

Preside or Lead?

The Attributes and Actions of Effective Regulators

9. Ethical



Ethics Defined: Narrow and Broad?

In regulation, we usually view “ethics” as avoiding wrongdoing—bribes, ex parte contacts, favoritism, and conflicts of interest. Gardner defines ethics more broadly: To act ethically is “to think beyond our own self-interest and do what is right under the circumstances.” An ethical worker “passes the hypocrisy test: She abides by the principles even when—or especially when—they go against her self-interest.” Paradoxically, we can define “broad ethics” in terms of self-interest. Gardner asks: “In what kind of a world would we like to live if we knew neither our standing nor our resources in advance?” His personal answer: “I would like to live in a world characterized by ‘good work’: work that is excellent, ethical, and engaging.”

Can these thoughts help solve regulatory problems?

Scott Hempling

Attorney at Law LLC

Copyright © 2013 Scott Hempling