

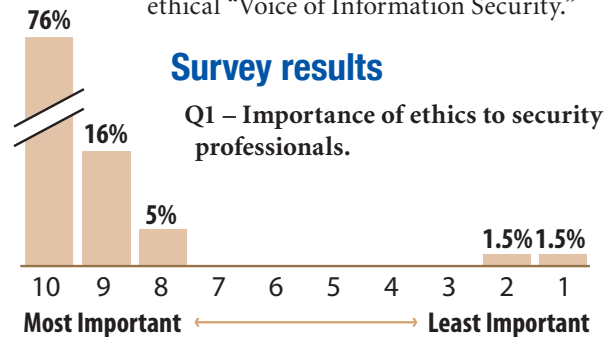
## ISSA Ethics Committee 2008 Survey

The ISSA Ethics Committee survey for our membership ended in mid-August 2008 with 62 people completing the questionnaire, although not every question was answered by all respondents.

Overall, the ISSA Ethics Committee felt that this survey assisted in validating our mission on many dimensions. However, we are collectively challenged as to how to improve the effectiveness of education and are continually looking for good ideas and input. We feel that our higher purpose is to positively influence thinking and thus behavior, rather than being merely a tribunal for complaints after the fact.

What encourages us the most about our volunteer activity on the ISSA Ethics Committee is that we have been able to connect with many members who also feel strongly about a commitment to professional ethics – some who have backed up that commitment by taking personal stances even though the consequences may be adverse in the short-term.

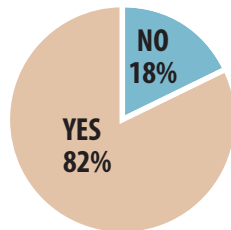
Our thanks go out to every member who considers professional ethics when faced with a compromising situation. Hopefully, you can use the association with the ISSA to confirm your belief and behavior with higher purposes in everyday work/life situations. May we continue to exhibit our dedication to professional ethics in setting a standard for our profession – indeed being the ethical “Voice of Information Security.”



**Q2 – Have you observed ethical violations from non-security professionals on the job?**

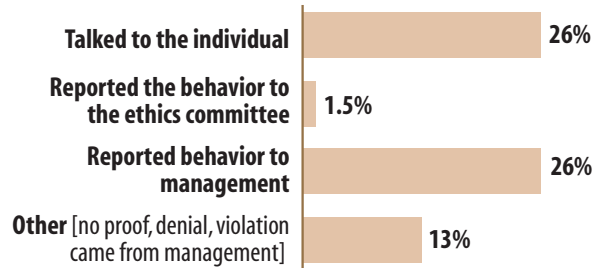
**Q3 – If yes, would you care to share an incident?**

- Multiple examples of self interest taking precedent over doing the right thing [CEO receiving raise when workers are laid off]
- Personal information divulged [snooping]
- Decisions made based on risk of getting caught
- Private use/misuse of company resources [IMing, playing poker, viewing porn, shopping eBay, taking company software home]

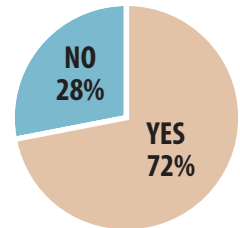


- Records altered [add doctorate degree to credentials]
- Changing data to cover mistakes
- Decisions based on expediency not policy [leaving notebook unprotected]
- Misrepresentation of facts [webserver down to cover failure to meet contract requirements, shipment errors of private data denied, hiding staff relationships]

**Q4 – If you observed an ethical violation, did you respond, report or other?**



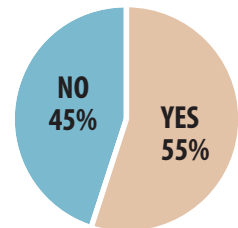
**Q5 – Have you observed/been involved in situations involving non-security professionals facing dilemmas who have been guided by ethics?**



**Q5a – Are you willing to share an example?**

- Personal data was not divulged when it might have been profitable to do so
- Declining gifts from vendors
- There are always some who do right
- Someone confronting those using corporate resources [using computer resources]
- Helping to create a supportive corporate ethical culture [employees reporting other employees for ethical violations]
- Disclosing conflicts of interest up front

**Q6 – Have you observed ethical violations from security professionals?**



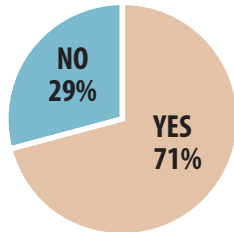
**Q7 – Are you willing to share an example?**

- Divulged personal info [salary info, personnel files, evaluations]
- Misrepresentation of facts [certifications, having someone else do his homework, cheating on time sheets]
- Misuse of company resources
- Taking credit for another’s idea

# Ethics and Privacy

- Not reporting violations to law enforcement [afraid to lose a contract, violates a pre-existing business agreement, legal procedure too public]
- Conflicting positions [management vs. ethical guidelines may pose conflicts]
- Accepting gifts

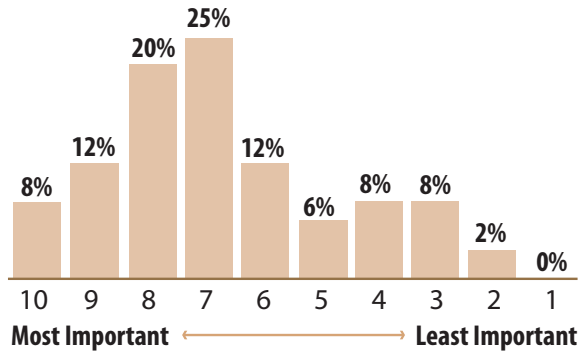
**Q8 – Have you observed situations in which security professionals behaved in an ethically responsible way?**



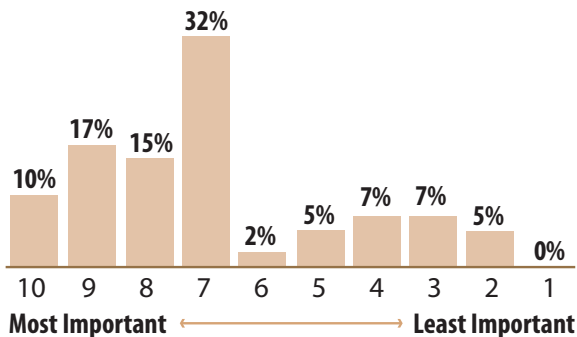
**Q9 – Do you have an example you are willing to share?**

- This happens frequently
- This happens rarely, yes, but cannot recall good examples
- For three respondents, holding fast to ethical principles and refusing to act as ordered (actions perceived as unethical). This ethical behavior, however, resulted in loss of employment (voluntarily – did not want to continue at that company)
- Respecting the privacy of the individual [refusing to snoop email]

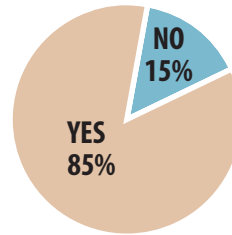
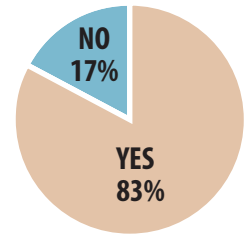
**Q10 – How effective is ethics education?**



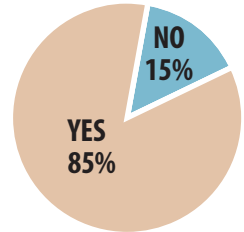
**Q11 – How effective in improving/maintaining ethical behavior do you think the formal mechanisms are that some professions have in place to deal with unethical behavior?**



**Q12 – Have you applied the ISSA Code of Ethics at work?**



**Q13 – Do you adhere to the Code of Ethics from other organizations?**



**Q14 – Do you feel the Codes of Ethics between information security organizations are consistent?**

**Q15 – Comments?**

- Codes of ethics have a shared core thread, but what is right and what to do are not consistent
- Consistent in general but differing in detail
- Problem with codes is that they do not reflect different cultures
- ISSA code of ethics conflicts with itself (what’s good for management vs. what’s good for the organization)
- Consistent code of ethics would lead us to being a “profession”
- License security professionals, but the license should not be college-based
- Intention of codes of ethics is similar but the details are not
- Unification is the next step
- I am unaware each organization has a code of ethics
- I don’t feel a code of ethics is important or relevant
- I don’t agree with all the code of ethics statements as written

## We invite your feedback!

This snapshot of responses to our first formal survey is not all that the ISSA Ethics Committee is opening up for input – we want to hear from you. The relevance of professional ethics needs to be attuned to what each of us is facing – daily as well as over the long-term.

**Comments and thoughts – send to [Ethics@issa.org](mailto:Ethics@issa.org).**

*The ISSA International Ethics Committee is an active group of ISSA members missioned to maintain a framework for ethics relating to practices that support the ISSA Code of Ethics, provide guidance on ethical behavior for Information Systems Security professionals, and provide education and outreach that increase awareness and promote positive actions.*