

The ethical issues faced by human resource professionals

[Business](#)



Human resource management is an important part of any business. Since the inception of industrialization, corporations are hiring and recruiting employees, and therefore human resource professionals is not something new. Managing human resource also involves many ethical considerations. In today's dynamic business realm the job of an HR manager has become extremely difficult because of the increasing diversity in the workplace and bad economic situation all over the world. In this paper, we will consider the ethical issues faced by human resource professionals.

Human Resource Professionals

Human resource management is an important function of any organization. Most organizations have separate departments for managing the human resource of the company. Human resource professionals are business graduates who specialize in human resource management. They may also take counseling courses in order to take a position of human resource professionals. License is not required to become a human resource professional because it is a common business-related function. A doctorate can also be pursued in the field.

Code of Ethics

There is no specific code of ethics that governs human resource profession. Every organization is free to choose its own ethical standards. There are general laws that restrict organizations to conduct discrimination when hiring employees. There are also harassment laws that are a part of all code of ethics. But there is no universal code of ethics for human resource professionals.

Ethical Dilemmas for Human Resource Professionals

The four ethical issues in human resource management pertain to hiring, promotion, firing, and privacy of employees.

Downsizing

In tough financial times, human resource managers have no choice but to reduce costs by reducing the number of employees in the organization. The term ' firing' has been replaced by ' downsizing'. It is very hard to filter out employees and therefore it is an ethical issue. It was identified that people who are involved in decision making about downsizing think the process is less significant than people who are actually affected by downsizing (Hopkins & Hopkins, 1999). This makes downsizing an ethical issue for HR professionals.

Promotion

Promotion is one of the areas in human resource management where ethics is of extreme relevance (Douglas, 2006). HR professionals should not let their biases influence their decisions about promoting employees. Ethics is important in promotion decisions because they are mostly taken by HR professionals and employees are not always aware of the reasons.

Hiring

Ethics is important when managers are hiring employees. HR managers should not discriminate when making hiring decisions (Posner & Schmidt, 1987). Hiring involves personal judgment of managers and therefore there is room for prejudice and discrimination. This is how hiring becomes an ethical issue for HR professionals.

Privacy

Employees usually provide their personal information at the time of hiring to

the HR professionals. This information is confidential in nature and HR professionals should keep this information under wraps. Privacy protection is now being regarded as an ethical issue for human resource managers (Nye, 2003).

Conclusion

Human resource management is an important function of business today. It is considered as a separate profession and specialization is offered by many business schools all over the world. Ethical codes that govern HR professionals are given by specific organization and no specific codes are present except employment laws. The ethical issues HR professionals face pertains to hiring, promotion, downsizing, and privacy of employees.

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