

Ensuring Ethical Standards in An Organization: A Comprehensive Guide on How the Human Resource Manager Can Create an Ethical Organization

Moses C¹, Leah N²

Abstract:

In each and every organization, Effective and efficient Human Resource Management is a key component that enables employees and managers to contribute effectively and productively to the overall business direction and the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives through various functions such as employee motivation, effective hiring, performance management, organizational development, safety, wellness, benefits, communication, career development and training.

In each and every organization, Effective and efficient Human Resource Management is a key component that enables employees and managers to contribute effectively and productively to the overall business direction and the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives through various functions such as employee motivation, effective hiring, performance management, organizational development, safety, wellness, benefits, communication, career development and training. Thus the primary goal of a human resource manager in an organization is to strengthen the employer-employee relationship. This goal is supported by a variety of functions which the manager is supposed to perform within the human resources department and in an organization at large. However, when performing these functions, the manager should ensure that he/she adheres to the values and ethical standards in order to hold the organization in a sustainable manner. This can be done by playing a prominent role of advocating good morals and ethics such as integrity, honest, fight against corruption and many more Mahapatro B. B (2010), defines a Human Resource Manager as "a qualified individual within an organization with the responsibility of hiring new employees, supervising employee evaluations, mediation between employees and employer through the management as necessary, and a general overseer of the human resource department. Human resource managers plan, direct and coordinate the administrative functions of an organization. They are in charge of recruiting, interviewing and hiring of new staff as well as training for current staff. Human resource managers play an important role in strategic planning and serve as a liaison between administrative staff and employees. Human resource managers are on the frontlines of building the staff needed to help an organization succeed. This includes working with administrative staff to maximize the value of the employees and to ensure that everyone is working as productively and efficiently as possible According to Basu R (2012), an ethical organization is an organization that is formed when individuals with varied interest and different backgrounds unites on a common platform and work together towards predefined goals and objectives while abiding to the principles and values that govern individual actions and decisions. An organization's ethical philosophy can affect a firm in many ways including its reputation, productivity, and bottom line of the institution. Ethics within an organization

can offer many benefits such as positive ethical and moral culture that improves the morale among the staff in an institution which could increase performance and staff retention. Organizations focusing on encouraging ethical practices are commonly viewed with respect by staff, the community and corresponding industries. Thus, the key elements of ethical culture and behavior of staff within an organization are Confidential reporting systems are well in place for everyone in the institution, a written code of ethics and standards or ethical code which is agreed up by all, the availability of ethical situational advice (i.e. advise offices) Ethics training for members staff and other employees.

However, as a human resource manager, there are various ways of creating an ethical organization. First and foremost, as human resource manager I should make sure that the organization has a well spell out code of ethics. The Association of Business Executives, (2014) explains a code of ethics, also known as a code of conduct or statement of values, as a policy statement of a company's values, responsibilities, and conduct expectations. Furthermore, they define Ethics as the principles and values that an individual use to govern his/her activities and decisions within the organization. In an institution, a code of ethics is a set of principles that guide the institution in its programmes, policies and decisions including the day to day running of the business. The ethical philosophy an institution uses to conduct day to day activities can affect the reputation, productivity and mainstay of the institution. Therefore, the purpose of a code of ethics is to guide employees in handling ethical dilemmas which is essentially a moral compass. Thus, this code of ethics should be able to meet the requirements of the act comprises the standards necessary to promote "honest and ethical conduct; full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable disclosure in periodic reports and compliance with applicable governmental rules and regulations.

Therefore, everyone in an organization needs to know the difference between what is acceptable and unacceptable in the workplace. Ethics should start at the top and trickle down. Accordingly, as a manager, the responsibility is to set the tone- publicizing the institution's commitment to a corporate code of conduct and stressing the importance for all staff to engage in ethical conduct. Secondly, to establish explicit ethics codes of conduct so that Management can address the various rules and regulations. It is helpful to ensure the codes are applicable across all the population by soliciting input from diverse groups. Thirdly it is imperative to Increase the awareness and understand how to apply ethical codes by providing communication and training for all staff. Finally, to Ensure that staff has a reporting mechanism they can use without fear of reprisal, if they observe a violation of ethics. They need to be aware that a corrective action will be taken if necessary.

The second element that can be used when creating an ethical organization is ethics training, having codes and policies in place that address ethics is not enough. Employees need to be taught how to respond in situations involving ethics. Therefore, the managers have a responsibility to enroll the employees in an ethics training program. Ethics programs often involve activities that encourage ethical behavior and reinforce a company's ethics code/policies. An example of the ethics activity is the one that involves having employees match various scenarios on one set of cards with the possible responses on another set of cards. Every scenario will have appropriate and inappropriate answers. After the participant's match scenarios with responses, the group discusses the decision. Discussing the responses gives the manager an opportunity to explain why some policies are in place and demonstrate how employees should respond in ethical situations they will likely to face while performing the job in an organization.

Although it is important, or even required in some cases, to have an established and effective code of ethics, it is crucial to the stability of a company to first hire ethical employees. It is better to hire someone who is naturally inclined to behave in an ethical manner than to rely on a company code of ethics to encourage an unethical employee to make ethical choices. One method of selecting and hiring ethical employees is the use of personality tests or situation-specific questionnaires. Personality tests can be used to determine temperament, outlook (i.e., whether positive or negative), and mood. Situation-specific questionnaires can be customized by a company and used to uncover how a candidate would react when faced with an ethical dilemma. Calling personal references may also help hiring managers filter out less ethical candidates. Although this method is used often, it is important to be aware that references often withhold negative information about a candidate. But the Manager should supplement references with another method of weeding out dishonest candidates. Best practices in the selection and hiring of ethical employees involve including the company's most ethical employees in the interview process. Interviewers already doing the job a candidate is applying for can ask relevant questions that can lead to answers that reveal a lot about the candidate, such as a propensity to make unethical decisions. The manager, should make sure that the hired ethical employees are involved in creating coherent statements of purpose, values, vision and mission, and integrating ethics and values framework in corporate strategy, decision tools, evaluation initiatives, institution systems, culture, services and practices. This will lead to efficiency and effectiveness in the running of the organization and may also improve staff motivation and enhance corporate social responsibility which will make the community happy.

On the other hand, one of the best enforcement tools in creating an ethical organization is a whistleblower hotline. This is a phone number or other method that employees or other stakeholders can use to report suspected acts of impropriety, such as fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, or violations of policy, laws, or regulations. These reports are usually confidential and may be anonymous. Colleagues often see suspicious behavior and are well-positioned to report it or fix it. However, some employees are reluctant to speak up for fear of retaliation. A whistleblower is an individual such as an employee who reports the misconduct of someone in a position of authority in his or her own organization. In the past, whistleblowers had no protection from retaliation by those they reported reporting a superior's wrongdoings often required risking one's livelihood. This discouraged employee from reporting offenses. Therefore, the manager is expected to strengthened whistleblowing protections and rewards anyone who reports a corporate wrongdoing and believes he or she could be penalized for it can request that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigate the matter. If the whistleblower is an employee who was fired and the termination of employment was found to be improper, the company can be ordered to rehire the individual and give him or her back pay as well as a penalty award.

In addition to establishing a code of ethics, hiring ethical employees, and protecting whistleblowers, key aspects of senior management's role in fostering ethical decisions and behavior in any organization include planning, implementing, and communicating the specifics of an ethics program. Ethics programs disclose important corporate values, often through the use of policies and employee/manager training. After a program has been implemented, senior management should monitor and evaluate it and then modify the program as needed or desired to ensure its effectiveness. It is also important for senior management to model ethical behavior. The responsibilities of senior management in modeling ethical behavior act ethically and are seen to act ethically. Be active in the ethics program. For example, introduce the ethics

training or be the person to speak, encourage employees to raise issues, Address ethics issues, and enforce the ethics program, such as by punishing violators. Ethics programs are like an insurance policy. They help mitigate the worst consequences when employees do stray, and they help prevent “accidents” by raising employee safety awareness (Association of Business executives).

In conclusion, it can be stated that Human resource managers usually performs the administrative functions of the human resource departments in an organization. these functions may include among others, Coordinating and supervising the work of the human resource staff in the department, Meeting with other departmental heads to collect information about their staffing and training needs, Planning and overseeing employee benefit programs, Mediating disputes between employees and direct disciplinary procedures, Supervising recruitment, interviews, selections, hiring and training of employees as well as motivating them through various ways. Thus, as human resource manager who want to create an ethical organization, it is important to communicate ethics as a priority and to set a good example of ethical conduct. Furthermore it is imperative to keep promises an commitment in my organizations, provide information about what is going on as well as considering ethics while making any decisions in the organization. It is also important to talk about the importance of values, morals and good working ethics and support the members’ staffs that are following organizational ethical standards. I must also consider being held accountable for ethics violation in my organization.

References

1. Association of Business executives (2014), Human Resource management, Wimbledon, UK
2. Basu R. (2012), Public Administration: Concepts and theories, Starling publishers, New Delhi
3. Guy M. E. (1990), Ethical decision making in every day situation, Quorum Books, New York
4. James F. (2012), Ethics discovering right and wrong: 7th ed. Mc Graw-Hill
5. Laaura P. (2015), Ethical dilemmas in Educational leadership, ellow contributor
6. Mecue R.H (1999), Applied ethics in professional practice. Verona, NJ, The institute of professional practice
7. Mahapatro B. B (2010), Human Resource Management, 1st ed, New age international, New Delhi
8. Robert D and Jane VD (1999), public administration: Action Orientation, Amazoni, states University, UK.
9. Venus S (2012), Human Resource Management and legal framework: application of labour legislation, Litovia, Lusaka, Zambia.