

Ethical Outsourcing Behavior

The following describes what it takes to conform to accepted standards of professional outsourcing behavior. Take heed since your commitment to ethical outsourcing will influence your experience with not just the outsourcing industry as a whole, but RentACoder too.

Legal Obligations

First things first. Know that working outside of an employer-employee relationship doesn't permit illegal activity. But it doesn't exactly jive with what's enforced in a contract either.

Who? What? Huh??

Here's the deal.

Let's say that you're already an outsourcing pro and your coder decides to break some form of the law. And let's say you decide to go along with the activity because it saves you money or because it gets the job done faster. Doing so places yourself and/or your entire company at risk for being an accomplice to a crime regardless of what's in a contract.

We're not talking about obvious crimes like murder or wearing fall colors in spring. We're talking about work crimes – those things people always think they can get away with when the boss is away on vacation. Example (typical) work crimes include: fraud, bribery, insider trading, embezzlement, computer crime, and forgery.¹ Crimes most likely to occur within the online workplace include:

- blackmail
- copyright, trademark, and patent infringement
- data interference (unauthorized damaging, deletion, deterioration, alteration or suppression of computer data)
- electronic fraud
- forgery (ID theft)
- hacking
- harassment
- illegal access (unauthorized access)
- illegal interception (by technical means or non-public transmissions of computer data to, from, or within a computer system)
- misuse of devices

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_collar_crime

- systems interference (interfering with the functioning of a computer system by inputting, transmitting, damaging, deleting, deteriorating, altering or suppressing computer data)
- theft and piracy



If you can commit to RentACoder's terms and conditions, you don't ever have to worry about unethical outsourcing. Ever!

To protect both its employers (buyers) and its contract workers (coders), RentACoder's (a) custom software buyer's agreement, (b) custom software seller's agreement, (c) affiliate agreement, (d) site terms and conditions, (e) bid request posting policy, (f) rating and rating comment change policy, (g) copyright violation policies and procedures, and (h) privacy statement address how the company's legal

department handles these issues and more. Check it out at <http://www.rentacoder.com/RentACoder/misc/Legal.asp>.

Honesty

Honesty is the best policy, right? Well maybe not at a family Thanksgiving dinner. But in outsourcing, it's not only the best policy, it's the most 'commonsensible' policy since there's no way a project will be successful if everyone fabricates things.

Confidentiality

The entire premise of outsourcing *can* be based on confidentiality (prudence isn't always standard). If you consider the ghostwriter for instance, this job title alone describes a writer who gives authorship (credit) to someone else. Of what value is there in hiring a ghostwriter if the ghostwriter claims credit for the same work? Or who blabbers to the world that s/he is the one who really authored the work instead?

Publically exposing an outsourcing work relationship can confuse customers and damage a company's reputation. That's why many businesses use a nondisclosure agreement (NDA).

A nondisclosure agreement states that should a contractor reveal secret information, a business can sue for damages...

...even at RentACoder!

Conforming to Industry Standards

A lot of ethics problems can be avoided just by following *industrial standards*.²

Almost every industry suggests a set of standards, and related businesses are legally bound to follow them since they can affect public health and safety issues. Here's a short list of some of those industries:

² <http://www.answers.com/topic/industry-standard>

Aerospace & Defense	Household Durables
Airlines	Household Non Durables
Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco	Industrial Machinery
Apparel & Footwear	Insurance: Life & Health
Autos & Auto Parts	Insurance: Property Casualty
Banking	Investment Services
Biotechnology	Lodging & Gaming
Broadcasting Cable	Metals: Industrial
Chemicals	Movies & Home Entertainment
Communications Equipment	Natural Gas Distribution
Computers: Commercial Services	Oil & Gas: Equipment & Services
Computers: Consumer Services & the Internet	Oil & Gas: Production & Marketing
Computers: Hardware	Paper & Forest Products
Computers: Software	Publishing
Computers: Storage & Peripherals	Real Estate Investment Trusts
Electric Utilities	Restaurants
Environmental & Waste Management	Retailing: General
Financial Services Diversified	Retailing: Specialty
Food & Nonalcoholic Beverages	Savings & Loan
Healthcare: Managed Care	Semiconductor
Healthcare: Facilities	Semiconductor Equipment
Healthcare: Pharmaceuticals	Supermarket & Drugstores
Healthcare: Products & Supplies	Telecommunications, Wireless
Heavy Equipment & Trucks	Telecommunications: Wireline
Homebuilding	Transportation: Commercial ³

If your business belongs to one of those industries, you'll have a better chance at nabbing a successful outsourcing experience by following *its standards*. Search your local directory for trade associations related to your industry and then call one to learn how to access relevant policies. Study them and follow the rules.

Ethics Code

What about your own standards? Do they count for anything?

An ethics code is helpful for any business that's responsible for managing a large group of employees. It's also helpful since its content can help flesh out an outsourcing contract.

Normally, RentACoder contractors have their own code of ethics to follow, however if your business requires tasks or behaviors that are unusual or atypical, you might have to reconsider what you're outsourcing and why you're outsourcing it.

An example of an unusual task or behavior – especially where the nondisclosure agreement is concerned -- would be if a RentACoder contractor is required to publish research results from a publicly-funded entity. This is exactly what's required within biochemistry and microbiology fields, however it may conflict with how information is distributed within a company that doesn't want its use of this information disclosed to the public.

³ http://sandp.ecnext.com/coms2/page_industry