

Essay on whistle blowing in organizations

[Business](#), [Employee](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Whistle blowing is a significant policy in promoting organizational ethics. It is the disclosure by members of an organization of any form of illegal, illegitimate, unethical or immoral activities under their employer's control. These practices could be done either by colleague employees or by senior members or administrators of the organization. Whistle blowing in organizations allows for any form of wrong doing to be reported or brought to public attention through different forms of disclosure. Disclosures through whistle blowing could also be reporting matters of public interests that were being infringed by some people in an organization or the organization itself such as polluting the environment. In some countries, there are policies and legislations that provide for organizational whistle blowing.

Whistle blowing policies are aimed at increasing transparency and efficiency in organizations and government institutions. Whistle blowers in organizations undertake this duty to achieve three objectives with the help of the whistle blowing policies. The policies help facilitate disclosures on matters of public interest, which encourages whistle blowers to their work. Secondly, they help ensure that all forms of disclosure by organizational or institutional whistle blowers are properly dealt with through investigation, proper assessment and appropriate action taken. Thirdly, the objective is to promote the protection of organizational whistle blowers. Whistle blowers are usually targets of reprisals, sacking or even malicious conspiracy when people discover that they disclose unethical and immoral practices in the organizations. Therefore, it is important to protect the welfare of whistle blowers so as to ensure they do their work without fearing for their jobs or lives.

Organizations should adopt the policy of whistle blowing for the obvious reasons that it will promote efficiency, transparency, honesty and increase productivity in the organization. Research shows that organizations that have embraced whistle blowing are twice as productive and effective as those that do not use whistle blowing. Whistle blowing is an important part of organizational ethics. It promotes ethical values by keeping workers on their toes and ensuring they do the right thing for fear of being reported.

Therefore, whistle blowing is an efficient way of promoting ethical values and providing sufficient conditions for organizational success. Organizations should adopt whistle blowing policies for various reasons.

Whistle blowing in organizations would be ideal in raising integrity standards among leaders and employees as a whole. Many organizations do not have an effective integrity system to ensure that workers and office holders are accountable and honest in their operations. Without a whistle blowing policy, it is difficult to tell any wrong doing and report it in good time. A whistle blowing policy would facilitate a cheap and effective system of checking and identifying any form of wrong doing or unethical practice in the organization. The best way to provide checks on the ethical performance of employers and administrators in the organization is by use of the same employees.

Employees have internal access to the day to day operations of the organization. They know the duties of every employee, and they interact with these people all the time. It is easy for an internal whistle blower to gather appropriate information because they can access the right people whenever they can. In any organization, there are employees who are naturally honest and loyal to their employers. However, these individuals

witness many forms of wrong doing by their colleagues and senior but remain powerless to act and stop the bad activity. These are the people who can be used to provide evidence of wrong doing in the organization. They are the whistle blowers who need protection from the organizations. Therefore, whistle blowing is an important resource in organizations in their efforts to enhance public integrity in modern society.

Whistle blowing should be encouraged in organizations because if left to thrive on its own, it cannot develop. This is because there will be peer and organizational pressure on honest employees to keep quiet on matters that involve public interest and wrong doing. Under normal circumstances, there would be no whistle blowing in organizations. It has to be initiated and catalyzed before it thrives. Organizations must introduce several and lucrative incentives to the honest members of the organizations to encourage them to be whistle blowers. In most cases, whistle blowers will be keen to report wrong doings that infringe on their individual rights and welfare. However, it is difficult to find those who are willing to report issues that affect the welfare and interest of the organization at large. The organizational management must seek for ways of doing away with possible disincentives of whistle blowing and introducing good incentives for the same. Some whistle blower employees would fear coming forward to report any form of wrong doing for obvious reasons. These people fear ruining their relationship with their colleagues and bosses. They try to avoid controversy and the negative outcomes of whistle blowing. They fear helping the organization at their expense. To encourage whistle blowing in organizations, there has to be a way of removing the disincentives and introducing good

incentives to whistle blowers.

Whistle blowing is a complex practice that has to be approached with care. Whistle blowers are usually part of the employee team such as volunteers, interns or contractors. The internal position of a whistle blower enables them to do their work with ease. They can access organizational files, observe the daily operations in the organization and interact with colleagues who are potential wrong doers. This strategic location of whistle blowers helps them find the necessary information on potential unethical or immoral intentions and activities within the organization. However, it is the same internal location that would most likely impede the whistle blower from conducting their work. Employees would fear for their jobs or ruining their relationship with other people in the organization. The position of whistle blowing is not restricted to internal individuals in the organization alone. There are those people outside the organization such as clients, citizens or aggrieved consumers who can also report any form of wrong doing in the organization. The issue of whistle blowing in organizations also brings up the contentious issue of whom the whistle blowers in the organization should report to when they get information. Disclosure of information is a sensitive issue, which should be approached with care. It could be possible that a whistle blower will report to an individual or official in the organization who is part of the wrong doing cartel. In such an instance, the information would have only served the purpose of alerting the wrong doers. More so, the wrong doers will know the whistle blower and will target him or her with conspiracies or threats to safe guard their welfare. Therefore, there must be a specified authority or individual in the organization or public whose duty is to receive

any information on wrong doing in the organization. This will give whistle blowers confidence that whatever they do will be reported to an able authority that will then act on the allegations.

The perspective of whistle blowing also varies from one organization and individual to another. There are those people who believe that whistle blowing in the organization should be reported to the organization's authority alone. There are others who believe that whistle blowing should be done through the media. It is difficult to tell which the best way of whistle blowing is. However, the process of whistle blowing should be done with care so as to conceal and protect the whistle blower. It should also allow the relevant authority to assess, investigate and take action on the perpetrators of the wrong doing in the organization.

Whistle blowing is a risky process because the wide spread public knowledge of wrong doing in an organization could lead to the exclusion of important minute details of the disclosure. Take an example of information relayed in the media over an unethical practice in a big organization. The media will most likely focus on the organizational leaders having failed to stop the unethical practice rather than focusing on the details of the scandal.

Therefore, the best way of dealing with an unethical practice in an organization is to focus on the details of the unethical behavior by the perpetrators rather than a public outrage in the media. The media usually moves to fault the organizational leaders, which affects the organization's reputation. Therefore, whistle blowing should be done in an orderly and careful manner that will allow easy and careful procedures in dealing with wrong doers in the organization without hurting the organization's

reputation.

The motive of disclosures is always an issue of concern in organizational whistle blowing. Whistle blowing is a practice that should be done with the sole motive of discouraging unethical and immoral activities in the organization and promoting integrity. Authorities have to assess why the whistle blower took the initiative to report an issue. It could be that they were part of the wrong doing cartel or that they had some malicious intent and tricked other employees into the act then reported them. There must be a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for whistle blowing. This is a precaution to avoid other innocent employees from being framed. It is also a way of ensuring that whistle blowing is a policy that is aimed at promoting integrity in the organization and not promoting revenge, mistrust and misunderstanding in the organization.

Organizations should seek to adopt whistle blowing policies because only then will they be able to counter unethical practices from within the organization. Increasing integrity standards and avoiding controversy should be the main agenda on the whistle blowing policy. There are some people who opine that whistle blowers are a bunch of disgruntled employees, clients or contractors with malicious and reckless motives to make some employees and employers look bad. Whistle blowers may not always be right whenever they raise the alarm of fraud, harmful or wasteful practices by some employees. There are some who raise the alarm for selfish reasons such as gaining popularity or to settle a score with some employees or decision makers in an organization.

Whistle blowing is a good practice that should be encouraged in all

organizations because it promotes integrity and transparency. However, there are several negative impacts that come along with this practice. First, whistle blowing is a recipe for suspicion and mistrust amongst employees. Once employees realize that there are whistle blowers in the organization, they try to conceal their activities and view each colleague as a potential whistle blower. In such a case, there will be no sharing of organizational information. Such a scenario would lead to little organizational progress, and there will be no harmony among employees. Lack of team work and information sharing will reduce organizational productivity because each individual will be working to safeguard their own welfare rather than help the organization attain its main objectives.

Whistle blowing is also a recipe for conspiracy and blackmail in organizations. Once an individual is thought to be a whistle blower by their colleagues, they will be targeted to make them stop. Threats of blackmail and even death could arise just to scare a whistle blower from doing their job. In the process, the whistle blower will not be able to carry out their organizational duties because they will be worrying for their lives, welfare or job. There have been cases in the past where whistle blowers have been framed and prosecuted, yet they were the innocent parties trying to promote organizational integrity. Therefore, regardless of the incentives created by organizations to enhance whistle blowing, it may never be possible to promote this noble practice because of the negative implications it causes to the whistle blower.

References

- Bouville, M. (2007). Whistle-blowing and morality. Retrieved December 15, 2012, from Journal of Business Ethics: <http://mathieu.bouville.name/education-ethics/Bouville-whistle-blowing.pdf>
- Davis, M. (2011). Avoiding the Tragedy of Whistleblowing. Retrieved December 15, 2012, from Business & Professional Ethics Journal: www.gsa.iit.edu/publication/avoidTragedyWhistle.pdf
- Kelleher, A., & Martens, L. T. (2004). A Global Perspective on Whistle blowing. Retrieved December 15, 2012, from International Business Ethics Review: https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:jw810N2Us5oJ:business-ethics.org/articles/Whistleblowing%20and%20Raising%20Concerns.pdf+&hl=en&gl=us&id=bl&srcid=ADGEESjbCQHViTVFaeEtDXPhmMqGf7KixdwMKFhziECJo1JZ8_HJBfQ3TcyYI2h6sWmeBTMvGaVa9RAITQRNLT-PtdcQ
- Shaw, W. H. (2010). Business Ethics: A Textbook with Cases (7 ed.). London: Cengage Learning.