

Business ethics: fairness in the hiring process

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Growth and good performance of any business solely relies on a number of factors ranging from one business to another although most of these factors have turned out to be common. One of these factors is upholding of business ethics within the operational domain of business activities. Business ethics has been described by many business experts as the main pillar of thriving businesses across the globe. Whether this statement is true or false depends on the role of these ethics in carrying business activities. Due to the weight and concern of many people business ethics as a topic has received manifold attention that has led to informative findings in the current business. Most of these revolve the existence of several ethical theories which explain diverse ethical issues. This paper explores some of these theories within the context of the Human resource hiring process. To achieve this objective, this analysis lays special concern on dominant ethical theories like deontology, ethical egoism and utilitarianism.

Business ethics

What are business ethics? How important are business ethics? The understanding of ethics is quite important in deciding what to. It gives the ability of indentifying that which is acceptable in the society or within the business world. It is of paramount significance to note that personal behavior is key in determining the performance of any business. There are countless businesses in the world which have crumbled as a result of unethical business approach in dealing with issues like personnel hiring. It has been found that an ethical business system has the full potential of affecting every aspect of business (Pojman & Fieser, 2008). It therefore follows that any

person who dreams to thrive in any form of business must double emphasize the need to upholding business ethics in daily activities.

Business ethics are well described using and acceptable behavioral standards. It is very possible to discover that different societies have different business ethics based on the observed ethics. Notably, businesses formulate policies and rules which are aimed at promoting morality as away of enforcing business ethics. These ensure the existence of appropriate conduct amongst managers and even junior employees within the company (Crane & Matten, 2007). It is worth mentioning that business ethics is one of the most recommended tools in dealing with ethical problems which may arise in a business setup. Although this has always been considered, the main challenge has been the difficulty to decide specific ethical conduct towards a given commercial task. In deed business covers all aspects of business activities including but not limited to the obligations which a given, business has towards other businesses, customers, the environment and even to customers. This varies since some governments may consider setting national business standards or a company designing a customized code of ethics for its employees (Goodpaster, 1991). These ideas are however based on certain theories which define specific moral behavior with regard to various business ethical issues.

Ethical issues

The contemporary is faced with countless ethical issues which are addressed today. Unfortunately, businesses around the globe have collapsed because

of taming some of these issues which mainly cause ethical dilemma. A good example of these issues is the hiring of personnel in any business setup (Ferrell., Fraedrich & Ferrell, 2009). How ethical are hiring processes done? There is no doubt very minimal or no fairness at all has been witnessed in the hiring processes of various companies in the world. The most discouraging thing is the fact many people have been considered for employment or lost their jobs because of physical disability, gender, race or even age. These immensely affect the Human Resource sector of any business or company because of its crucial role in determining the growth and performance of the business.

Ethical theories

These represent the main ideas which give direction in addressing ethical issues like hiring of employees in companies. They aim at give answers to particular questions which determine what and how has to be done. Many ethical principles observed my businesses mainly stem from these theories (Rachels, 1998). These theories are however very important in addressing certain issues even though the principles have always dominated.

Utilitarianism

This is one of the many business theories which have been applied in setting acceptable business standards and behavior. This theory advocates for maximum utility for the majority when making decisions especially in influential leadership position. It is always governed by actions and rules which have been set up to generate happiness to the majority. Pro

utilitarianism believes that any decision which has to be taken must generate satisfaction for the majority and not for individual gain (Mill, 2006). This is a key theory especially in dealing with issues of the Human Resource section. This can be used to determine the criterion to be used in say, hiring employees or laying them off. If a decision to be made has to promote fairness to all, a person should not be disqualified on the basis of gender. Nobody ever applied to be male or female. It would therefore be unethical to disqualify an applicant because of gender differences. By giving every applicant equal opportunities to be considered for a given job, it is clear that every person would be happy and satisfied.

Deontology

As described by research experts, this theory emphasizes on the need for everybody to adhere to his or her specified duties and responsibilities when analyzing any form of ethical dilemma. People who follow this kind of theory are known to produce more consistent results since they carry out their roles in a defined manner (Darwall, 2003). How would a human resource operate under this kind of theory? This would definitely mean that there are defined duties which the manager has to perform as described by the service manual. Although there are many businesses and companies in the world which give the job description of a manager say, for human resource, there are countless unfair practices carried out with regard to the recruitment procedures. There is usually a tendency of managers favoring specific candidates especially during interviews. This is mainly based on factors like gender, race and even physical disability. Although some jobs require

physically fit people who are strong, disability ought not to be a key issue hiring employees. There are numerous disabled people who perform far better than fit people.

Ethical egoism

This has been considered as the root cause of a number unethical issue in business which revolves around setting of personal interests before any other thing. Those who support the theory believe that satisfaction can only be achieved by driving personal interest regardless of its impact on other people especially the minority in the society. Many human resource managers have been found victims of this theory due to their unfair execution of their hiring powers (Hospers, 12). Although there are certain factors and minimum requirements for specific jobs, it is possible to miss an employment opportunity in a bank because of your age, race and gender among other natural factors. How would race determine the performance of an employee? This can not be considered as an elimination criterion factor. Nevertheless, egoistic managers have gone ahead to use it since they lack feelings for other people as long as their needs are met. Collapse of businesses and booming companies has also been closely linked to recruitment of incompetent people based on either race or gender. When a person is driven by personal interests, negative consequences of his actions are not an issue as long as he succeeds in his agenda.

The issue of women being discriminated at workplace is highly linked to ethical egoism. This is common in areas where those in authority misuse

their positions to fulfill personal desires and dreams. In cases where the hiring manager has personal interests in certain candidates, it is very possible for such applicants to secure the job even minus the necessary requirements. Such an egoistic manager does not care whether or the company realizes its goal as long as his interests are met (Åsterberg, 1988). It is important to note personal interests do not promote growth but instead gradually leads to the suffering of many.

Rights ethical theory

This theory mainly focuses on the rights set by the society and which have to be given the first priority in protecting and serving human beings. This means that the functioning of this theory may differ from one society to another to the variation and diversity in rights (Brady, 1985). However, there are other rights which cut across global boundaries. These include but not limited to gender protection, rights of the disabled, age and even race. Human rights are common in every country and play a major role in protecting minority people in the society like the disabled and more vulnerable groups like women. A lot of discrimination which takes place in the contemporary society can only be curbed by observing the rights theory among others. It is worth noting that a woman, disabled person or a black one can be hired for a specific job as long as the person meets the minimum job requirements. However, the theory can well operate in a society or country which fully protects human rights, looks out for the rights of the disabled, aged and even women. The main driving principle of the theory is that

everybody has the right work regardless of other factors as long as the minimum qualifications are met (Smithers, 1996).

Conclusion

Business ethics is a very fundamental concept in dealing with many ethical issues and dilemmas witnessed in our day to day lives. They basically give an understanding of what and how something has to be done in the most acceptable way. There is no doubt that a clear comprehension and differentiation of what is wrong from what is right can be of significant benefits. Business ethics give the basis of decision making in any society since it determines and sets standards within which certain business activities operate (Brief et al. 2000). These ethics give rise to ethical theories which are mainly applied in deciding ethical conflicts. Although every employee or any other person has to observe business ethics, those in management positions like the human resource managers are expected to fully operate within ethical boundaries in order to promote fairness and good performance.

Hiring of personnel on the basis of their race, age, gender and physical disability has to be condemned completely. Unless there are restrictions which limit the recruitment of certain individuals, the entire process has to be done with fairness and open minded. The idea of pushing for personal interests does more harm than good to any business (Machan, 2007).

Although every stakeholder in the business world is encouraged to protect the rights of every person in business, laws which protect human rights are

also important in augmenting legal protection of these rights. This can go a long way in taking legal actions against those who discriminate others especially in the HR department. It would however be useless without having a transformed Human resource sector which upholds equality, fairness and good for everyone.