

ETHICS IN HUMAN RESOURCE

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INTRODUCTION

The management of human resources (HR) can involve complex ethical dilemmas. Ethical dilemmas are broadly defined as situations in which two or more values are in conflict. They concern four major business areas: human resources, customer confidence, conflicts of interest and the use of corporate resources. Human resource dilemmas are the most common type of ethical issue at work and they generally involve fairness in working relationships. Examples of human resource dilemmas include ethical problems that arise when people work together, such as discrimination, favouritism, harassment, work-life balance, inconsistencies in pay or discipline, or simply how people get along. Customer confidence dilemmas concern ethical issues in customer relationships, such as confidentiality and fiduciary responsibilities. Conflicts of interest occur when objectivity is compromised, such as through bribery, kickbacks, undue influence or privileged information. Finally, the use of corporate resources concerns truthfulness in managing the financial resources and the reputation of the organisation.

NEED FOR ETHICS AND CONDUCT

- Ethical conduct promotes a strong public image for the organisation. People respect an organisation that makes ethical choices. Customers like doing business with an organisation they can trust.
- Ethical conduct makes the best use of resources. Money, time and effort are put into productive activities rather than diverted for questionable purposes or personal gain.
- Ethical conduct on the part of all employees also helps maintain quality and productivity. When employees follow ethical standards, they do not cut corners or short-change the company or its customers.
- Ethical conduct assists the organisation to comply with laws and regulations. What is ethical is also legal.
- Ethical conduct ensures good and proper relationships with customers and vendors.
- Ethical conduct boosts morale and promotes teamwork. When employees can trust one another and management, they can work together more harmoniously and effectively.

IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS IN HUMAN RESOURCE (HR)

Ethics in HR indicates the treatment of employees with ordinary decency and distributive justice. The ethical business contributes to the business goals as the employees will feel motivated and they will work with efficiency and effectiveness. Ethics in HR basically deals with affirmative moral obligations of the employer towards employees to maintain equality, equity, justice, company reputation and brand awareness.

framework that has standardised employee behaviours towards each other. In good organisations, the only differentiating factor is performance! In addition, the power of filing litigation has made put organisations on the back foot. Managers are trained for aligning behaviour and avoiding discriminatory practices.

Privacy Issues

Any person working with any organisation is an individual and has a personal side to his existence which his demands should be respected and not intruded. The employee wants the organisation to protect his/her personal life. This personal life may encompass things like his religious, political and social beliefs, etc. However, certain situations may arise that mandate snooping behaviours on the part of the employer. For example, mail scanning is one of the activities used to track the activities of an employee who is believed to be engaged in activities that are not in the larger benefit of the organisation. Similarly, there are ethical issues in HR that pertain to health and safety, restructuring, layoffs and employee responsibilities.

Legal Considerations

Breaches of ethics in human resources can lead companies into a world of legal trouble, in both the civil and criminal arenas. Breaches of ethics in the HR department are more likely to be reported by victims to the Better Business Bureau, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other regulatory agencies than those committed in other areas, such as product development or accounting. Companies with comprehensive ethics programmes in place can avoid costly trouble regarding discrimination and hostile work environment issues, resulting in lower costs for litigation and out-of-court settlements.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from what has been said that the employment of people in contemporary times gives rise to unique and critical ethical dilemmas on the part of HR practitioners, which have not been sufficiently addressed. The ever increasing competitive pressures and greater employment scrutiny, means that human resource professionals must make and execute decisions with several ethical implications, which may result to serious dilemmas for the practitioners. Indeed, beyond the traditional issues of confidentiality, fair treatment and honesty, HR must also deal with other controversial, but equally important issues, including affirmative action, health and safety, harassment as well as functional related issues including redundancies, downsizing, pay and benefits, promotion and so on.

In all of this, the critical need to positively engage employees for increased productivity must not be undermined in the process. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the HR function to strike this delicate balance of ensuring employees' welfare, while not compromising the need for increased organisational efficiency and improved productivity.