***What are “work ethics”?***

Respect

Responsibility

Trust

***The Work Ethic in the Information Age***

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Just as the people of the mid-nineteenth century encountered tremendous cultural and social change with the dawn of the industrial age, the people of the late twentieth century experienced tremendous cultural and social shifts with the advent of the information age. Toffler (1980) likened these times of change to waves washing over the culture, bringing with it changes in norms and expectations, as well as uncertainty about the future.

Since 1956 (Naisbitt, 1984) white-collar workers in technical, managerial, and clerical positions have outnumbered workers in blue-collar jobs. Porat (1977), in a study for the U.S. Department of Commerce, examined over 400 occupations in 201 industries. He determined that in 1967, the economic contribution of jobs primarily dealing with production of information, as compared with goods-producing jobs, accounted for 46% of the GNP and more than 53% of the income earned. Some jobs in manufacturing and industry also became more technical and necessitated a higher level of thinking on the job as machines were interfaced with computers and control systems became more complex.

Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1984) contrasted the work required of most people during the industrial age with the work of the information age. Industrial age jobs were typically low-discretion, required little decision making, and were analyzed and broken into simple tasks which required very little thinking or judgement on the part of workers. Information age jobs, in contrast, were high-discretion and required considerable thinking and decision making on the part of workers (Miller, 1986). In the workplace characterized by high-discretion, the work ethic became a much more important construct than it was during the manipulative era of machines. Maccoby (1988) emphasized the importance, in this setting, of giving employees authority to make decisions which would meet the needs of customers as well as support the goals of their own companies.

As high-discretion, information age jobs provided opportunities for greater self-expression by workers, people began to find more self-fulfillment in their work. Yankelovich and Harmon (1988) reported that a significant transformation in the meaning of the work ethic resulted. Throughout history, work had been associated with pain, sacrifice, and drudgery. The previously mentioned Greek word for work, *ponos*, also meant "pain." For the Hebrews as well as for the medieval Christians, the unpleasantness of work was associated with Divine punishment for man's sin. The Protestant ethic maintained that work was a sacrifice that demonstrated moral worthiness, and it stressed the importance of postponed gratification. With the information age, however, came work which was perceived as good and rewarding in itself. Most workers were satisfied with their work and wanted to be successful in it (Wattenberg, 1984).

According the Yankelovich and Harmon (1988), the work ethic of the 1980's stressed skill, challenge, autonomy, recognition, and the quality of work produced. Autonomy was identified as a particularly important factor in worker satisfaction with their jobs. Motivation to work involved trust, caring, meaning, self-knowledge, challenge, opportunity for personal growth, and dignity (Maccoby, 1988; Walton, 1974). Workers were seeking control over their work and a sense of empowerment and many information age jobs were conducive to meeting these needs. As a result, the work ethic was not abandoned during the information age but was transformed to a state of relevance not found in most industrial age occupations.

Even though the information age was well established by the 1980's and 1990's, not all jobs were high-discretion. Some occupations continued to consist primarily of manual labor and allowed minimal opportunity for worker involvement in decision making. In addition, authoritarian forms of management continued to be utilized and the potential of the work ethic was wasted. Statistics reported by Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1984) indicated that by the early 1980's, 43% of the workforce perceived their jobs as high-discretion and 21% of the workforce perceived their jobs as low-discretion. The high-discretion workers were likely to be better educated, to be in white-collar or service jobs, and to have experienced technological changes in their work. The low-discretion workers were more likely to be union members, to be in blue-collar jobs, and to be working in positions characterized by dirt, noise, and pollution.

What are the five factors of work ethics today? <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/5-factors-demonstrate-strong-work-ethic-15976.html> (*Chron* is an online magazine from the Hearst Corporation. This article was published \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

Read and list the factors with examples or explanation:

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2. Org \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Team \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Det \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Con \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

