



INTEGRITY, HONESTY, HONOUR – IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

By the time you read this column, millions of eligible South Africans would have cast their votes in the local elections and, for many people, it will be the beginning of the wait for the delivery of those promises made by politicians in the run up to the elections. Sadly, the wait could be a long one, with the possibility that many of those promises may never be kept.

In time to come, when we hear of strikes, disruptions or corruption, we will remember those promises and we'll be disappointed because we'll come to realise that they've been broken through a lack of integrity.

But, aren't we just like many of those dishonest politicians? In our daily lives how many of us promise we will be at our clients' houses on time, that our work is of the highest standard and that we'd never 'rip them off'?

Can you honestly say that your staff members are registered with the National Bargaining Council for the Electrical Industry, that your company is registered as an electrical contractor and that you are on top of all the relevant electrical regulations as required by you, the registered person, in the industry? Do you promise you will be on site every day for the duration of the work? Do you operate with integrity or are you just like those politicians who make promises that are difficult to keep – just to get the job?

Integrity

Let's look at how the Oxford dictionary defines 'integrity'. It's a noun and defined as "... the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles ...". It's worthy to note that the definition uses the word 'honest' and the adverb 'honestly' is defined as "... in a truthful, fair, or honourable way ...". And 'moral principle' is defined as "... the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group ...".

Now that we understand the definition of integrity, I will leave it up to you to decide whether or not you conduct your business (or live your life) with integrity.

During my life, I have come across many people in the electrical industry – registered persons and contractors who claim they act with integrity but who do not actually display those characteristics. Are you one of them?

Here are some things to consider:

- As a learner, do you conduct your studies with integrity?
- When you provide a quotation to a potential client, are you sure that you are going to act with integrity?
- When you drive your car, do you drive with integrity?

- When you go to the shops and the cashier gives you too much change or charges you less than the marked price, do you act with integrity?
- Have you bribed a traffic officer or a policeman to get out of a 'situation'?
- Have you bribed a clerk, public servant or potential client just to get a sale or a job?
- Have you purchased and/or installed electrical components that you knew were not compliant?
- Do your clients get what they paid for?
- Do you always support your family with integrity?
- Do you take short cuts and deliver work that is less than your best?

So, how did you score? Did those questions make you feel a little embarrassed or perhaps leave you feeling a little guilty?

Acting with integrity is a way of living – you can't turn it on and off – you are an honourable person or you are not.

You will find that, when you act with integrity, you will make more money in business; and it comes with a warm, fuzzy feeling ... Knowing that people trust and believe you makes you feel better about yourself. It's a win-win way of life.

Remember: "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching." - C. S. Lewis



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