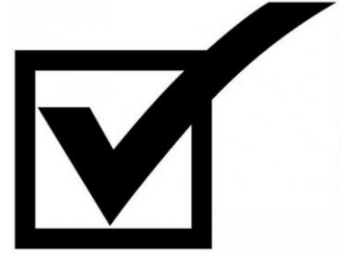


**BUSINESS
PROFESSIONALS**
of **AMERICA**
Giving Purpose to Potential



Ethics and Professionalism

(540)

STATE 2025
FINAL

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.

STATE FINAL SCENARIO:

Sarah is a senior financial analyst at Digital Solutions. Recently, she was entrusted with confidential information about an upcoming merger between Digital Solutions and another large corporation. This information, once public, is expected to significantly impact the stock prices of both companies involved. While Sarah is strictly prohibited from using this information for personal gain, she realizes that purchasing stocks in these companies before the merger announcement could result in substantial financial profit.

Sarah's close friend, Lisa, often asks Sarah for financial advice. Lisa is currently facing severe financial difficulties due to unexpected medical expenses. Lisa confides in Sarah, telling her about her current financial situation and asking for financial advice to manage the situation. Sarah is torn between her loyalty to her friend and her professional and ethical obligations. She considers the idea of subtly hinting to Lisa about the merger without explicitly sharing the confidential information, thinking this could help Lisa financially without directly implicating herself or benefiting personally.

What should Sarah 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*:

- A true professional knows the importance of, and liability of, maintaining confidential information within the context of every business and/or personal situation. When in doubt, maintain confidence and seek professional counsel.
- 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.

- Paying respect to co-workers, oneself and clients, being honest during any type of transaction, and taking responsibility for one's own actions is both ethical and professional.
- **Business Ethics:** Prevent exploitation, harassment, and intimidation in the workplace. It ensures that the organization abides by the law of the land. [It is easy to take short-cuts that seem innocent but are really against the law. It is hard to break laws when your business practice is above-board and honest.
- **Integrity:** Integrity 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.
- **Trustworthy:** Good business practice requires trust. Neither you nor your business can succeed with a reputation for untrustworthiness.
- **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."
- **Values:** A person's moral code is integrated into his/her business ethics. A person uses his/her own personal values in the context of his/her business dealings.

Possible Judges Questions

- How might Sarah's decision impact her own professional career and future opportunities?
- How can Sarah use the principles outlined in Digital Solutions' Ethics & Professionalism Manual to guide her actions in this situation?
- How is Digital Solutions likely to respond to a breach of confidentiality, and what disciplinary actions might be taken against Sarah?