

Relationships between IT Workers and Suppliers

IT workers deal with many different hardware, software, and service providers. Most IT workers understand that building a good working relationship with suppliers encourages the flow of useful communication as well as the sharing of ideas. Such information can lead to innovative and cost-effective ways of using the supplier's products and services that the IT worker may never have considered.

IT workers can develop good relationships with suppliers by dealing fairly with them and not making unreasonable demands. Threatening to replace a supplier, who cannot deliver needed equipment tomorrow, when the normal industry lead-time is one week, is aggressive behavior that does not help build a good working relationship.

Suppliers strive to maintain positive relationships with their customers in order to make and increase sales. To achieve this goal, they may sometimes engage in unethical actions—for example, offering an IT worker a gift that is actually intended as a bribe. Clearly, IT workers should not accept a bribe from a vendor, and they must be careful when considering what constitutes a bribe. For example, accepting invitations to expensive dinners or payment of entry fees for a golf tournament may seem innocent to the recipient, but it may be perceived as bribery by an auditor.

Bribery is the act of providing money, property, or favors to someone in business or government in order to obtain a business advantage. An obvious example is a software supplier sales representative who offers money to another company's employee to get its business. This type of bribe is often referred to as a kickback. The person who offers a bribe commits a crime when the offer is made, and the recipient is guilty of a crime if he or she accepts the bribe. Various states have

enacted bribery laws, which have sometimes been used to invalidate contracts involving bribes but have seldom been used to make criminal convictions.

A former mid-level supply chain manager at Apple pled guilty in 2011 to taking over \$1 million in payments from certain iPhone, iPad, and iPod suppliers in China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. The kickbacks took place over several years and were in exchange for the employer providing confidential information about Apple's production plans, enabling the suppliers to negotiate more favorable deals with Apple. He now faces 20 years in prison on charges of money laundering, receiving kickbacks, and wire fraud.

There is growing global recognition of the need to prevent corruption. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption is a legally binding global treaty designed to fight bribery and corruption. During its November 2010 meeting, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Ministers of members of the Group of 20 (G20), which includes Argentina, China, India, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and 13 other countries, pledged to implement this treaty effectively. In particular, the countries pledged to put in place mechanisms for the recovery of property from corrupt officials through international cooperation in tracing, freezing, and confiscating assets. Members also pledged to adopt and enforce laws against international bribery and put in place rules to protect whistleblowers.

In some countries, gifts are an essential part of doing business. In fact, in some countries, it would be considered rude not to bring a present to an initial business meeting. In the United States, a gift might take the form of free tickets to a sporting event from a personnel agency that wants to get on your company's list of preferred suppliers. But, at what point does a gift become a bribe, and who decides?

The key distinguishing factor is that no gift should be hidden. A gift may be considered a bribe if it is not declared. As a result, most companies require that all gifts be declared and that everything but token gifts be declined. Some companies have a policy of pooling the gifts received by their employees, and giving the proceeds to charity. When it comes to distinguishing between bribes and gifts, the perceptions of the donor and the recipient can differ. The recipient may believe he received a gift that in no way obligates him to the donor, particularly if the gift was not cash. The donor's intentions, however, might be very different. Table shows some distinctions between bribes and gifts.)

Distinguishing between bribes and gifts eitao ashte pare

Bribes	Gifts
Are made in secret , as they are neither legally nor morally acceptable	Are made openly and publicly , as a gesture of friendship or goodwill
Are often made indirectly through a third party	Are made directly from donor to recipient
Encourage an obligation for the recipient to act favorably toward the donor	Come with no expectation of a future favor for the donor

Source Line: Course Technology/Cengage Learning

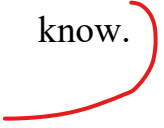
Relationships between IT Workers and Other Professionals

Professionals often feel a degree of loyalty to the other members of their profession. As a result, they are often quick to help each other obtain new positions but slow to criticize each other in public. Professionals owe each other an

adherence to the profession's code of conduct. Experienced professionals can also serve as mentors and help develop new members of the profession. A number of ethical problems can arise among members of the IT profession. One of the most common is résumé inflation, which involves lying on a résumé by, for example, claiming competence in an IT skill that is in high demand. Even though an IT worker might benefit in the short term from exaggerating his or her qualifications, such an action can hurt the profession and the individual in the long run. Many employers consider lying on a résumé as grounds for immediate dismissal.

Yahoo! hired Scott Thompson, the president of eBay's PayPal electronic payments unit, as its new CEO in January 2012. Just four months later, Thompson left the company, due, at least in part, to revelations that his résumé falsely claimed that he had earned a bachelor's degree in computer science. Some studies have shown that around 30 percent of all U.S. job applicants exaggerate their accomplishments, while roughly 10 percent "seriously misrepresent" their backgrounds. Résumé inflation is an even bigger problem in Asia. According to a recent survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong and a Hong Kong-based company specializing in pre-employment screening, over 62 percent of respondents confessed to exaggerating their years of experience, previous positions held, and job responsibilities; 33 percent confessed to having exaggerated even more.

Another ethical issue that can arise in relationships between IT workers and other professionals is the inappropriate sharing of corporate information. Because of their roles, IT workers may have access to corporate databases of private and confidential information about employees, customers, suppliers, new product plans, promotions, budgets, and so on. It might be sold to other organizations or shared informally during work conversations with others who have no need to know.



Relationships between IT Workers and IT Users

The term IT user refers to a person who uses a hardware or software product; the term distinguishes end users from the IT workers who develop, install, service, and support the product. IT users need the product to deliver organizational benefits or to increase their productivity. IT workers have a duty to understand a user's needs and capabilities and to deliver products and services that best meet those needs—subject, of course, to budget and time constraints. IT workers also have a key responsibility to establish an environment that supports ethical behavior by users. Such an environment discourages software piracy, minimizes the inappropriate use of corporate computing resources, and avoids the inappropriate sharing of information

Relationships between IT Workers and Society

Regulatory laws establish safety standards for products and services to protect the public. However, these laws are less than perfect, and they cannot safeguard against all negative side effects of a product or process. Often, professionals can clearly see the effect their work will have and can take action to eliminate potential public risks. Thus, society expects members of a profession to provide significant benefits and not to cause harm through their actions. One approach to meeting this expectation is to establish and maintain professional standards that protect the public. Clearly, the actions of an IT worker can affect society. For example, a systems analyst may design a computer-based control system to monitor a chemical manufacturing process. A failure or an error in the system may put workers or residents near the plant at risk. As a result, IT workers have a relationship with members of society who may be affected by their actions. There

is currently no single, formal organization of IT workers that takes responsibility for establishing and maintaining standards that protect the public. However, as discussed in the following sections, there are a number of professional organizations that provide useful professional codes of ethics to guide actions that support the ethical behavior of IT workers.

