Ethics In the Workplace: 
Tools and Tactics for 
Organizational Transformation

By Craig E. Johnson. 363 pages. 
Softcover. Thousand Oaks, CA: 

Most organizations have ethics 
policies, because they recognize 
that ethical values in the work- 
place are tied to organizational health. However, those policies are too frequently ignored. Reasons include the following: 
- the belief that changing ethi- 
cal performance is easy 
- the idea that trying to enforce ethical behavior won't do any good 
- the conception that ethical values are already set in childhood 
- the impression that the current interest in ethics is just a fad 
- the feeling that implementing high ethical standards is too expensive.

Usually these reasons are erro- 
nous, and in his illuminating book Craig E. Johnson responds to each. But reasons (legitimate or not) aside, moral standards and performance do go hand in hand. Practicing ethical behavior takes a desire to improve, the drive to follow through, and the determination to engage in constant monitoring.

Before explaining how ethical organizations function, Johnson first looks at five widely-used ethi- 
cal theories and encourages us to look at problems from each. He helps by explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Both individual and contextual factors contribute to ethical behavior, but before addressing the context, Johnson explains personal motivations, character, and reasoning. He identifies the elements of personal ethical develop- 
ment and explains how to 
cultivate communication skills to 
foster ethical interactions and 
decisions.

Johnson explores ethically 
destructive behavior and ways to 
prevent it or respond to it. Then he looks at the behaviors that 
should become ingrained and 
practiced to build highly ethical workplaces. In addition, he considers how organizations themselves can become more socially responsible. At the end of each chapter, Johnson presents problems to 
practice ethical thinking. Practice keeps us ethical as individuals and 
organizations. That will lead to 
high performance. Following Johnson’s guidelines is good prac- 
tice for us individually and for our organizations.

Moral standards and 
performance do go 
hand in hand.

High-Performing Organizations Must Be Ethical

To transform your organization, you need to translate ethical theory into action.

By Terrence Fernsler

How to Build an Ethical Workplace

A few of the tactics Craig E. Johnson describes in his book:
- Communicate your expec- 
tation that people will act 
ethically. People tend to live 
up to the expectancies placed 
on them.
- Clearly identify your orga-
nization’s core values. Be sure 
you reinforce and model those 
values.
- Develop a warm emotional 
climate in your organization, 
giving people opportunities to 
express their opinions and 
offering frequent feedback.
- Create a powerful mission 
statement that inspires ethical 
behavior.
- Encourage people to live 
up to their full potential.
- Use moral vocabulary 
even when making routine 
decisions. Avoid euphemisms 
that hide the ethical implic- 
ations of your choices.
- Recognize that high con- 
centrations of power and an 
emphasis on status tend to 
produce unethical behavior.
- Monitor your behavior to 
reduce inequalities – especially 
subtle ones – in the ways you 
treat others.
- Make sure your organiza-
tion has a code of ethics that’s 
consistently enforced.

Terrence Fernsler is the individual- 
giving officer for the Olympic Park 
Institute in Seattle.

Relevant reviews

By Terrence Fernsler

High-Performing Organizations Must Be Ethical

To transform your organization, you need to translate ethical theory into action.