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To: IELTS Prep Group
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Lesson Objective

The student shall be able to use “power words” as part of their oral vocabulary, read and comprehend both social and business language and demonstrate effective oral communication skills

Section One

Vocabulary

Evaluation Criteria: Ability to understand definitions of English vocabulary

Look at the chart

Idioms

Chip on your shoulder

To carry a grudge against someone or something



Golden touch

Successful with everything you are involved with



Loose ends

To leave something unfinished or unresolved



Out of the blue

Something unexpected, a sudden surprise



Now complete these examples with one of the idioms and ask someone else to make another example with that idiom.

1. Yesterday I noticed that you were in a very bad mood because you weren't promoted, are you
2. It has been many years since I have seen my cousin, then one day when I got home he showed up
3. Last week my boss was trying to close his store and he was taking care of any
4. Have you seen Bob and how his business is growing? It seems he has the.....

Section Two

Reading Comprehension and Pronunciation skills.

Evaluation Criteria: Ability to effectively read and comprehend written English in a social or business environment.

ARTICLE A

Promoting more ethical behavior at work

Source

1. People share many different things at work to try and brighten the drudgery of office life. They append moral quotes to an email signature line. They sit little statues of Buddha or other religious icons on their desk. They thumbtack quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. or Winston Churchill to the drab, gray canvas of their cubicle wall.

But those small efforts at workplace enlightenment don't just have an effect on the people who use them. New research shows they might also help preempt unethical behavior by their boss.

A forthcoming study in the *Academy of Management Journal* that was recently highlighted in the *Harvard Business Review* found that when employees display moral symbols — such as a virtuous quote in emails or religious images hung on a cubicle wall — it could help prevent their managers from asking them to cheat or engage in other bad behavior.



2. "It causes others in their vicinity to behave slightly more ethical," Sreedhari Desai, an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's business school, said in an interview. "If the person happens to be your boss, they would be less likely to ask you to do something that's unethical."

The study, which Desai wrote with coauthor Maryam Kouchaki of Northwestern University, included five laboratory studies and one study of employees and managers in Indian workplaces. The lab studies set up experiments in which the participants were asked to take part in a decision-making game where they stood to lose money and had to decide whether to engage in deceptive behavior — or ask their virtual teammates to do so. When they received emails from these virtual teammates that included a moral quote — Sophocles' dictum that it's better to "fail with honor than succeed by fraud" — they were less likely to lie or ask others to deliver a deceptive message.

3. Meanwhile, the study in India looked at 104 pairs of workers and their managers. It surveyed the supervisors to ask how often their subordinates displayed religious symbols at their desks, such as images of Krishna or Buddha, and the subordinates about how often their bosses asked them to do something dubious. Even after controlling for other factors, such as job satisfaction, those who displayed religious symbols were less likely to be asked to act unethically.

Desai, who wrote her dissertation on the same topic, got the idea for the research after a student asked her how to turn the theoretical ideas about ethics she was teaching into real-world answers.

4. "One of my students raised his hand and said, 'All this is good, but if my boss asks me to do something unethical, it's very hard to say no,'" she said. It made her wonder if a more bottoms-up solution to resolving ethical problems could help, rather than just trying to get leaders to act more principled themselves. "Is there some way to preempt those kinds of unethical questions to begin with?" she thought.

Desai recognizes that such symbols have cultural boundaries, and is quick to say that what works in India, where there's less distance between religion and the rest of society, may not apply to U.S. workplaces. But she does think culturally appropriate

moral symbols could still have similar effects.

5. For instance, part of her dissertation research, which was not part of the recent paper, looked at how much people spent in a pay-as-you-wish cafe located in Salt Lake City. After the community-minded cafe hung images of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa and other towering social figures on its walls, people began spending roughly 20% more for similar amounts of food than they had before the proprietor decorated the place with the posters.

Still, couldn't there be a downside for people who display such symbols, such as coming across as holier-than-thou? Desai said her research looked for such backlashes.

"We wanted to know if there are hidden costs," she said. Bosses might think "'She's moral, so I'm not going to ask her to fudge the numbers.' But then when it comes time to promote people, are they seen as not being a team player?" Desai said her research did not show evidence of such a problem.

6. Lab studies and research from India may not definitively tell us how much such "moral symbols" can really help turn around an unethical boss. But it does seem they're unlikely to hurt. Desai recently got an email from someone who'd heard about her research after having a bad experience with a rude client. He added a quote from philosopher Eric Hoffer about rudeness being "a weak man's imitation of strength" to the bottom of his email signature line. He ended up getting an apology from the client.

"It's non confrontational," Desai said. "It's a subtle, sneaky way to influence people."

ARTICLE B

Leaders: Whose shaping your company culture

[Source](#)

1. You've spent more time being "one of the guys" than being at the top, so here's a helpful reminder, in case you're feeling wistful: When you're one of the guys, you're fitting in -- which is the opposite of being a strong leader. As CEO, you can't have a sense of belonging. You need to flip that on its head and create a place others want to belong to. Every leader makes mistakes, and it seems you've made your first big one: You hired a team and then let them dictate the company culture. Now you need to fix that.

Can an entire company's culture be changed? Yes, but it has to be done fairly and transparently. If you haven't formalized a company code of conduct, get started immediately so that employees stop making up their own rules. Make it clear to employees what needs to change and why. Everyone will need to know what is expected going forward.

2. That may all sound overwhelming, so start small: Identify three or four core values that guide how you want employees to act toward one another, and how you want your company as a whole to behave. To make those values concrete, identify specific actions that employees can take to embody those values. For those who can't buy in, show them the door -- and use those openings to enhance diversity and talent. Once staffing issues are sorted out, continue to work with your team to build on values and evolve a culture of respect.

This will be lonely work, so it's time for you to tap into a support system of your own peers. Leave the staffers to go have drinks themselves. You're no longer one of the guys -- now you're one of the CEOs.



ARTICLE C

Leaders: Whose shaping your company culture

[Source](#)

1. It seems like, on the first day of your new job, every employee handbook circulated covers the general rule that telling someone they have a nice butt isn't a good idea professionally.

That's why a recent controversy at an Indiana restaurant chain is such a head-scratcher. At least one manager at Scotty's Brewhouse in Indianapolis was fired as a result of a team-building event gone wrong. Several employees received trophies akin to "best bartender" or "best server," presumably as some kind of reward for good service.

But one employee got a trophy that was entirely unwelcome: "Best butt." Not only that, but, after receiving the trophy, she was then told to turn around in front of everyone so people could take pictures of the asset that won her the award.



2. The server, whom the local media didn't identify, was, unsurprisingly, not amused. In fact, she felt humiliated.

I feel like I'm more than just a butt," the woman told a local television station. "I feel like I'm smart. I'm going to school."

In fact, she deserved a trophy for nothing short of work ethic, it seems. "I have two jobs so I can make money and continue to go to school," she said, "and then get my degree and not work two jobs anymore."

The corporate bosses at Scotty's meted out an ass-whooping for the offense. In a statement, company owner Scott Wise said he was "completely unaware" of the awards, nor did he or anyone else in senior management "condone or sponsor this event."

"As a result," Wise said, "we took immediate action that included terminating management, and I have instructed our teams to immediately do additional sexual harassment training company wide, beyond the initial training process new managers go through already when they are hired."

3. From a communications standpoint, that touches on the Holy Trinity of messaging that companies like Scotty's want to make in a crisis: It was an isolated incident, we handled it swiftly and we're working to make sure it never happens again.

But there's also something hollow about the response. Sexual-harassment policies, like all corporate efforts to root out bad behavior and discrimination, can be filled with grey areas. All hiring, for instance, involves some kind of discrimination. Many a manager has spent a good amount of time wondering whether a colleague's compliment over a dress runs afoul of unwelcome-communications policies and needs a disciplinary response.

This doesn't seem to be a grey area. Talking about someone's "nice butt" to them is an event worthy of termination at most places, for obvious reasons: It objectifies someone in a sexually aggressive way, which runs a high risk of being unwelcome by the receiver. That's first-day training material: No touching, no whistling, etc.

Having a trophy engraved seems to take this to a whole other level of asininity.

And that's where an isolated firing and retraining might not do the trick Scotty's management needs. Many employees test



company policies, but only enterprises with permissive cultures allow some to blow past boundaries in the way that happened with the "nice butt" trophy. It's probably not surprising that this happened in a bar environment, which is more laid back than a cubicle-farm office. A neon Bud sign is a modern *sub rosa*, a signal that much of what happens in the confine of the bar is meant to stay there, or at least to never be mentioned (or remembered) again. Many employees at bars and restaurants know and accept this. The banter that goes on in kitchens or behind bar with staff would make a Teamster blush and cause blood-pressure spikes in the average HR representative.

4. But that's no license to humiliate or take away human dignity from someone, and that's what happened at Scotty's. Beyond simply a rogue employee or two, Scotty's corporate culture bears some responsibility and needs an assessment. After all, it was Scotty's overall culture that, presumably, allowed people to be hired and promoted to the point where a nice-butt trophy didn't command a second thought. At the very least, it's a cultural indictment that a single management team at one restaurant could have an event like this without anyone in the corporate suites knowing about it or approving of it beforehand. Yes, all companies have bad employees and subpar managers, but bad culture often allows these people to go unchecked. That's the blame of leadership, not the bad actors in question.

Here's the good news. Scotty's seems like a great business. It's been around 20 years, has about a dozen restaurants and looks to be welcoming and inventive with its food. (I'm particularly intrigued by something called a Chupacabra burger.) This isn't some roadside trucker tavern that can't get out of its own way. It seems to have bright marketing minds, committed leadership and it knows a crisis when it sees one. A cultural audit is at least easy to begin, even if the findings are troubling.

And there's better news: Scotty's can use this to try to hire more people who work their tails off, support themselves, pay for their education and contribute to a positive workplace culture.

That would be a very nice end.