

Ethical Issues at the Workplace

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Abstract - The rationale of this paper is to examine the establishment of an ethical culture in an organization. Ethical leaders are often willing to take responsibility for their deficiencies and paybacks of the choices they make in the business. To overcome unethical practices in the workplace, the notion of doing what is right ought to be embraced. In addition, changing from unethical to ethical practice in an organization requires a revolution. Being an agent of transformation is the responsibility of every employee and not just the leaders. Equally, discussing ethics should be a regular topic among employees, and each person should be treated fairly and rewarded appropriately when necessary. Ethical leaders set high ethical standards and act in accordance with them. Leaders influence ethical values of the association through their conduct, serve as role models for their followers, and show them the behavioral boundaries set within an organization. They are perceived to be honest, trustworthy, courageous, and demonstrating integrity. The more a leader works by his word and translates internalized principles into actions, the advanced rank of belief and admiration he/she garners from his/her followers. I put forward that these characteristics can be used as an underpinning of an all-inclusive replica that can fit into position to sway equipped practices in forming and supporting an ethical business culture. Additionally, an ethics program should be implemented and supplemented by the incorporation of an ethics manager, ethics hotline, ethics training, and a code of ethics that all employees will observe.

Index Terms - Ethical Culture, Ethical Leader, Character, And Leadership



If I was hired as a management consultant to overcome unethical practices, I would first examine the organization and emphasize on the need for personal values among employees, especially the leaders.

According to Hanson and Murray (2014), doing what is right is what an ethical culture is all about (p.7). It entails having beliefs on the value of human welfare in professional life; treating people equally and compassionately. When professionals embrace positive values in their lives, it marks a good beginning. In addition, changing from unethical to ethical practice

in an organization requires change. Being an agent for change, points out Hanson and Murray, is the responsibility of every employee and not just the leaders (Hanson & Murray p.12).

Secondly, I would emphasize to employees the factors which contribute to an ethical culture. Huhtala et al. (2011) posits the view that discussing ethics should be a regular topic among employees, and each person should be treated fairly and rewarded appropriately when necessary (p.232). In addition, there should be good leadership and a perception among employees that the

actions of the organization are in consonance with company policies. Making decisions which are ethical should therefore be encouraged among employees. As Huhrala et al. observe, employees will make ethical decisions if they are both encouraged and expected to do so (p.232). In an organization with a strong ethical culture, employees will be more committed.

Thirdly, I would encourage employees to report wrong doing. Such an action is supported by statistical evidence. For example, from 1996 to 2004, about 18 percent of cases involving fraud in large companies in the U.S. were reported by employees (Kaptein, 2009, p.3). 90 cases out of 360 cases involving fraud investigated in 2007 by KPMG in Africa, the Middle East and Europe were similarly reported by employees. According to Kaptein (2009), organizations create an environment for catastrophe when they do not encourage reporting of wrongful acts (p.3). However,

wrong doing can also be corrected through intervention by employees when detected. It is equally important to encourage a positive culture where ethical dilemmas are openly discussed with the knowledge that wrong doing is punishable.

Fourthly, I would encourage leaders to synthesize their expectations into the ethical culture within their domains. In this way, the moral efficacy of followers is influenced, and their behavior shaped through the ethical culture that exists in the unit (Schaubroek et al., 2012, p.2011). This is a process that appears to exert an ethical culture hierarchically, a leader at his level having a certain measure of influence. In a study conducted among thousands of soldiers at multiple organizational levels, Schaubroek et al. (2012) found that ethical leadership indeed cascades down the various levels (p.1053). In essence, I would encourage unit leaders in the company to practice ethical leadership within their

domains and ensure that their expectations become part of the unit's ethical culture.

Lastly, I would incorporate a number of other measures to minimize unethical behavior. According to Schwartz (2013, p.42), it is vital for a company to have ethical values in its practices, processes and policies. In addition, an ethics program, supplemented by the hiring of an ethics manager, ethics hotline, ethics training, and a code of ethics to be followed by all employees (Schwartz 2013, p.44). Significantly, these measures will only be effective if managers, executives and directors are ethical. Despite the fact that many of the measures mentioned to overcome unethical practices appear distinct, they are nevertheless effective because they bolster each other.

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