

# Excellence through Ethics™

*Get the Word Out—Ethically*



**Elementary School**



**Junior Achievement®**



*Excellence through Ethics*  
**Elementary School**

*Get the Word Out—Ethically*

**Content:** Ethics, Product Ideas, and Advertising

**Methods:** Teamwork and Discussion

**JA Foundational Pillars:** Ethics and Entrepreneurship

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# Acknowledgements

## **Sponsorship**

JA Worldwide® (Junior Achievement) gratefully acknowledges Deloitte & Touche USA LLP for its commitment to the development and implementation of the supplementary program *Excellence through Ethics*. JA Worldwide appreciates its relationship with Deloitte & Touche USA LLP to develop and implement vital and innovative programs designed to foster ethical decision-making skills.

## Get the Word Out—Ethically

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### Overview

Students learn that the successful creation of a product or service ultimately depends on the consumer and that although making a profit is important for a business, the desire for profit should not override the goal of customer satisfaction.

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define consumer and that profit.
- Recognize that the primary goal of an ethical entrepreneur should be to provide excellent customer service, and profit will follow.
- Express how use advertising to honestly to support a business.

### Preparation

Review the activity. Prepare the necessary copies and session materials.

Group work is incorporated into this session. You may consult with the teacher to determine how best to form the groups.

Post Key Terms and definitions in a visible place.

- **Ethics:** The standards that help determine what is good, right, and proper.
- **Entrepreneur:** A person who starts his or her own business with the hope of earning a profit.
- **Ethical:** Acting upon the standards that help determine what is good, right, and proper.

### Recommended Time

This session typically takes 45 minutes to complete. Ask the teacher to help you keep track of time.

### Materials

- New Product Scenarios (1 per student)
- Pens or pencils (1 per student)

### Presentation

#### Introduction (10 minutes)

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Greet the students.

Define the term **entrepreneur** as **a person who develops a business idea into a functioning business.**

Briefly discuss what makes an entrepreneur successful, including the following ideas:

- Successful entrepreneurs translate their talents, hobbies, and business sense into goods and services for consumers.
- These goods and services usually are based on new, innovative, and exciting ideas.
- Entrepreneurs usually start as a very small business with the hope of growing.

*Excellence through Ethics*

Ask students to think of a product or service they could create to sell to other kids their age. Then ask why that product or service? Is it because kids your age would like it or use it? Could you become rich because you could sell this product or service in large quantities? Is it because no one else has created this particular item or service? Have a class discussion, encouraging different types of answers. Tell students that an aspiring entrepreneur should consider these questions.

Define the following Key Terms for students:

- **Ethics:** The standards that help determine what is good, right, and proper.
- **Ethical:** Acting upon the standards that help determine what is good, right, and proper.
- **Entrepreneur:** A person who starts his or her own business with the hope of earning a profit.

Building a business means facing all kinds of ethical decisions. Explain to students that not every successful entrepreneur is ethical. Some entrepreneurs are driven solely by the desire to become rich, and they forget about customer's desires. The real success of a business depends on customer satisfaction, and whether or not they will spend the money they worked hard for on your goods or services.

## Activity

### Developing an Ethical Business Idea (15 minutes)

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Entrepreneurs should consider the following questions before opening a business. As you discuss the questions, review the implications for each.

- Does my product or service already exist?
- If my product or service does exist, is there an improvement that can be made?
- Who needs my product or service? What type of person will buy it? How many people can it serve?
- How and where can I sell it?
- How expensive is it for me to create and sell it?
- Is there anything unique about my product or service?
- How much will I charge? Can the people I'm targeting afford my product or service?
- How can I use advertising to persuade people to buy my product or service?

Once students briefly respond, explain the following points that an ethical entrepreneur who puts customers first should consider:

- Pricing should be appropriate for the product or service.
- Pricing should be appropriate for the demographic (intended consumer).
- Advertising should give an honest description of the product or service people are purchasing.

Have students write down two products or services, one of good quality and the other of poor quality, or a product or service in which the advertising was dishonest. Have a brief discussion, calling on three or four students.

## Activity

### Ethical Products and Advertising (15 minutes)

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Organize students into teams of two or three. Each team will be given a product or service description, the goal of the entrepreneurial team, and their advertising tool. At the top each of their instructions sheets will be the word ETHICAL or UNETHICAL. That word should be their guide. Instruct them to

read the description, and choose their advertising tactic based on the question they are asked. Allow 10 minutes for teams to complete their assignments. Each team should select a representative to share their responses.

Instruct teams not to say whether the scenario is ethical or unethical. After each team reports, invite opinions from the rest of the class. Pose the following questions:

- Was their method of advertising ethical or unethical, and why?
- Was their business goal ethical or unethical? Explain your answer.

### **Summary and Review (5 minutes)**

Briefly review the vocabulary introduced in the session.

Remind students that running a business is rewarding, but also challenging, especially when just starting out. There is nothing unethical about wanting to make money, but when the goal of profit overrides the mission of fully satisfying your customers, there may be a temptation to conduct business unethically. Happy customers will guarantee loyalty, trust, and, in the end, profit.

Thank the students for their participation.

## **Session Outline**

### **Introduction**

- Greet the students.
- Define the term **entrepreneur**.
- Brainstorm possible products or services through listed questions.

### **Activity**

- Define **ethics** and **ethical**.
- Explain to students that not every successful entrepreneur is ethical.
- Pose provided questions to students, encouraging discussion.
- Discuss fair pricing, honest advertising, and quality products and services.
- Organize students into teams of two or three.
- Facilitate the activity, using the New Product Scenario handout.
- Debrief the activity.

### **Summary and Review**

- Briefly review the vocabulary introduced in the session.
- Running a business is rewarding, but also challenging, especially when just starting out. There is nothing unethical about wanting to make money, but when the goal of profit overrides the mission of fully satisfying your customers, there may be a temptation to conduct business unethically. Happy customers will guarantee loyalty, trust, and, in the end, profit.
- Thank the students for their participation.

## New Product Scenarios

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### Scenario #1 UNETHICAL

**Product:** Toothpaste for kids that is offered in different flavors, such as cotton candy, apple, cola, chocolate, etc.

**Goal:** To make a quick profit in 6 months. You want to make money fast.

**Advertising:** TV commercial.

**Question:** How would you use your TV commercial to accomplish your goal?



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### Scenario #2 ETHICAL

**Product:** Sweatshirts in great colors, to which you can add your personal touch, such as your name, a favorite phrase or design.

**Goal:** To enable people to express themselves through design.

**Advertising:** Magazine ad.

**Question:** How would you use your magazine ad to accomplish your goal?



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### Scenario #3 UNETHICAL

**Service:** A hamburger restaurant.

**Goal:** To mimic the other hamburger restaurants in the area so you can take all their customers and make all the money for yourself.

**Advertising:** Printed flyers.

**Question:** How would you use your flyers to accomplish your goal?



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### Scenario #4 ETHICAL

**Service:** An after-school tutoring center.

**Goal:** To help kids and teens who need extra support in their schoolwork.

**Advertising:** Can't afford it. The program is free, so there's no money for advertising.

**Question:** How would you creatively advertise to get the word out about your service?



# Appendix

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## **Welcome to Junior Achievement's**

### ***Excellence through Ethics***

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As a Junior Achievement (JA) volunteer or teacher, you are joining other teachers and volunteers from across the United States in providing students with a unique educational experience. Junior Achievement's *Excellence through Ethics* offers students learning opportunities to share knowledge and information regarding ethics in business. JA strives to show students how business works, and to better evaluate organizations that conduct their operations in the right way.

*Excellence through Ethics* is designed to equip volunteers and teachers with supplemental, ethics-based activities for use with JA in-class programs for grades four through twelve. All these activities provide students with current and essential information about business ethics.

These activities are designed to reinforce students' knowledge and skills, teach them how to make ethical decisions, assist them in learning to think critically, and help them to be better problem-solvers. All the activities are hands-on, interactive, and group-focused to present the material to students with the best instructional methods.

Within these supplements, you will find sections to help you effectively implement the activities in your volunteer experience. Materials include: (a) an introductory discussion of business ethics, marketplace integrity, and the growing capacity of students for ethical decision-making; (b) activities and student materials that connect to and expand current classroom-based Junior Achievement programs; and (c) a functional glossary of terms relating to a wide spectrum of ethics, quality, service, and social responsibility considerations in business.



# Appendix

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## Introduction and Overview

- *How do I do the right thing in this situation?*
- *Should I be completely honest, even if it puts others in jeopardy?*
- *What kind of community do we want to be?*
- *How do we do what's best for the long term?*
- *Who should cover the cost of "doing the right thing"?*

These are all questions having to do with business ethics. They are valid and necessary questions, and good business people have asked them for generations. They form the backdrop of vital discussions as business, community, and political leaders grapple with significant issues. Many students would ask these questions, even if Junior Achievement hadn't developed this ethics curriculum.

## Business Ethics Discussions Are Here To Stay

Business ethics has been in the spotlight for much of the past decade, especially as examples of wrongdoing come to light in the media. New technologies and international competitive pressures cause a steady focus on the question, "Is it possible to be competitively successful in business today and still operate in an honest and ethical manner?" The past decade has seen individuals search for deeper personal meaning in the workplace, which has contributed to lively ethics discussions in the business realm. For these reasons, the discussion of business ethics is not a passing fad; it's here to stay.

Many graduate schools of business have either required ethics coursework or integrated ethics principles throughout all areas of study. That is commendable. We believe this vital area of exposure and instruction also should happen at earlier ages and continue throughout the students' educational journey. Many of today's students haven't had access to a well-rounded education in economics and free enterprise or have come to see these in a very negative light. They have limited awareness of the extent to which good business leaders engage in the challenging exercises of ethical decision-making amid heavy competitive pressures. As students learn the general principles of economics and business, it's critical that these be underpinned with a strong foundation in ethics. This will accentuate the best in American business traditions, while laying the groundwork for students' continued evolution into future generations of leaders.

## Integrity in the Marketplace?

Many adults and young people choose to believe that the marketplace is driven only by greed. They view it as bringing out only the worst in human behavior, demoralizing the human spirit, and driving out any sense of idealism. While elements of greed and extreme self-interest among some individuals cannot be denied, solid research has shown time and again that companies with a long-term focus on ethics and a broad consideration of stakeholders' interests are much more profitable than those lacking such a focus.

James A. Autry, in his book *Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership*, said it well: "I do not doubt the presence of greed in the marketplace because I do not doubt the presence of greed in people. But, I also do not doubt the ennobling aspects of work, of the workplace, of the community, of endeavor, of

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the marketplace. So I choose to believe that most of the marketplace is driven by people who want to do good work for others and for themselves.”

*Excellence through Ethics* accepts the challenge of educating youth in the basics of economics and business while establishing a positive balance on the side of well-informed, ethical business practice. This may appear to place a heavy burden on Junior Achievement volunteers, who are not trained ethics experts. The following informational pages will not turn you into an ethics expert. That’s not what we’re striving for here. What students need most is meaningful interaction with people who are willing to engage in a discussion of these vital issues.

### **Lively Practitioners Rather Than Dry Theorists**

This program is more about day-to-day ethics practice than the nuances of ethics theory. Some believe that working in business requires a disconnect from one’s personal ethics. We do not believe this is the case. Students need to know that what they learn about fairness and honesty in general also applies to business. While business ethics may address some specific areas of business practice, it’s not a separate and distinct specialty to be set apart from the general ethical principles that apply in other areas of life. Young people need to encounter the wisdom of age and experience that volunteers bring to the classroom.

### **Students’ Growing Capacity for Ethical Decision-Making**

*Excellence through Ethics* is designed to foster discussions at the appropriate level for each age group. The curriculum developers have designed the ethics activities with sensitivity to student’s mental maturity. At the late elementary and middle-grades levels, students’ capacities for ethical reasoning tend toward good personal behavior as determined by adult rules and authority. In relationships, personal trust, loyalty, and respect are of paramount importance. For these students, corporate ethical behavior is viewed in much the same light as their own personal behavior: it’s governed by rules.

As students advance into high school, their ethical decision-making moves into the larger arena of social contracts and systems that guide and govern societal and group behavior. Here the rationality and utility of laws are scrutinized, as students become more capable of higher-ordered, principled thinking. Students are increasingly aware of the diversity of values among different cultures and communities. At this level, students’ capacities for processing the complex, ethical dilemmas that may be encountered in business are greatly enhanced.

You will gain confidence as you come to realize that conducting a robust, provocative discussion with students is more important than “having the right answer.” The activities have been designed to leave room for lively discussion and multiple points of view. Having the courage to share your own experiences is very valuable to students.

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You don't have to apologize for the excesses students may see in business. Don't assume responsibility for actions that are not your own, and do not try to defend the indefensible. While accentuating the fact that most businesses operate ethically, it's okay to scrutinize the unethical players in the marketplace who give business in general a bad name.

## **Continuing Education**

Teaching this material to students will no doubt strengthen and enhance your own ethics awareness and continuing education. Some students will challenge your best reasoning capacities. Having your own support network of professional colleagues with whom you can share and discuss some of these issues is very valuable. It's also helpful to seek out colleagues with philosophical views that differ from your own. This serves as a valuable "cross-pollination" function because you will be able to understand and discuss a variety of views with students, as well as share students' perspectives with your colleagues. In this way, everyone learns.

Finally, please be assured that your contributions here have tremendous value to students and will serve to upgrade business ethics in the future. We're dealing with the future generation of leaders in their formative years. We can take pride in the fact that we've had a hand in shaping the very people who will be responsible for business ethics and social responsibility in the future.

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# Appendix

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## Excellence through Ethics Evaluation

**Thank you for participating in JA!**

