between what is prudent or not prudent; within the legal dimension, between what is legal or unlawful; and within the ethical dimension, between what is right or wrong."[19] Although there is some overlap between these dimensions, many actions can be evaluated through the lens of solely one dimension. On the other hand, complex "[e]thically sensitive situations are often confounded by prudential and legal issues we fail to see."[20]

¶15 An action that falls within the prudential dimension is usually one in which individuals "balance one issue with another, trade off pluses and minuses, and weigh opposing risks, to decide what the 'smart' thing is to do."[21] Actions that are seen as prudential usually involve self-interest: for example, agreeing to serve on a committee for the sole reason that the appointment has significant résumé value, or supporting a supervisor's decision to paint a wall her favorite color believing that this loyalty will be rewarded in the future. Or a library director might decide not to argue with a dean about the installation of a new computer lab in the library even if the director believes the lab has no real long-term value. The director knows that the computer lab is one of the dean's pet projects, and if it is too vigorously opposed, the library might lose significant institutional support.

¶16 Actions that are encompassed within the legal dimension in the work environment obviously include embezzlement, fraud, sexual harassment, defamation, and discrimination in hiring practices. Such behaviors and actions can be efficiently handled as purely legal matters since there are clear laws, policies, procedures, penalties, and punishments in place. The difficulty arises when trying to determine which illegal behaviors are egregious enough to pursue and worth the investment of institutional resources.

¶17 Actions that are included within the ethical dimension are those that relate to an accepted standard of behavior. "An action in accord with our code of behavior is obviously ethical, and [an action] in conflict [is] unethical."[22] Decisions about the ethics of a particular action often become needlessly complicated and confused because we fail to place the decision in its appropriate context or "dimension."[23]

¶18 It is usually easy to distinguish between the legal and ethical dimensions of actions in the work environment. For example, a library director might believe that war is immoral and those that participate in armed conflict are exhibiting flawed character traits. However, if federal or state law stipulates that veterans be given

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19. *Id.* at 35.
20. *Id.*
21. *Id.*
22. *Id.*
23. *Id.* at 36.

preferential treatment in the hiring process, the librarian does not need to enter the ethical dimension in her decision-making process—she is compelled to follow the law. Similarly, a director might feel strongly that it is discriminatory not to provide undocumented aliens equal opportunity to seek and secure employment. But if federal or state law precludes the hiring of undocumented workers, the director cannot choose to infuse her personal values into the hiring process.

¶19 The more difficult exercise is distinguishing actions that should be evaluated in the ethical dimension from those that fall within the prudential dimension. As Howard and Korver comment, "we do not usually get 'between an ethical rock and a hard place.' Instead, we get between an ethical rock and a prudential hard place."[24] Often we "characterize emotionally charged prudential actions as ethically sensitive."[25] Issues involving ethical matters are frequently termed "ethical dilemmas." However, "they are [often] not dilemmas at all. They are conflicts between prudential gain and ethical action. They are issues of temptation."[26] Here is a classic example of this type of conflict: An employee interviews for a supervisory position within the library where she has worked for several years as a reference librarian without administrative duties. Moving into the open position would result in a promotion and a salary increase for this employee. During the interview, without prompting, the librarian states that if offered the job, she would stay with the library for at least two years. This promise, of course, is not a legally enforceable agreement. The librarian is offered the supervisory position and accepts the promotion and salary increase. Within six months, now having supervisory experience, she applies for a position at another library that pays more money. She interviews for the job and is offered the position. The employee feels torn between honoring her promise and accepting the position at the other library, but this is not an ethical dilemma. The employee made a promise that she would not leave her position. If she succumbs to the temptation to accept the job offer and break her promise, she has engaged in behavior that, although not illegal, is clearly unethical.

¶20 Ethical concerns frequently are also affected by considerations unique to a specific environment and that go beyond the specific issue at hand. These may include whether the library is a public, private, or religiously affiliated entity; whether the library has formal management and personnel policies that extend beyond legal requirements; whether the library or the larger institution has clearly articulated, expected ethical norms and behaviors; and whether there are cultural and political factors that must be weighed. In addition, administrators often must consider the costs of addressing an ethical concern in terms of resources, potential institutional discord, external opinion and ramifications, and possible litigation. These costs must be balanced with the benefits in terms of fairness, honesty, enhanced credibility, and the possibility of improved staff morale.

¶21 To work through the inevitable balancing act that is a part of addressing almost every ethical situation, many management ethicists advocate the following five-step process: (1) consider the boundaries of the action; (2) separate the impor-

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24. *Id.* at 38.
25. *Id.* at 36.
26. *Id.* at 38.

tant ethical issues from the trivial; (3) evaluate alternatives and their repercussions; (4) determine a course of action that conforms with ethical standards; and (5) recognize the effect that a decision will have on future choices.[27] Steps 2 and 3—determining what ethical issues are important and evaluating alternative actions—require heightened ethical understanding and insight. These two steps are obviously subject to individual interpretation. The fifth step is also particularly noteworthy, since once one has started down a particular path, the direction in which that path leads may have enduring ethical consequences.

¶22 This five-step process is well defined but flexible enough to be adapted differently in varying situations. For example, the solution to an ethical challenge may be completely different when a library director sees an employee using the library's administrative photocopier to reproduce thirty copies of his grandmother's famous fruitcake recipe than when she encounters an employee at the water cooler spreading malicious gossip about another staff member's personal life.

¶23 In the first scenario, the director may determine that, although there is no policy statement specifically addressing personal use of the library's photocopier and the cost of making thirty copies of a recipe is relatively minimal, this type of misappropriation of library resources is unethical. The director may decide not to discuss the matter with the employee, though, because she suspects that many employees use the photocopier in the same manner. The director could determine that the appropriate course of action is to implement a policy that clearly states that using any library resources, including photocopiers, for personal matters is inappropriate and not permitted. Thus, in the future, if another employee exhibits the same behavior, the question of ethics will not even arise—the action would be a violation of library policy.

¶24 Following the suggested five-step process, the solution to the second scenario could well be very different. Clearly, the action of spreading malicious gossip is not a matter of a few pennies out of the library's coffers. The library employee has perpetuated stories that not only could have negative ramifications on a colleague's career, personal life, and self-esteem but also could encourage a tone of backstabbing and dishonesty throughout the organization. In evaluating the situation, the director might suspect the gossiping library employee assumes that sharing mean-spirited comments is part of life in any organization and that everyone does it. However, if the library director views the spreading of malicious gossip as unethical in the workplace and hardly trivial, she may decide to chastise the employee and even state that future occurrences of the same behavior could result in a formal reprimand.[28]

¶25 The director also would need to determine how to communicate to the entire staff that such behavior is not condoned and may result in disciplinary action. The harder part of this final step is recognizing that similar situations that arise in the future may not be easily resolved by clearly stated policies. For instance,

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27. Fay Zipkowitz, Professional Ethics in Librarianship 10–11 (1996) (citing A.J. Anderson, Problems in Library Management *passim* (1981)).

28. Of course, before moving on to writing a memo of reprimand that will become part of the employee's personnel file, the director would need to adhere to broader institutional human resources policies and procedures.

what comments should be considered malicious and what comments, albeit critical, are merely benign conversation regarding another employee? The answers to such questions may vary from institution to institution and with the context in which the remarks are made. For example, an employee repeating a rumor that a colleague is sharing an apartment with her boyfriend may have different significance in a public institution in a large urban environment than in a library within a religiously affiliated institution in a conservative and tightly knit community.

Ethical Library Workplace Issues in Context

¶26 Ethical library workplace issues arise in a number of contexts. Organizational culture, for example, often leads to ethical questions. Library politics also often frame ethical debates. Religion and religious discussions can lead to differing opinions about ethical behaviors and fracture fragile workplace relationships. Some potential client or customer service initiatives pose ethical challenges.

Culture

¶27 In our increasingly culturally diverse workplaces, ethical imperatives will not remain constant. The workplace milieu defines most workplace issues but also raises ethical considerations. To what extent is it appropriate to use library funds for staff birthday parties, administrative lunches, and other institutional celebrations? Such gatherings boost employee morale and, indeed, may be expected as a benefit by some staff members. However, in times of financial stringency, is it ethical to divert monies, even those in a petty cash fund, away from operational activities to support purely social gatherings? Actions that may once have been considered appropriate may be viewed as ethical lapses when the culture of a library has evolved into one of financial prudence and restraint.

¶28 The allocation of employee time may raise ethical issues. Employee requests for release time for professional development or to attend to medical or family matters are normally covered by institutional policies, and questions of abuse usually arise only when a supervisor suspects deception. If such a situation develops, the easiest solution is to request documentation as permitted by institutional guidelines. More difficult ethical concerns arise when supervisors look the other way or inconsistently enforce policies. A supervisor who allows an employee to take time off from work to run personal errands without using vacation time is as ethically culpable as the employee. Most ethical missteps can be avoided by both supervisors and employees adhering to all institutional policies and procedures.

¶29 Some cultural workplace issues are potential landmines but nonetheless must be tackled. These may be questions such as: Is a library dress code still a reasonable policy in the twenty-first century work environment? What are the possible consequences if an employee is dressed inappropriately? Are employee grooming and personal hygiene issues any business of the library administration? Who tells coworkers that they need to see a barber or a dentist? The first line of defense in handling these matters is to implement a personal hygiene/dress code if such guidelines are institutionally permissible. If such a policy is not permissible, management

techniques such as coaching or peer counseling can be, and often are, appropriate.

¶30 However, ethical transgressions may occur if there is any hint of disparate treatment. For example, a supervisor may have the administrative authority to implement a dress code and might institute a policy that no member of the public services staff can wear jeans, although all the technology support staff are allowed to wear jeans because dressing casually is the "tech culture." The library's clients also dress very casually and seem to have no interest in the attire of the library staff. In this scenario, the public services staff might see the dress code as inequitable, which could lead to a lowering of staff morale and have no positive impact on the efficiency of the library. In addition to being perceived as poor management, the implementation of the dress code could be seen as unethical in that the manager has shown favoritism toward one group of employees.

¶31 Ethical questions associated with the receipt of gifts and favors are often tied to the cultural environment of the workplace. What favors or gifts should a library leader accept from his coworkers? Are tickets to a ball game an acceptable expression of friendship? What value or price for a gift is appropriate? Does it make a difference whether the gift was homemade or homegrown or whether the items were purchased? How often is too often to accept gifts from coworkers? The ethical answers to these questions will usually center on the value and the frequency of the gift giving. The bottom line is that any workplace interaction between employees must be transparent and must avoid even the appearance of impropriety. An employee bringing a supervisor a bag of zucchini from a backyard garden is much different from an employee returning from an overseas trip and presenting his supervisor with an expensive piece of jewelry.

Politics

¶32 There are run-of-the-mill office politics and then there are garden variety party politics. There seems to be little merit in promoting or engaging in party politics in the workplace. The best practice is undoubtedly to have all political parties and their emissaries leave their slogans at the door, since such conversation often generates too much heat and not enough light. Is there then an obligation to report those instances when political decorum is breached, such as when an employee utters some canned campaign rhetoric during a staff meeting? Maybe, but generally it is wiser to forget or at least to fail to remember minor breeches. If no real harm is committed, there probably is no ethical transgression to address.

¶33 There is no way, though, to avoid or prohibit office politics. Everyone who joins an organization is faced with learning something about the key players. Who are they? What do they like? What do they dislike? What are their pet projects or favorite pastimes? Who are their intimate friends? Who counts and who doesn't count in the organizational hierarchy? The trick is to make sure that a personal ethical code keeps "learning the ropes" from deteriorating into a gossip-fest. If routine office politics lead to gossip that distorts the truth and harms an individual's reputation or ability to succeed in the organization, then a library manager needs to take action to address the issue and perhaps take disciplinary action against the perpetrator of the gossip.

¶34 Within the realm of office politics, another form of harmful, unethical behavior occurs when an employee has the opportunity to assist a colleague in some way and chooses not to do so, out of either apathy or avarice. For example, a librarian may hear an unflattering and obviously false comment about a colleague and fail to take action to correct the misrepresentation. This can probably be best described as an ethical lapse rather than an intentional act; nevertheless, the failure to act can undeniably harm another individual in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

¶35 To quote Howard and Korver as they reflect on the harm caused by some office behaviors:

> As with stealing, most of us don't engage in obvious harming. But we may engage in more common but subtle behaviors that fall into this category, specifically actions that cause risk of harm to others. . . . recognizing which of our actions put others in harm's way . . . . we may turn a blind eye to harm, incite harm, fail to prevent harm, or deceive others into putting themselves into harm's way.[29]

They go on to observe, "The question is not always, Have I injured someone? It is more likely, Am I complicit somehow? Did I gamble with someone else's well-being? Did I turn aside, jeopardize, or imperil? Did I see the risk yet blink, wink, dodge, discount, dismiss, or disown?"[30]

¶36 It is clear that library employees should make an effort to treat all colleagues with respect and be honest in their dealings with coworkers. In most library organizations, there also is an implicit understanding that colleagues need to cooperate and support one another. But how far should camaraderie extend? Should physical relationships between coworkers be restricted? If there are restrictions, should they apply only to those who are direct reports or to other colleagues as well? Many organizations have policies in place, but these policies are often vague, poorly communicated, or rarely enforced. At a bare minimum, if an institution is committed to avoiding opportunities for ethical transgressions and there are no institutional constraints such as union agreements, a policy should be considered (if institutionally permissible) limiting the extent of personal relationships between supervisors and subordinates.

¶37 Although library administrators are limited in their ability to ensure that everyone gets along, harmony undoubtedly increases in organizations where employees are counseled to resist the temptation to engage in self-interest and self-promotion by stepping on, stepping over, and stepping up the workplace ladder. Climbing the rungs of the workplace ladder frequently causes individuals to lose their ethical balance. Library leadership must be vigilant in ensuring that self-interest and self-promotion at others' expense are not rewarded.

Religion

¶38 It is difficult to imagine any workplace environment in which the implementation of the Golden Rule or the expression of charity and other similar virtues would not be welcomed and embraced. Nonetheless, many libraries do not encour-

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29. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 23.
30. *Id.*

age employees to engage in formal religious dialogue, debate, or practice, even though arguably the development of most ethical principles comes from religious heritage. Especially in public institutions, employees, including administrators, may be reluctant to express any views based on personal religious beliefs for fear of violating institutional rules and culture. Obviously, favoring one religious sect over another in the workplace is unethical, but this does not mean that dialogue cannot be permitted if managed in an unbiased manner. The exception, of course, is those faith-based library organizations where religion plays a prominent role and wherein religious discourse is encouraged. Even at these religious institutions, however, it is important that all faith traditions be welcomed and valued and that no one be harmed through hiring or promotion practices that are tainted with religious prejudice, intolerance, or bigotry.

Client Service

¶39 Client service issues exist in all libraries, and some of these issues can be ethically challenging. The client using the resources of a public law library needs to be served, but at a private or special library a more restricted client base may need more focused attention. The majority of client issues deal with how much service is enough service and what types of service can be offered. The quality of library service will obviously be influenced by the size of the library collection and the number of library staff. Ethical questions come to the forefront in a variety of situations when librarians attempt to meet client service demands. What hoops should librarians be expected to jump through? What about difficult clients—is service downgraded or diminished for those individuals? What are the ethical ramifications when service is compromised? What about when client requests for personalized service turn into demands for special treatment or even threats of some kind of reprisal if service expectations are not met? Is it even possible to offer extraordinary service when economic problems continue to drain library resources? The answers to these questions will depend on the type of library, the service mission, and the health of the library budget. The bottom line for customer service, however, regardless of service parameters, is to understand what library clients need and then determine what can be done to fulfill those needs in an ethical manner.

The Importance of Administrative Leadership: Creating a Culture of Ethical Behavior

¶40 The ethical climate of any library will be, to a large extent, determined by the leader of the organization. In most cases, this will be the library director. Therefore, it is imperative that the director clearly and repeatedly articulate the ethical guidelines that she expects all employees to follow in even the most difficult situations. It is equally important that the director's actions and words reflect a consistent adherence to these standards. According to business consultant Laura Nash, "A manager is not an autonomous moral entity. Rather, he or she must be a moral leader, responsible for the behavior of other people and the institution itself, as well

as his or her own character."[31] Although institutional ethical codes[32] are undoubtedly best drafted with input from all internal constituencies, the institutional culture itself will largely influence which ethical principles are practiced with consistency.[33]

¶41 The true test of a director who is committed to creating a sustained culture of ethics within a library is a demonstrated effort to objectively and consistently examine her own behavior. A library director cannot hold her staff to higher standards than she demands of herself. Nor can she behave in a manner that does not mirror the articulated ethical values of the institution. Ethical behavior within a library setting will be tested, lived, and judged on a day-to-day basis. Ethical patterns, or the lack thereof, emerge as they are practiced. The question then becomes whether it is possible for a library director to create or sustain an ethical workplace by the clear articulation and implementation of ethical principles. The negative consequences and costs to library organizations that tolerate inconsistent ethical behavior or ignore serious ethical transgressions, such as lying, slander, and stealing, are incalculable.

¶42 Among the plethora of challenges facing a library director in developing an ethical environment is defining the boundaries of her own workplace relationships. Associations and friendships that might be appropriate in other circumstances may be not just ill-advised but unethical for a leader within an organization. Interpersonal relationships that go beyond purely collegial work-related exchanges and associations can lead to situations where a director's judgment and decision-making efforts are clouded by friendships and non-work-related loyalties. This concern goes beyond relationships that may have an emotional or romantic component. Close friendships or even casual relationships that involve occasional social gatherings such as dinner parties may lead a director to lose objectivity in the workplace in regard to some personnel matters. How a director approaches this challenge is driven by factors discussed earlier in this article, such as the culture and unique concerns of an institution. For example, in a library within a religiously affiliated institution, the director may interact frequently with employees at church committee meetings, fund-raisers, and social functions. Or the director may share an involvement with an employee in a civic activity such as the Rotary Club or a veteran's group. Each director, within the parameters of her own situation, must decide where to draw the boundaries with an eye toward not only ensuring her own objectivity but also how others within the institution might view social interactions beyond those expected of colleagues.

¶43 Other ethical issues may arise for a director when distributing or approving workplace perquisites such as institutional support for professional activities.

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31. Laura L. Nash, Good Intentions Aside: A Manager's Guide to Resolving Ethical Problems 4 (1990).

32. For an interesting discussion of drafting an ethical code for law librarianship, see Arthur A. Charpentier, *An Ethical Code for Law Librarianship?*, in Reader in Law Librarianship 121 (Bernard D. Reams, Jr. ed., 1976).

33. The failure to adopt a library ethics code may result in the default practice of "laissez-faire ethics," whereby an organization relies on everyone's upbringing or creates an after-the-fact punishment mechanism. *See* Nash, *supra* note 31, at 17.

Although clearly stated policies and uniform travel allowances negate some ethical concerns, valid requests for additional funding frequently arise. Broad consultation with other library staff by the library director or the establishment of a professional development committee with a budget could help minimize these concerns. The key in dealing with this situation, as with all ethical challenges, is to engage in an evaluative process that includes identifying a course of action that conforms to ethical standards and assists the library in regularizing practices.

¶44 Effective and open communication is a critical factor in all aspects of leadership. However, the challenge in maintaining an ethical institutional culture is determining what information can be shared with whom and in what context. Sharing a considerable amount of institutional information with colleagues is appropriate and indeed is often a necessity for optimal organizational management. However, library directors frequently face ethical considerations when attempting to determine what information to share with whom in a particular context. Obviously, an administrator will share all the information necessary with trusted subordinates, peers, and superiors to ensure that they can achieve maximum performance. Not sharing all appropriate information with colleagues can be a form of deception, in that it leads others to false perceptions and causes them to be handicapped in their ability to fulfill their responsibilities.

¶45 Surreptitiously sharing privileged information, however, is a betrayal of trust, whether it is the trust of an individual or a larger entity. Howard and Korver observe that "deception can arise from secrets."[34] If information shared in secrecy affects a third party, such sharing "changes the relationships between tellers and receivers. Secrets transfer information, power, and control to the secret holder. They take it from the person in the dark."[35] Inevitably, when the secrets are disclosed, trust throughout the organization is eroded. A library director has a particular responsibility to ensure not only that confidential information is protected but that pending personnel and workplace decisions are shared with appropriate employees in a timely manner.

Navigating Through Potentially Dangerous Ethical Shoals

Hiring

¶46 Hiring is an aspect of library administration often susceptible to ethical confusion and compromises. Obviously, the most prudent path to avoiding either actual or perceived ethical violations is to conscientiously abide by all hiring practices and policies mandated by institutional human resources personnel. It is important, therefore, that all of the i's are dotted and all of the t's are crossed to ensure that institutional employment safeguards are a foundation and not a stumbling block.

¶47 To ensure an ethical outcome in the hiring process and avoid possible subsequent issues, a library administrator should follow a deliberate and transparent

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34. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 20.
35. *Id.*

process from the outset. As a first step, in almost all situations, she should determine whether the position under consideration for posting offers meaningful work that supports the goals and needs of the organization. Next, as part of a fiduciary duty to the larger organization, she should analyze the position to determine whether it could be restructured to capture efficiencies or economies, or perhaps even be eliminated. Then, in addition to crafting a comprehensive and well-drafted job description, she should consider possible hiring intangibles and how these intangibles—such as unique job qualifications—should be integrated into the hiring process. After a thorough screening of applicants and the conclusion of an interview process that is the same for all candidates, the library director or her delegate(s) can make the hiring decision. The library director or anyone else on the staff may need to recuse herself from the process if there might be the possibility or perception of bias.

¶48 Incorporating ethics in the hiring process requires that potential conflicts of interest be recognized and addressed early on so that bias and bigotry are minimized and fairness and equality are enhanced. Care needs to be taken to eliminate the possibility that the qualifications for the posted position or the hiring procedures have been unintentionally or intentionally manipulated to help or harm certain individuals. If the library wishes to meet certain goals, such as eliminating nepotism, then the institution needs to create and follow policies that ensure the attainment of those goals, such as guidelines that preclude family members from working within the same department. Many libraries employ a rubric that weights position specifications, which can be used to compare and score applicant qualifications with respect to position requirements.

¶49 To ensure ethical outcomes, all employment decisions should mesh with the expectations of an organization's mission and vision. If a library has an articulated commitment to hiring and supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds, then the library has an ethical obligation to strive, through its recruitment, hiring, and retention practices, to create a workforce that mirrors the demographics of the community population or meets other diversity goals. A strategy used by some libraries is to establish a diversity committee to monitor hiring and develop strategies that ensure that all employees are given an equal opportunity to succeed within the organization.

Compensation

¶50 When analyzing ethical transgressions involving money, and specifically compensation, discussions usually focus on equal treatment for equal work, which is a closely regulated issue. The payment of two employees with equal skills, experience, and performance records is an issue easily resolved by following clearly articulated laws and precedents. However, the ethical issues surrounding compensation are complex. High-performing employees are deceived if they are told that they are being provided with equitable compensation when they earn the same as low-performing employees, as well as financially harmed by not receiving the pay to which they are entitled. In addition, when administrators with salary approval overcom-

pensate an employee, such actions result in both administrative deceit and theft of resources from the larger organization.

¶51 Library administrators often limit access to information such as budgets and salaries to financial management staff. With the exception of public entities, most institutions are highly sensitive about sharing budgetary information both internally and externally. When financial information can be shared, ethical dilemmas arise most frequently when compensation figures are shared broadly. One writer has termed confidentiality, such as in the case of salary figures, "a hallmark of professionalism."[36] However, it is usually appropriate to share general library budget information and background with all staff members so that library belt-tightening won't be a surprise, and to promote a broader understanding of why certain steps, such as reductions in allocations, are taken. All employees also have a right to know when across-the-board salary increases are approved and the amount of those increases in order to make personal budget adjustments.

¶52 Library administrators often have the authority, frequently with considerable discretion, to award annual merit increases. This discretion raises a host of questions: Is it ethical to give an increase to a mediocre or a nonperforming employee? If an adequately performing employee who has a distorted view of his own organizational worth continually clamors for pay raises, is it ethical to grant him one just to keep him happy? Does it make any difference if the employee asking for a raise has an outstanding employment record? When salary caps are in place, is it ethical for a library leader to deviate from these constraints by implementing flexible time provisions or by creating a bonus system, professional development opportunities, or other perquisites? To what extent will part-time or outside library work be permitted? These questions need to be considered before compensation is allocated.

¶53 Although context will affect the answers to these questions, the following rules of thumb may provide some guidance: It is unethical to give a merit increase to a nonperforming employee, and it is equally unethical not to award an outstanding employee a merit increase when funds are available. Granting a more generous raise to an outstanding performer is good policy, but such a decision can lead to overall morale problems if the manner in which merit raises are awarded is not clearly communicated, resulting in a perception of favoritism. When salary caps are in force, library leaders may feel an ethical obligation to implement creative compensation solutions.

Performance Reviews

¶54 The employee review process poses a number of ethical challenges, including the possibility of deceiving the employee or the institution. Harm to both the employee and the library occurs when an employee receives a review that does not fairly reflect performance. In such situations, a poorly performing employee can lose the opportunity to receive guidance on how to improve, and a strong employee can lose access to additional compensation or a promotion. When reviews are conducted, it is imperative that the process be transparent and honest. An evaluation

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36. Jean Preer, Library Ethics 183 (2008).

that considers attitude, team participation, skill proficiencies, and goal achievement should be used. It strengthens neither the employee nor the library organization to gloss over employee weaknesses or shortcomings. Candid review discussions can reduce conflict down the road if the employee's performance does not improve. At the same time, the opportunity to acknowledge and reinforce positive accomplishments during a review session is a milestone that must not be missed if morale at a library is to be heightened and maintained and high-performing staff retained.

¶55 Some administrators, with the most honorable of intentions, perpetuate deceptions during the review process because shading of the truth might seem to benefit the organization. For example, a law library director might write an unearned favorable review for a professional librarian coming up for promotion because the candidate has significant potential and is going through a difficult divorce that has inhibited his ability to perform his responsibilities. However, all deception is unethical. Deceptions committed during the review process are often ignored and left unexamined. "We lose track of how much we use them and we ignore their aftereffects."[37]

¶56 Library managers have an obligation to follow up and follow through with all of their coworkers periodically. Only by consistently monitoring employee effort is it possible to identify and measure employee performance. Performance discussions must be closely tied to annual or periodic employee reviews in order to avoid potential ethical and legal problems. If a library administrator fails to adequately and consistently monitor employee workplace performance, then arguably she too could be seen as engaging in unethical behavior by mismanaging subordinates.

Employee Terminations

¶57 Employees bring a multitude of skills and talent, as well as potential, to the workplace. In return, employers hold out the promise of establishing a productive and rewarding environment. One privilege that a library administrator has is the opportunity and the challenge to match the skills of library personnel with library duties or responsibilities in order to find a suitable place for everyone within the organization. This matching process often involves working with individuals who may have any number of performance or health-related problems. Occasionally, individual work begins to deteriorate and job performance moves from an excellent to an unsatisfactory status. Further problems may arise that lead to the conclusion that an employee must be terminated. A library administrator who does not terminate an employee who is not meeting even minimal performance expectations is failing to honor her fiduciary duty to the larger institution.

¶58 When downsizing is necessary, usually the most prudent strategy is to eliminate the least essential position within an organization first. If an employee is to be laid off or terminated, when should the employee be told? Once again, deception, even if used to soften the blow, is an inappropriate approach. In most cases, a possible termination notice should be given as soon as it becomes apparent that an employee is in a position that is deemed least essential, and that a reduction in force

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37. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 20. See Umphress et al., *supra* note 17, for a discussion of unethical actions, including deception, intended to provide positive benefits to an organization.

is imminent. Unless employees are given early notice of a proposed layoff or eventual termination, they may become victims of detrimental reliance such as making future plans that involve expending large sums of money with the expectation that there will be no change in their employment status. Library administrators have an ethical obligation to take their employees' well-being into account when determining how much information needs to be disclosed and when.

¶59 While employee termination decisions are usually a library administration matter, employees, for whatever reason, may be in a position where they can no longer support those who lead their library or the mission of their organization. These employees may perceive the organization as being arbitrary in its decision making regarding layoffs or as not exploring all options in response to a fiscal crisis. This may lead employees to lose faith in their organization and its leaders, and to vent their criticism both within and outside of the institution. These employees have an ethical obligation to consider whether and when they should quit and search for other employment. It is unethical for unhappy librarians or other staff members to remain in a job when they can no longer perform the functions of that job at an acceptable level or when they are undermining the institution through their open criticism, malicious gossip, or negative attitude. When an employee decides, for financial or other reasons, not to resign from her position, she has an ethical obligation to support the organization through he words and actions. This does not of course preclude engaging in constructive dialogue with an organization's leaders to work toward change.

Providing References

¶60 The issue of whether to serve as a reference for an employee is fraught with potential ethical and legal entanglements, as well as opportunities to engage in rationalization. If a library leader decides to serve as a reference, must he do so with all employees or may he pick and choose? It might be appropriate for an administrator to implement a personal policy never to serve as a reference. However, this policy must be clearly articulated at the beginning of any new employee relationship. If an administrator does decide to provide references, he can avoid significant ethical hurdles by adhering to a well-crafted letter or phone script.

¶61 Is it ethically possible to give an employee reference without sharing the whole workplace story? If information that would be of value to a potential employer is omitted, is such an omission deceptive? Should prospective employers be expected to read between the lines and understand that most negative employment information cannot be shared? Is silence by a former employer, when requested to provide an employee reference, an indication of misconduct or underachievement on the part of that employee? There are no simple answers, and circumstances will dictate the appropriate response. Perhaps a supervisor is just gun-shy about offering any kind of information—positive or negative. It may be enough to warn a potential future employer to keep in mind that all job candidates who glitter are not gold. Under Howard and Korver's analysis of ethical transgressions, however, all of the above questions have definite ethical (and unethical) answers. "Deception, in its broader sense, may mean failing to correct an inaccurate impression, feigning ignorance, not telling the whole truth, withholding informa-

tion, sugarcoating the truth, or overusing tact. Deception is intentionally giving a false impression with or without telling a lie."[38]

Vendor and Donor Issues

¶62 At the heart of vendor/donor ethical issues is the question of where the loyalty of a library director, librarian, or library staff member lies. And at the crux of these issues is the caveat that a library director should never do anything that would in any way harm the library, including harm caused by deception or theft. It may be hard to ignore vendor pleas to purchase new products and services if a librarian has accepted numerous gifts; eaten many free, vendor-sponsored meals; attended countless vendor presentations; or accepted an invitation to a dinner cruise. Favorable contract bids, corporate sponsorship at librarian regional and annual meetings, all-expense-paid trips to corporate headquarters, and other freebies have further served to compromise librarians' objectivity when dealing with vendors. In addition, membership on a vendor board may in some situations be problematic. Perceptions matter, and often vendor relations are rife with ethical conflicts of interest and possible legal improprieties.

¶63 Donor gifts also often come with strings attached. Some stipulations by donors are appropriate, such as the requirement that a gift of $100,000 to a library be used to create a reading alcove named after the donor's mother, who was a well-respected community leader. Occasionally "strings" to donations become "chains," as when a gift comes with such a litany of restrictions that a library could not spend the funds in a useful or strategic manner. In these cases, no issue of ethics has arisen. The library might simply make a management decision that the institution cannot accept the gift because it would be unable to fulfill its obligations as the recipient. However, ethical dilemmas do indeed arise on occasion, such as when a donor who made a fortune as a furrier offers $20 million to build a new library with special accommodations for physically challenged students at an environmentally committed law school. Or if the president of a company that has been found guilty of discriminating against minorities offers to establish a $5 million endowment for student scholarships. These scenarios are best evaluated through appropriate vetting not only by library administrators and staff but also by both those to whom the library reports and those whom it serves.

Conclusion: Leading Through Consistent Ethical Values

¶64 In the twenty-first century, some skeptics may hold the view that good ethical examples count for very little. We believe the converse is true. Those organizations that are founded upon and routinely reinforce ethical principles continue to flourish. Those organizations that build on the slippery slope of ever-enlarging ethical lapses, such as expanding workplace entitlements, often find their names in unflattering headlines and, at times, even fade into oblivion. The U.S. financial

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38. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 17.

meltdown in October 2008 is a prime example of the fate of at least some unethical entities.

¶65 Most, although certainly not all, employees within any institution will follow the boss's lead. Thus, there can be no substitute for a good example set by the leader of any library organization. Leaders who scale back budgets cannot then use funds to lavishly redecorate their offices. Library leaders who want to build trust and credibility throughout the organization cannot engage in idle gossip or divulge confidential information of any type. The key to modeling ethics is to be a leader who possesses a set of core beliefs and adheres to them with unwavering integrity and moral authority.

¶66 Ethics unfold as they are practiced. Practicing ethics, however, does not necessarily make an organization perfect. Ethics involves teaching correct workplace principles, but as one commentator has noted, "Telling someone he or she is unethical or immoral is almost never a useful approach, quite aside from the fact that it is also arrogant."[39] The resolve of a library organization that teaches ethical principles will be tested, but it can be strengthened and renewed through the power of persistence and determination. Honesty in evaluating individual weaknesses and in dealing with others can be developed. Accountability in using one's time and in the quality of one's performance can be measured. A focus on living the spirit of workplace policies and procedures can be attained. It truly is all about consistency—articulating an ethical message that is followed scrupulously even when that message appears to be falling on deaf ears or failing to obtain results. What keeps an unfolding ethical practice from unraveling? Marshaling group support for an ethical agenda that recognizes conscious commitment and follows through with positive reinforcement.

¶67 Ethical principles are tested by everyday trials and tribulations. In a difficult situation, individuals will often be tempted to cut corners, to make inappropriate compromises, or to ignore signposts of potential moral or ethical decay. There are at least temporary advantages to be gained through sabotage, deception, and theft. Some ethical standards may evolve a bit over time, while other ethical standards will certainly differ within various organizations. It is important to remember, however, that ethical insight often changes as greater wisdom is acquired. Experience may help employees become more professional in demeanor and performance. Over time, library team members can become more attentive to client needs and desires. Often library organizations will develop an ethic of support and encouragement among all employees.

¶68 Leaders who reflect upon the ethical experience will learn that ethics build and reinforce relationships within an organization. A consistent display of ethical behavior strengthens the resolve of almost all employees to improve all aspects of a library's operation and offers the potential for truly extraordinary customer service.

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39. WHITE, *supra* note 9, at xv.

¶69 Howard and Korver have written:

> Today in workplaces everywhere, managers instruct people to "do the right thing" or "do things right." They give integrity top billing in speeches and newsletters. But their efforts may actually encourage people to sell the potential of ethics short, to use ethical principles as ground rules, not as powerful levers to transform relations among individuals, groups, and organizations.[40]

When a code of ethical conduct is effectively integrated into the workplace, the vast majority of employees will better understand the parameters of their workplace responsibilities and the value they can contribute. Employees may well come to appreciate the value of hard work and the importance of each and every job function, responsibility, or relationship. Ethical workplace principles transform the library environment when, for instance, a reference librarian ceases disparaging and undermining her colleagues and becomes truly supportive. Transformation is evident when employees donate their accumulated sick time to a pool for a coworker facing a health crisis. Transformation takes place when the midnight oil is burned in order to assist a faculty member with an unexpected research request, or when a spontaneous celebratory event is held. One business management scholar has described the transformation that needs to occur as moving from "good intentions into a profound and enacted covenant with customers, employees, and the general public."[41] As organizations grow in confidence, believing that together they can provide extraordinary service, ethical principles will flourish. Ethical principles will then empower library staff at all levels to unleash their individual creativity and to partner with their various constituencies to build and transform an entire institution's operation into an amazing enterprise.

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40. HOWARD & KORVER, *supra* note 1, at 139.
41. NASH, *supra* note 31, at 22.