

The pros and cons of employer drug testing programs

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Introduction

The debate on the importance of employee drug testing programs has received much controversial views from the social, political, economic, and professional fronts of the community. Proponents of the debate claim that drug testing workers increases workplace safety (Berger). This is because drug use has been established as having the ultimate potential of compromising the reasoning and judgmental ability of an individual. Such can lead to incidences of non-intentional accidents or employee violence at workplace. Another claim by proponents of employee drug testing program is that it serves to execute the social and economic responsibility of employers to their employees (Berger). Sustainable employee development and retention call for the employers to care for the social, health, and economic aspects of their workforce, and drug testing programs are one strategy.

However, there are a number of claimed against employee drug testing programs. Opponents of the program regard it as a contradiction of the constitutional provisions protecting an individual right to privacy (Berger). Based on this, the right to privacy dictates that an individual as to do whatever they wish provided it does not harm other members of the community. Still, forced employee drug testing violates the principle of innocent until proved guilty (Ward 12). It is also claimed that random employee drug testing programs do not serve any importance in

mitigating drug abuse among employees. This is because drug addiction is more of a psychological rather than a criminal issue (Ward 12).

This paper is written as a discussion on employee drug testing programs. The author in particular gives a critical discussion on both the advantages and disadvantages of having an employee drug testing program in an organization.

The pros of employees drug testing programs

Employee drug testing programs are crucial in an organization for the following reasons. The sustainable development of an organization depends on the effectiveness and reliability of its employees (Berger). However, drugs have been evidently identified as a leading compromiser of the effectiveness of employee productivity at workplace. This is because, according to available psychological evidence on drug dependence, victims of drug abuse have their efficient functionality dictated by drugs. Such have the implication that accommodating drug abusing employees at the workplace compromise the certain realization of the underlying objectives of the organization (West, and Coombs 49).

Another pro of employee drug testing programs is that it serves to ensure safety of employees at the workplace (West, and Coombs 61). Numerous scientific research findings have identified drug use as having the potential to negate the reasoning and judgmental power of an individual. In the social life, drug abuse is regarded as a leading cause of violence in the society (Berger). Taking an analogy of this to the workplace scenario, drug abuse can no doubt compromise the safety of employees. According to existing

statistical information on industrial injuries and deaths, drug use is the most notable cause of failed workplace safety (West, and Coombs, 63). Therefore, employee drug testing programs are important for an organization to realize its workplace safety policies as a way of ensuring sustainable development.

Employee drug testing programs are a social responsibility owed by employers to their employees (Berger). According to the principle of sustainable competitive advantage development in organizations, employee engagement is the most important tool. True to the letter, the ultimate realization of an effective employee engagement practice dictate for identifying and mitigating the social and economic problems affecting employees. From available evidence, drug abuse is a leading social-economic problem affecting most members of the community (Ward 21). This has the end result of causing emotional and psychological distress in employees, a factor which can only serve to compromise their productivity as well as their interpersonal relationships with other employees.

Still on social responsibility as an advantage of employee drug testing programs, drug abuse poses a major risk to the sustainable future of an organization (Ward 24). Victims of drug addiction find less importance to an organization. It is worthy to appreciate here that one of the most expensive aspect in any organization is to acquire and nurture reliable skills. Indeed, this is why practices of retaining the best employees are given utmost priority in any organization. To realize this, organization must address any potential problem that can lead to the loss of the reliability of their employees. Thus, employee drug testing programs should be encouraged in

organization as a tool for realizing employee retention (West, and Coombs 66).

Employee drug testing programs are important in executing justice among members of the community (Ward 27). The rule of the law must prevail regardless of the place. According to the laws of the United States of America, drugs are illegal. In fact, the government spends billions of dollars every on the war against drugs among its citizens. This makes it an obligation for every member of the community to identify, rectify, and/or report cases of drug abuse among individuals. With workplace being currently the most common social avenues for the citizens, organizations should implement employee drug testing programs.

Helping of drug abusers has also been claimed to be an advantage of having employee drug testing programs (Berger). Clearly defined policies are quite important in any institution. It is due to this reason that employee orientation is crucial in at workplace. According to available research finding, most companies have drug abuse assistance programs for their employees. Just to be appreciated here is the fact that not all drug abusers consider it a threat to their social and economic life (West, and Coombs 69). Based on this reasoning employee drug testing programs are important as they serve to identify drug abuse incidences among employees. This is important in providing early intervention to mitigate the habit.

Some proponents of employee drug testing programs have claimed that the practice enhances morale of employees at the workplace (Ward 31). Sustainable interpersonal relationships among employees are quite

important for the teamwork policies of an organization. According to the psychologists, drug abuse is a potential source of compromising interpersonal relationships (West, and Coombs 83). It is due to this reason that employee drug testing programs are closely attributed with increasing workplace morale. This is because it allows employees to interact with each other with high levels of soberness and naturally influenced understanding and appreciation, a crucial element in resolving workplace conflicts. All what this has is to promote the commitment and productivity of the employees.

Employee drug testing programs serve to promote and strengthen the reputation of an organization (West, and Coombs 84). Statistics have sufficiently established that companies which lack employee drug testing programs are at a greater risk of tarnishing their reputation in the general public. Such have been attributed to two reasons. First, drug abusing employees portray a bad image of the organization in the public (Berger). Another reason is that such companies are constantly marked with employee conflicts which can only serve to deter new job seekers from wishing to work in the organization. It is worthy noting that the reputation of an organization is the most important marketing tool. Therefore, failure by an organization to implement employee drug testing programs might compromise its competitive advantage in the marketplace, thus negating its goals and objectives.

The cons of employees drug testing programs

Employee drug testing programs are claimed to be a negation of the constitutional right to privacy of the American citizens (Berger). Although

many perceive the right to privacy as not applicable to private sector employees, it is no doubt a fundamental constitutional right that must be respected. According to opponents of employee drug testing programs, every individual has the constitutional right to do whatever they want provided it does not harm others (Berger). Based on this reasoning therefore, it remains unconstitutional to force employees into a drug testing exercise without their consent.

Another reason against employee drug testing programs is that it instills the sense of mistrust by employers for the responsible behavior of their employees even when under drugs (Berger). The most important aspect in realizing strong employer-employee relationship is enhancing trust. Indeed, this is a key reason behind employee engagement practices. Despite this evident importance of trust at workplace, employee drug testing programs negate the underlying principles of performance grading in an organization. According to available scientific findings, some highly reliable members of the community function best under the influence of drugs. Therefore, employee drug testing programs may depict mistrust between employers and their employees.

According to available statistical information, random drug testing of employees does not solve the problem of drug abuse at workplace (Ward 32). It is a common practice by employers to conduct random drug testing on employees. However, according to critics of this method, it remains a major challenge to effectively identify the real victims of drug abuse. Still, it is claimed that most employee drug testing programs are discriminatively

applied (Berger). Just like is in the public perception, some ethnic groups are seen as drug abusers while others are not. This means that organizations with employee drug testing programs might, through their beliefs, failure to conduct a realistic drug testing practice (West, and Coombs 91).

Employee drug testing programs are quite expensive to the organization (Berger). The ultimate purpose for the existence of any business is to maximize profits. This dictates for minimized expenses in sustaining the operations of the company. The initial cost of conducting a drug test is estimated at \$15 and the cost of a confirmatory test is roughly \$60 (Berger). This has the implication that employee drug testing programs will remain a costly endeavor particularly for large organization (Berger). Such are further complicated by the fact that such test might not pay the expected results to the organization. Therefore, employee drug testing programs can be a potential source of unwarranted expense to the organization.

Implementing a drug testing policy for employees is noted to overlook the most common causes of accidents and inefficiency in the company (Ward 32). It is sufficiently established that the main cause of accidents in an organization are failure by the management to implement effective workplace safety policies. Still, failures in policy formulation and execution by organization are also to be blamed for the inefficient productivity of an organization. It is worth appreciating here that most companies lack an effective and binding corporate culture to guide its employees, a factor which deters the realization of its objectives.

Employee drug testing programs can be a source of psychological stress and depression to employees (Berger). Going against the will of an individual might greatly compromise their perception of the reality behind the action. According to logically acceptable claims by psychologists, psychological impairment is one of the most common and dangerous diseases affecting the human community (West, and Coombs 95). Therefore employee drug testing programs should not be implemented in organization as such can lead to psychological problems among the employees, a factor thus only serves to compromise their productivity.

It has been established that implementing employee drug testing programs in an organization can lead to loss of skilled and reliable employees of the organization (Ward, 31). Not all employees are ready to lose their claimed freedom rights and habits for a job opportunity. This means that employees can opt for resigning their positions due to employee drug testing programs. Just to underscore here is the fact that talent acquisition and development is quite expensive for an organization. Such is the reason behind the need for the retention of skilled and reliable employees.

Conclusion

It is evidently established that employee drug testing programs in organizations have both advantages and disadvantages. However, in my opinion, there are economic importances in implementing employee drug testing programs. This is because such enhances effectiveness and reliability of employees as well as promoting interpersonal relationships at the workplace. However, to ensure an effective and acceptable employee drug

testing program, an organization should engage its employees in understanding, accepting, and appreciating it. This could serve to solve any negative effectives of the program.

Works cited

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