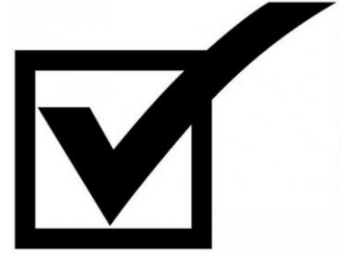


**BUSINESS
PROFESSIONALS**
of **AMERICA**
Giving Purpose to Potential



Ethics and Professionalism

(540)

REGIONAL 2025
PRELIMINARY

TOTAL POINTS _____ (100 points)

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Failure to adhere to any of the following rules will result in disqualification:

1. Contestants must hand in this test booklet and all printouts if any.
2. No equipment, supplies, or materials other than those specified for this event are allowed in the testing area. No previous BPA tests and/or sample tests (handwritten, photocopied, or keyed) are allowed in the testing area.
3. Electronic devices will be monitored according to ACT standards.

DESCRIPTION:

Explore the application of ethical frameworks to various aspects used in business today.

REGIONAL PRELIMINARY SCENARIO:

Alex is a senior software engineer at Digital Solutions. Recently, Alex has been working on a major project for a high-profile client, Secure Data, to develop a new cybersecurity software suite.

During the development phase, Alex discovers that a fellow team member, Chris, has been cutting corners in the coding process to meet tight deadlines. Chris's shortcuts involve bypassing certain security protocols, which could leave the software vulnerable to cyberattacks. When Alex confronts Chris, Chris argues that they can patch these vulnerabilities in a later update, once the project is delivered and the immediate pressure is off, which will increase the fees paid to Digital Solutions in the long run.

Alex is deeply concerned about the potential risks and feels that delivering insecure software goes against the core values of Digital Solutions. However, reporting Chris's actions might delay the project and lead to significant financial penalties for missing the deadline. Additionally, Chris is a close friend and has been a mentor to Alex, making the decision even more difficult.

What should Alex do?

A contestant will be DISQUALIFIED for violations of the Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines.

Contestants who do not submit an entry that follows this topic will be disqualified.

Answers will vary, but may include the following from the *Ethics and Professionalism Resources Manual*:

- Professionalism allows for heightened respect from clients, thereby, opening greater lines of communication and potentially increasing trust. A company known for maintaining a level of high ethical and professional standards is typically valued above its peers when competing in the same market.

- Professionalism plays an important role in how a person is perceived by his/her Employer, his/her co-workers, and casual contacts.
- Integrity: Integrity is generally the term that is most associated with business ethics and is the foundation on which good commerce is built. Integrity simply means holding to your principles even when it would be easier or more profitable to compromise them.
- Dependability: Dependability is considered an admirable business ethic. Can people trust that you will do what you say?
- Internal + External: Good business ethics requires that ethical behavior be practiced both internally as well as outside of the business. In simple terms, you must “practice what you preach.”
- Trustworthiness: Good business practice requires trust. Neither you nor your business can succeed with a reputation for untrustworthiness.
- Values: A person uses his/her own personal values in the context of his/her business dealings. Being able to determine right from wrong is instilled in us as children and is difficult to change as we mature into adulthood.
- A true professional knows the importance of, and liability of, maintaining confidential information within the context of every business and/or personal situation.
- Knowing how to efficiently communicate your message will enable you to increase the amount of influence that you will have in dealing with your peers, supervisors, and subordinates.

Sample Judges’ Questions:

- Why is it important for Digital Solutions to maintain a reputation for ethical practices?
- How might Alex's decision impact the morale and trust among team members at Digital Solutions?
- What steps can Alex take to further his own professional development in ethics to better handle similar situations in the future?