

## The Ethics of Me

On January 15, Todd T. Hatori, chairman of IABC, was the guest presenter at the Dallas IABC chapter meeting. Entitled the “Big E Brand,” Mr. Hattori posed the question of ethics and personal branding.

Ethics is not a new concept to business. In this post-Enron world in which we live, the role of ethics has taken on an even greater role. At work, it is common for management to adhere to a code of ethics. In professional organizations, such as IABC, members agree to comply with a code of ethics.

But what about a personal code of ethics? How does it affect the decisions we make and the life we live? Mr. Hattori addressed the *necessity* and *value* in developing a personal code of ethics in all that we do.

He further stated that as communicators, our role *and* responsibility should be to play the role of counselor to top management on ethical matters. The same should be considered in our daily lives. When you encounter people or businesses with unethical conduct do you assess the situation and make decisions based on your own personal code of ethics?

Is what you say aligned with what you do? And if not, why not? What factors are influencing your words and actions?

Mr. Hattori cited the Greek Philosopher Plato who stated, “Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws.” Those who live by a personal code of ethics will do what is right not because they want to give a superficial appearance of being right.

When developing a personal brand it is important to consider the values, abilities and personality traits that constitute who we are. In the book, *The Personal Branding Phenomenon*, the author Peter Montoya cites eight elements of personal branding: specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, persistence and goodwill. The book is a guide to managing personal identity and how to leverage it to your advantage. If these are important criteria for creating a personal brand, I like Mr. Hattori, propose the necessity of one additional criterion, a code of ethics.

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