

Quality Workplace Discussion Brief

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Process Instructions:

Please read this brief prior to the team meeting. Before the meeting, write down some of your own general comments and recommendations. One suggestion for the team meeting is to spend a few minutes doing a round table.

The facilitator can lead the discussion using the below questions as a template. The goal is to determine any actions the group determines will impact and improve performance integrity and honesty in the workplace.

Theme: Integrity and Honesty in the Workplace

This purpose of this brief is to facilitate a discussion on the theme of integrity and honesty in the workplace.

What is your company doing now to coach and promote this theme on an ongoing basis? Many companies do nothing, and perhaps are hoping there was good parenting of their employees. Unfortunately, this has left a gap that unless addressed and promoted by the company, will seldom close, and the consequences will continue.

Many companies form their own definitions, perceptions, and expectations of what constitutes integrity and honest behavior. M. Scott Peck writes in the book, *People of the Lie*, “Saints are people who have become utterly themselves.” He later explains that the ethics of honesty, and the ability to act with integrity, lie not in the act of never speaking a false word, rather in humans choosing to “always speak words and perform acts that create safe, caring, and healthy spaces for human development.” Robert Wright wrote in *The Moral Animal*, “Like some lawyers, the human brain wants victory, not truth; and like some lawyers, it is sometimes more admirable for its skill than for its virtue.”

Another challenge of working with people is trust. Integrity and honesty represent major core competencies needed for employees to trust. Without trust there is emptiness. The longer the person is left with little or no trust, the more resources will be needed to get them back.

Dictionary Definitions:

Integrity: steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code. The root of the word “integrity” is “intact.” In the quest to live a life of integrity, we also work to remain intact, personally and professionally.

Honesty: The quality or condition of being honest; integrity. 2. Truthfulness; sincerity: *in all honesty*.

Facts:

- Manufacturing is a low-scoring industry, with many workers not only questioning leadership integrity, but also observing ethical problems on an ongoing basis in the workplace. *Integrity in the Workplace 2001 National Employee Benchmark Study*
- From a checklist of ethical violations, 54% of U.S. employees cite at least one occurring in the past two years at work, topped by the following problems: (what do you think these numbers are at your plant?)
 1. Lying to supervisors 26% (*tie*)
 2. Unfair treatment of employees 26% (*tie*)
 3. Improper/personal use of company resources 21%
 4. Conflicts of interest 20%
 5. Stealing/theft from employer 19%
 6. Lying on reports/falsifying records 18%
 7. Sexual harassment 15%

Integrity in the Workplace 2001 National Employee Benchmark Study

- On the other hand, a widening majority who know about a violation do *not* report it (65% chose not to in 2001, compared to 60% in 1999). □ □ Reasons for not reporting misconduct begin with lacking enough facts, but also reflect a lack of faith in the response and reporting systems of employers. *Ethics Resource Center, 2000*
- Fewer than 10% of survey respondents report that ethics have been incorporated into their organization's mission statement. Just over 10% of the organizations have taken the step to create an internal function or committee specifically focused on ethics. *PricewaterhouseCoopers, April 15, 1999*
- Employees with negative views of workplace integrity were more likely to be trapped (low commitment, yet staying) or at risk (low commitment and low intention of staying). Over half (55%) of those rating their organization highly ethical are also truly loyal. This compares to just 24% of those neutral about the ethics at work, and just 9% of those who flat do not believe their organization is ethical. *The Hudson Institute, September, 1999*
- 25% of employees who see honesty applied frequently in their organizations say they have observed misconduct within the last year. Observed misconduct was higher among those who feel honesty is applied only occasionally (52%) or rarely/never (71%). *Ethics Resource Center, 2000*

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you define integrity and honesty in the workplace?

2. Do believe this plant needs to improve?
3. What needs to change so these can be improved?
4. Where do we need to start, and what is the first step?
5. What core competencies or information do you believe needs to be provided to enhance the development and growth of integrity and honesty in the workplace?

Action Plan:

1. What is the group's action plan? Ensure the action plan is easily measurable, has a follow-through and monitoring system.
2. What is your action for this week to improve integrity and honesty in the workplace?