

Duke Values



Case Study: Accurate Time Reporting

“Accurate Time Reporting” is a fictional story that highlights the values of honesty, trust, and integrity in the workplace. It reminds us how important each person’s choices and behavior are in maintaining both good work relationships and our reputation for fair, honest business practices.

Accurate Time Reporting

Before heading home, Misha dropped by Karl’s office to review the coming week’s schedule. Their work was going well, but the team had missed an internal deadline earlier in the week. Misha wanted to run a catch-up plan by her friend and co-worker.

Karl had stepped out, and while waiting for him to return, Misha happened to glance at the time sheet on his desk. She was surprised to see that he had recorded 10 extra hours for the week just ending.

“What’s wrong, Misha? Lost your laptop again?” Karl teased as he walked in the door.

A bit startled, Misha took a step back from Karl’s desk. “Very funny, coming from someone who loses his keys once a week,” she fired back.

“Details, details,” sighed Karl.

Misha laughed. Karl’s wit made work more enjoyable, and in her experience he was the smartest and most creative colleague on staff. But she worried about his tendency to bend the

rules. The fudged time sheet was particularly worrisome.

Misha glanced down at the time sheet, and then back at Karl. “Speaking of details, I’m pretty sure we put in 55 hours this week, not 65. Are you certain that’s the right number?”

Misha knew in fact that she was right; the two had worked closely together throughout the entire week. Still, in this kind of situation she liked to give Karl a chance to save face. Usually he came around and set things straight with characteristic good humor. Not this time, though.

“It’s close enough, Misha. Whatever it was, it felt like a hundred hours! I am whipped!” Karl slumped down in his chair. “By the way, the status report you put together looked good.”

“Thanks. We’ve made good progress. Have to say, though, I’m a little worried about slippage on our timetable—”

“Oh, that reminds me,” Karl interrupted. “Hope you don’t mind, but I changed the wording a bit

Our shared values are more than aspirations...

They are the beliefs and behaviors that we expect of ourselves and our colleagues. They are the ideals that we must uphold in order to earn and maintain our reputation for quality and integrity, and to inspire confidence with each other and the world which we both serve and rely on for our future viability.

Trust

We are honest, credible and reliable in our words, behaviors and actions.

Living our Values

As stewards of Duke's trust, we are accountable. We avoid activities, pursuits or financial interests that are not compatible, in reality or perception, with our responsibilities.

We seek advice when expectations are not clear or when we question what is "right." We are vigilant in our intentions, leading by example and considering the implications of our actions.



on where we're at meeting deadlines. Officially we're right on target, not behind. Understood?"

At week's close, Misha was not prepared to push back, despite her discomfort with Karl's decision to play fast and loose with both his time sheet and the team's status report. Shooting him a knowing look, she replied, "We'll talk about it later. Have a great weekend."

On Monday morning, Misha was ready for the hard conversation she knew she had to have with Karl. When the time seemed right, she sat down with him, presented the facts clearly and asked what he thought should be done to rectify the matter. His irritated response caught her off guard.

"Look, Misha, you know Duke has deep pockets. There's plenty of room for a little padding here." Karl then stood up, his voice rising as he continued, "As for the blown deadlines, don't worry about it. Our deliverables are high quality and that's what everyone really cares about. You know we'll be able to get back on track later in the month, anyway. So let's drop the subject and move on, shall we?"

Given how worked up Karl had become, Misha decided not to press the issue in the moment. It was not the right time to call him to account. Misha also knew the project was entering a critical phase,

and that Karl was an irreplaceable member of the team. Besides, escalating the issue was something she'd always found a way around when faced with problems created by Karl's occasional indiscretions. This time, however, not only had Karl crossed way over the line ethically, he also showed no sign of stepping back.

Several days later, the team missed another internal deadline. Misha knew that something had to be done, but now she seemed to have no good options. Acknowledging the second blown deadline might prompt difficult questions about previous claims of being on schedule, but keeping quiet about it would be even more risky as well as unethical.

And what about Karl? He seemed completely unwilling to talk about the situation and this made Misha angry. She then thought about reporting the matter. There likely would be disciplinary action taken against Karl. His removal from the project would be a disaster. And if he figured out who had filed the report—as was likely—their friendship and work relationship could be jeopardized.

On Friday afternoon, as Misha sat down to prepare another status report, she was still unsure what to do.

Key Points to Remember

- *Honesty, trust, and integrity are foundational for success and they are closely connected to reputation. Unethical behavior can lead quickly to an erosion of these core values.*
- *Building trust by acting with integrity leads to better teamwork and performance.*
- *It is better to raise and resolve an ethics issue or concern that arises in a timely and forthright manner rather than avoiding it; usually, inaction or “enabling” results in the situation growing worse.*

SPEAK UP

If you witness or are asked to participate in actions that are not consistent with our values, tell someone.

Ask your supervisor, department head, academic dean, residence advisor or ombudsman for advice.

If that is not possible, contact **800.826.8109** to discuss your question or report your concern. The toll-free number is a confidential, and anonymous if you choose, service provided 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

We speak up when words, behaviors or actions are not consistent with our values.

It takes courage to come forward. Retaliation for reporting concerns in good faith is strictly prohibited.