You’re Hired! You’re Fired!

Over 50% of employers say that most employees lack basic skills to be employed and advance in a job. These basic skills being honesty, being on time, coming to work on a regular basis, knowing how to work with others, and working hard on the job. Professionalism skills are critical for success in the workplace. This activity teaches teens about honesty and integrity and how they are important in the workforce.

Youth Will Learn

*Workforce Skills*: Building personal qualities- honesty, trustworthiness, integrity

*Success Indicator*: Youth will describe the consequences for breaching confidentiality.

What You Need:

- **Time Involved**: 45-60+ minutes
- **Suggested Group Size**: Any
- **Materials Needed**:
  - “Paper
  - Pencils or pens
  - Screen Play Scenarios” Handout
  - “From the Classroom to a Career” Handout

**Facilitator Tips**:

For an additional activity to further explore reference letters, have the teens collect 3 reference letters from the people on their list (#7-8). Explain to them how to ask for a reference letter and provide copies of how to write a request for one. Have them ask their references to write a letter of recommendation for them to be a camp counselor. Collect and keep the letters on file.

The Activity

1. Ask the teens to think of a secret they have had in their life—perhaps they have done something they are not proud of, perhaps embarrassed by it. They might have told a friend in order to have someone to talk to about it. As long as they keep the information confidential that is OK, right? But what if they tell your secret to other people?
2. Give the teens a chance to think about these questions on their own.
   - Why would someone tell a secret you told them?
   - What would they gain from it?
   - How would you feel?
   - How might you react?
   - What might happen?
   - Could you forgive them?
   - What would it take for you to forgive them?
   - Would you ever trust them again?
   - What would it take for them to regain your trust?

4. Have the teens break up into small groups of 4-5 people and allow them to discuss their answers. After thinking about and discussing the questions, ask the teens if they think honesty and integrity are important on the job.
   - Do you think that employers require that employees be honest and trustworthy?
   - Do you think being dishonest is grounds to be fired?

5. Next, explain to the groups that they are going to create a movie scene showing someone betraying confidence and what might happen as a result. Pass out one of the scenarios provided to each group. Encourage the youth to have a discussion and brainstorm ideas of how the scenario will work out.

6. After they have created their movie scene scripts, have the groups act out their scenes.

7. Pass out the “From the Classroom to a Career” handout. Discuss the items on the handout. Talk about how being honest on the job can affect your career future. Most employers require you to give them letters of reference before hiring you. These letters of reference are written by people who tell your employer if you are the right person for the job. If your letters tell a possible employer that you are honest, trustworthy, and dependable, you will have a greater chance of getting the job.

8. Have the teens write a list of 3-5 people they could ask for a reference if they ever needed to. Tell them to write down the names and collect the contact information for these people so they have them for a future time.
Talk It Over

Discuss with the teens why integrity and honesty are skills that are very important to every aspect of our lives. Whether we are at school, home, at a store, or at the workplaces, being honest and showing integrity lets others know that you are a dependable and trustworthy person. Trust is something you have to gain from those around you. Being honest and telling the truth is a great way to earn the trust of those you work for and with. Showing integrity means doing the right thing for the right reasons. You can show your integrity by standing up for what is right and being a positive role model for others.

**Share**
- What did the movie scenes show?
- How did this activity make you feel?

**Process**
- How does confidentiality relate to trustworthiness?
- Why might someone confide in you with a secret or private information?
- Why might you be tempted to tell someone else’s secret to another person?

**Generalize**
- How do these concepts of trustworthiness and integrity relate to knowing sensitive information about the business where you work?
- What other actions or behaviors would cause someone to lose trustworthiness?

**Apply**
- Once a coworker or friend loses your trust because of a breach of confidentiality how difficult would it be for them to regain your trust? What would they need to do in order to regain your trust?
- How would you feel if your coworkers lost trust in you?
- If your coworkers lost trust in you, what would you do in order to gain it back?
Screen Play Scenarios

- A friend at work asks you to work for him so he can go to the movies with his girlfriend. The manager asks you where your friend is. You tell him that your friend is sick.

- You are filling out your time sheet. You worked a day when your supervisor was not around. You add an hour to your timesheet.

- You saw the schedule for prom weekend. You ask a coworker who is also a classmate to work for you that weekend before they get to see the schedule. You tell them that you have a family function that weekend.

- Your grades are not quite high enough to apply for a summer job at the local camp. You know they never check grades so you lie about yours.

- Your cash drawer is off by $5. You counted it multiple times. You know that you did not take the money so you just tell your manager that it balances.

- Your friend always helps you clean up after work so you do not have to stay as long. Your boss compliments you on the good job you are doing keeping everything so clean. You just say thank you and do not give credit to your friend for helping.

- You found $20 in the aisle at the store where you work. You look around and no one is nearby that might have dropped it. You stick it in your pocket instead of giving it to the service desk.

- You ask a friend to lie about you being sick so you can go to a football game instead of working your shift.

- You borrowed $5 from a coworker. He seems to have forgotten about it so you figure you will forget about it too.

- You said you cleaned the bathroom at work, but you really just sprayed air freshener in there.

- You see how busy the store is where you work. When asked to stay and work extra time to help out, you make up a reason why you need to leave on time.

- You see the supplies for the dispensers are running low. You do not feel like doing it so when your manager asks why you have not filled it, you make up a story about being too busy.

- You work at a gas station. The owner gave you permission to work on your car on weekends. Without asking permission, you let your friends also come in and use the garage’s equipment.

- A customer gave you $10 too much to pay for her order because the bills were stuck together. She did not realize it. You pretend you did not realize it either and plan to pocket the money later.
How to Wow - Professionalism
Activity 1

Here are some tips that you can use whether you are at school, work, in a club, or at home to help you develop the professionalism skills you need for success in the workplace.

Be a Dependable
- Be punctual to school, work, meetings, and other obligations.
- Avoid frequent absenteeism.
- Meet established deadlines.
- Be someone that can be counted on to get the job done.

Master Your Tasks
- Prove that you understand and can accomplish the basic requirements of a task or job.

Exceed Expectations
- Work hard and plan to do more than is expected.
- Show enthusiasm and take initiative.
- Avoid “it is not my job” thinking.

Strive for Excellence
- Always do the best you can.
- Work towards providing the highest quality final product possible.

Ask for Feedback
- Keep your supervisor, teachers, or boss informed of your progress and ask for feedback regularly on your performance.
- If any assignments are unclear, ask for clarification instead of proceeding in the wrong direction.

Develop Strong Oral and Written Communication Skills
- Every job, even technical ones, require some degree of communication skills.
- Look for opportunities to make oral presentations and written reports and do them conscientiously and carefully.

Establish Positive Working Relationships
- Get to know and be known by others in your work environment.
- Be professional and courteous at all times.
- Maintain confidences and avoid gossip because it can be destructive and puts you in a bad light.

Correspondence Etiquette
You will probably correspond with customers, clients, business contacts, and coworkers via telephone and email. When doing so, it is important to maintain a professional image. The following tips will help you sharpen these skills in the workplace.

Telephone
- Call during typical business hours.
- Have all necessary information in front of you before calling.
- Call from a quiet location or reduce background noise.
- Notify people when they are on a speakerphone.
- Make sure voicemail messages are concise and professional. Be sure to state your full name and telephone number and reason for calling.
- Speak slowly and clearly, especially when leaving a voicemail message.

Email
- Write in complete sentences, do not use one word replies.
- Use the subject line to specify the point of the message, not for an informal greeting.
- Structure your email like a business letter and include greetings and closings.
- Review the content of your email to make sure the point of the message is clear.
- Be sure to use correct grammar and to perform a spell check before sending.