**Ethics Matter – Rotary**

**Module 3**

*“Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do”*

*Potter Stewart*

[**Ghosting in the workplace**](https://www.zenefits.com/workest/understanding-ghosting-in-the-workplace-and-how-to-prevent-it/)

Ghosting occurs when someone you believe cares about you, such as a person you have been dating, or going out with for some time, disappears from contact without any explanation at all—no phone call, email, or text. They just seem to disappear.

“Ghosting” a dating partner because you are no longer interested, is an unkind act. The person you have been dating has a right to know about your feelings so they can move on with their life. Ask yourself how would you feel if the roles were reversed? You would, most likely, want to be informed to have closure.

**Ghosting in the context of interviewing for a job can create an ethical dilemma.**

Ghosting occurs when a candidate abruptly disengages from the interview process without explanation. The candidate might fail to inform the interviewer that they have accepted another position.

In some cases, a candidate has accepted a position only to accept a second one and not inform the first employer.

**Consider the following facts:**

You are interviewing for a job. You’ve gone through interviews at five companies and are anxiously awaiting the responses. You get your first offer and verbally commit to taking the job. You will not start to work for another two weeks.

Shortly after accepting the first offer a second one comes in. It’s the better of the two offers and from your preferred employer. Since you haven’t started work for the first employer you face an ethical dilemma: Decline the second offer because you have already accepted the first or accept the second offer.

There is something to be said, ethically, to living up to your word and staying with the first acceptance. It does reflect a sense of honesty and personal responsibility.

However, many people in this situation might take a more self-interested position and bow out of the first offer and accept the second.

There’s nothing wrong with accepting the second offer as long as your reasons are explained to the first employer. They have a right to know why you changed your mind. It may help them in the recruiting process going forward.

In many cases, such as this, it’s not so much what your decision is but how you explain it that counts. After all, the first employer probably doesn’t want you to work for them if you will regret accepting their job offer.

You have a responsibility to inform the first employer because it made an offer, held a position open for you, and will need to fill it once informed of your decision.

Failing to inform this employer means a position that would otherwise be closed is really open because you plan to renege on the offer.

Ghosting the first employer is a selfish act. You are doing what is easiest not what is ethically appropriate. The key ethical issue is the trustworthiness.

Imagine if you didn’t tell the first employer and just disappeared and then the second employer somehow found out about the ghosting. Would they be just as anxious to have you come aboard? Should they be concerned about whether you will be a trusted employee?

Your word is your bond and while our minds may change over time it is important to fully explain to the affected parties why that has occurred. Transparency is the key to developing trusted relationships whether in a dating situation or when interviewing for a job.

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