

Ethics in the Workplace

The Developments of Ethical Standards

- ✓ Utilitarian approach: do the least harm, look at consequences
- ✓ Fairness or justice approach: treat all people equally, treat each person with dignity
- ✓ Common good approach: interlocking relationships are the basis for decisions, look at common conditions that affect the welfare of everyone
- ✓ Virtue approach: look at traits and habits that foster our development to our highest potential

Benefits of an Ethical Workplace

- Attention to business ethics gives employees a foundation during times of change
- Attention to ethics cultivates teamwork and productivity
- Attention to ethics creates greater consistency in standards and quality of products and services offered by the organization
- Attention to ethics helps ensure corporate policies are legal and proactively enforced

The Ideal Ethical Workplace

- Equality is essential
- Fairness is fanatical
- Integrity is integral
- Vision is vital
- Individual accountability is authentic
- Collective responsibility is common

Guidelines for Achieving an Ethical Workplace

- ✓ **Communication:** Develop and distribute written ethics code, make sure employees are aware of consequences
- ✓ **Training:** Include ethical issues in employee orientation and ongoing training
- ✓ **Contracts and Performance Appraisals:** Make compliance with the code mandatory
- ✓ **Monitoring and Reporting:** Establish a committee to deal with code oversight
- ✓ **Goal:** Every employee demonstrates the preferred behaviors in the workplace
- ✓ The best way to handle an ethical dilemma is to avoid its development in the first place.

Dealing with Unethical People

- Behave ethically yourself and lead by example
- Get to know coworkers, customers and vendors as individuals, don't judge based on what others say
- Find common ground even with people who behave unethically
- If others' unethical behavior affects you, find a way to deal with it but don't get sucked in yourself

Decision Making Steps/Questions

1. What are the facts?
2. Who is involved? Who will be affected?
3. What are the underlying causes of the situation?
4. What principles, values or standards should be upheld in this situation?
5. What are the best and worst case scenarios?
6. What are possible alternatives, and the pros and cons of each?
7. What is your decision and how will you explain it?

An Ethics Policy...

- Sets out an organization's ethical values, standards and commitments that form the foundation for the way that it does business
- Confirms senior management commitment to the above
- Describes how to report a potential violation
- Describes how this will be achieved and monitored
- Identifies the main ethical issues faced by the organization and employee
- Identifies other policies and documents that support and detail aspects of the ethics policy - such as a code of ethics, a bullying and harassment policy, a gifts and hospitality policy, an environment policy etc.

Issues Addressed in an Ethics Policy

- ✓ Professional dress and behavior
- ✓ Business expenses
- ✓ Personal use of business property
- ✓ Conflicts of interest and other questionable behavior
- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Harassment and discrimination
- ✓ Work/home balance
- ✓ Security and data protection, whistle blowing
- ✓ Drug and alcohol use