

Emerging Business Ethics Issues

To make an ethical decision, a person must recognize that there is an ethical situation at hand. So the first step in understanding business ethics is to create ethical issues awareness. Gender, race, culture, characteristics of a job can create ethical issues within a business. What is an ethical issue? An ethical issue is a situation or problem that requires thought from an individual or organization, maybe even an opportunity that needs thought, or an investigation to make a decision on whether the issue is right or wrong. The phrase that regards to business ethics is "deceitful purposes." And that consists of trickery, misrepresentation, or the intent to lead others to believe one truth but not of its entirety. The National Business Ethics Survey suggests that the leading ethical issue since 2000 is abusive or intimidating behavior toward employees.

Honesty is a key component when making ethical decisions. But a lot of CEO's and business leaders see business as a game or like war. They think because they make the rules that they are not governed which leads to poor decisions and lawsuits. This business-as-war mentality gives them the idea that honesty is not important or necessary. Two other key components are fairness, and integrity.

An ethical dilemma is a problem, situation, or opportunity that requires an individual, group, or organization to choose among several actions that must be evaluated as right or wrong, ethical or unethical.

Some of the more common ethical issues and dilemmas in business are as followed: Abusive or intimidating behavior, lying, conflicts of interest, corporate intelligence, discrimination, sexual harassment, environmental issues, fraud, insider trading, intellectual-property rights, and privacy issues.

Abusive or intimidating behavior, as I mentioned before, is the most common ethical problem within a business. What is abusive or intimidating behavior is really hard to define because people have different perceptions as to what is abusive or intimidating. Physical threats, false accusations, being annoying, profanity, insults, yelling, or ignoring someone are some actions that people may conceive as abusive or intimidating. Why are these actions so hard to define? Well, one person may think that a profane word isn't bad but to someone else it's really offensive and insulting. With a culture that's so diverse there's a fine line that's crossed too often. Bullying creates a hostile environment, and is usually associated with sexual harassment. So why do workers tolerate such behavior? 81% of bullying is by supervisors.

There are two types of lying: commission and omission. Commission lying is creating a perception or belief by words that intentionally deceive the receiver of the message. Omission lying is intentionally not informing the channel member of any difference, problems, safety warnings, or negative issues relating to the product, service. Some business people believe that lying occasionally is a must in order to succeed. You have to ask yourself whether those lies distort the values that are associated with ethical behavior.

"Conflicts of interest" is pretty self-explanatory. It exists when a person must choose between his/her gain, the organizations, or of some other group. Also, keep private and business matters separate. The same goes for bribery, we all know what bribery is and the consequences are. There are two types of bribery though, active bribery and passive bribery. Active bribery is where the person who promises or gives

the bribe commits the offense. The person who receives the bribe commits passive bribery.

Corporate intelligence is the collection and analysis of information on markets, technologies, customers, and competitors. Corporate intelligence is the discovery of important information to stay competitive. Some ways to get valuable information is hacking, dumpster diving (stuff that is discarded on a public street is considered fair game), social engineering, bribery, and hiring away key employees.

Discrimination of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, public assistance status, disability, age, national origin, or veteran status is considered discrimination and is illegal in the U.S. 70,000 to 80,000 cases of discrimination charges are filed annually.

Sexual harassment is any repeated, unwanted behavior of a sexual nature perpetrated upon one individual by another. The acts may be verbal, written, visual, or physical and in order for it to be sexual harassment it has to be unwanted, the act was severe and disrupt his/her conditions of employment, and also that a reasonable person would find it hostile or offensive.

Environmental issues are now becoming the significant business concerns. Global warming, water pollution and waste management are the main issues today. Recycling plastics especially will be the problem for the twenty first century.

Fraud, in general, is any purposeful communication that deceives, manipulates, or conceals facts in order to create a false impression. There are many types of fraud including: accounting fraud, marketing fraud, implied falsity, labeling issues, consumer

fraud. Consumer fraud is where the consumer tries to deceive businesses for their own gain such as shoplifting.

There are two types of insider trading: legal and illegal. Illegal insider trading is the act of buying or selling stocks by insiders who possess material that is still not public. Legal insider trading involves legally buying and selling stock in an insider's own company, but not all the time.

Intellectual- Property Rights deals with the protection of intellectual properties such as music, books, and movies. Copyrighting is one way of trying to protect the creators' product.