

Essay on the goodrich and bart case

[Business](#), [Management](#)



In each and every organization whistle blowing should be controlled. As an employer there is the need to minimize any available need by the employees within the organization to blow the whistle. When such kind of information become public, the organizations image may be harmed and also the future prospects of the company may be affected. An out of the ordinary corporate approach in trying to stop whistle blowing with its resulting bad effects to the organization is to fire all those whistleblowers and also trying to intimidate all others who may be in the likelihood of doing the same. Although this type of approach is ethically unacceptable and it is also ineffective.

Ways of preventing the problem of whistle blowing include first having an ethics culture that is strong. It includes a clear commitment from the highest level of management to the ethical behavior, and also an ethics training that is mandatory for all the employees. Also the employees tone for the ethical behavior needs to be set by the managers. Secondly, the lines of communication need to be clear within the corporation. It gives employee openness whenever he/she feels that something has to be fixed in order to air whatever the concern. Thirdly there should be meaningful access by the employees to the high level managers so as to allow bringing forward of concerns and there should be guarantee retaliation not being there. Finally the management needs to have willingness to admit to mistakes and if necessary publicly. It sets the stage for the employees to have ethical behavior.

In the BART case, the Bay Area Rapid Transport system (BART) was generated in 1947

after a recommendation for an underneath tunnel construction for high speed trains. It was meant to be rail system of a high tech class to serve communities outlying along the San Francisco. Engineering issues that were distinct in BART include the construction and design of rail beds, bridges, tunnels, etc, the manufacture and design of the rail cars, and also the implementation and design of a system by which the trains would be controlled. Westinghouse was awarded contract to design and build the Automatic Train Control system (ATC) and Rohr Industries awarded a contract for the supply of 250 rail road cars.

In Bart there was a very diffuse and a chain of command that was unclear making it difficult for the employees to raise there concerns to the right person. Key players in the case were Roger Hjortsvang, Max Blankensee, and Robert Bruder who were employed to work on the ATC.

While working at the Westinghouse plant Roger Hjortsvang became concerned about the issue of lack of testing components of the ATC and also the lack of supervision of Westinghouse by BART and returning to San Francisco Roger Hjortsvang began raising some of the concerns to the management. Bruder also joined Bart and became concerned considering the issue of Westinghouse testing schedules and procedures although he was unable to have his issues addressed with the BART management both of them being told that the management was satisfied the procedures for testing employed by Westinghouse. Both the engineers became concerned about the provision of documentation by Westinghouse if it would sufficient for BART engineers to be able to have an understanding on how the system

worked. Also if they would be able to modify and repair it after being delivered. They dropped the matter after not being satisfied. Blakenzee also joined BART and became concerned on the same issues.

In January 1972 the three of them contacted directors of BART board showing how their concerns were not being taken into seriousness by the lower management. The action constituted " internal whistle blowing." Dan Helix a member of the board took them seriously and took their memos with the report of the consultant distributing them to the other members of the board unfortunately releasing them to the local newspaper which is an act of external whistle blowing by a board member. The engineer's position within BART became fragile after the board found out about the issue. In 1972 they were dismissed after being offered a choice to resignation or firing on the grounds lying to their seniors, insubordination and not following the procedures of the organization.

In 1968 Goodrich started the full brake prototypes testing. After 13 tests there only remained the passage of the Air Forces specification concerning temperature. Kermit Vandivier who was not an engineer but a report writer for Goodrich became aware that some of the results of the tests had been manipulated in order to meet the specifications and he raised his concerns though they were not taken into account by the management. Later Vandivier resigned leaving Goodrich after supplying the FBI with information and Goodrich documents. He joined the Troy Daily News where it made way to Washington reaching the attention of Senator William Proxmire and others. General Accounting Office was ordered review the brake testing issue

and they confirmed Vandiviers allegations. In the end though no official action was taken against Goodrich and those in it.

References

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