

J.D. Fox Micro

Code of Ethics

- **Earn every penny you bill for** by performing your duties with the same diligence and attention to detail as you would apply to your own IT system. If you would feel the slightest bit of dread were a client to call with a question about your invoice, then fix that invoice before you send it.
- **Make expectations clear at all times.** If your client thought a service was included in a contract or project when it was not, it's your fault. You wrote the contract or project plan, and you are the expert in this industry. Never shirk your responsibility to tell a client up-front what is not included, even if you fear it will lose you the sale. If you think it will, then you should review whether your offer is honestly providing the value it should.
- **Maintain your skills.** Subscribe to industry publications, and purchase equipment and software to improve your understanding and capabilities in installing and configuring systems, diagnosing and fixing problems, and recommending the right solutions for your clients' needs.
- **Maintain integrity.** Explain things to your client with the same detail and candor as you would to a colleague from whom you are asking help. If you make a mistake, admit it and explain to the client how you will fix it and prevent it from happening again. However, be measured in your response to an apparent mistake; admitting too quickly to something that turns out not to have been a mistake on your part, and then trying to take it back, can damage your relationship with your client unnecessarily and thereby hurt both you and your client.

- **Do not expose your client to risks that he is not aware of.** You must ensure you always know when there is a potential for loss of data or a service outage due to actions you take or do not take on the IT system, which go beyond the normal routine risks of relying on information technology or otherwise what your client already expects. If such a risk is possible, mitigate the risk and/or advise the client of the risks and his options.
- **Having insurance does not absolve you from responsibility.** Insurance that would cover your legal expenses or a judgment in case of a lawsuit is irrelevant to this Code of Ethics. You buy such policies to protect your own assets, but this shall never be considered a replacement for proper diligence, evaluation, and mitigation of risks on behalf of the client.
- **Do not pass the buck.** If you sell your client a device that doesn't work, and your supplier doesn't take care of you, you still have to take care of repairing or replacing it for the client. Your deal with your supplier is not the client's problem, and it is totally out of line for you to make it the client's problem by blaming your supplier for the problem.
- **Be a vociferous and effective advocate.** Similarly, if a third-party provider, such as a web hosting company, is the cause of a problem with a client's service for which you are the front-line maintainer (such as the client's website), and that provider does not fix the problem, you must do everything, as your client's advocate, to get that provider to fix it, or promptly provide your client with options to work around the problem

- **Be objective in your recommendations.** If you have outside business or financial interests that would be affected by major decisions your client might make in which you have any influence, you must address this by withdrawing from your contract with your client, if possible to do so properly under the terms of your contract, or giving up your conflicting outside financial interests.
- **Honor the privacy of your clients without exception.** No matter how tempting it may be to take a harmless peek at a user's document with a tantalizing title, never do it. Always work as if your client is watching everything you do.
- **Do not screen your calls.** If you fear talking to a client because you are too overloaded with work, or you do not know how to solve a problem he's having, you must immediately figure out how to address it, and communicate your plan to the client.
- **Never provide counterfeit or unlicensed software to your clients.** While a client may fervently request this to save costs, your willingness to steal intellectual property within our own industry, your complicity in putting your client at risk of a civil court judgment, and your failing to persuade the client on the value of properly licensing software will permanently damage your standing as a virtuous and honorable service provider.

- **Do not denigrate other IT service providers.** It does not make you look any better; it only proves that you can criticize. It can also insult the client, as it was this same client's decision to hire the other IT service provider to do the work you now disparage. If you have a problem with how another provider did things, simply explain to the client why you would do things differently, and keep in mind that there may have been factors no longer present when past decisions were made that you are now unaware of.
- **Be courteous and respectful at all times** to every member of your client's organization, from the boss to the lowest-level employee. If you do not know how to control your temper, or how not to mock someone who may be unskilled, then find another occupation.
- **Return calls promptly and arrive on-time to all appointments,** mentally and physically ready for duty, and with all equipment and other items required.
- **Conduct your personal life in a manner that will not interfere with your ability to provide the level of service your clients expect.** Maintain your physical fitness to minimize sick days. Do not put yourself in situations or make bad personal choices that cause such hardship that you cannot fulfill your obligations as an IT service provider.

Copyright © 2014 by J.D. Fox Micro. This document may be copied and used for the purpose of promoting good ethics among Information Technology service providers so long as it is copied in its entirety, including this copyright notice. Any other use is prohibited, and all other rights are reserved.