

ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE

The February issue of AHRD Newsletter focuses on the changing paradigm of workplace ethics and leads a thought provoking question to eminent HR experts and readers:

- *Who in the organization is responsible to initiate, guard and champion the work place ethics?*
- *What is the one major challenge in Indian organization to nurture work place ethics?"*



The editorial team takes pride in thanking the contributors for their valuable responses. Due to paucity of space, we have selected the best among the responses for publication and could not incorporate the photos of respondents.



From the hr experts....

" Ethics to get institutionalized..CEO sets the standards and examples; Managers ensure communication and enablers; Employees exercise their veto to live the ethics based on mindset-faith-rationale."...
Dr. G.P. Rao, CEO, GPR Consulting

" Organizations means group of people and responsibilities for work place values and ethics is both but leaders are custodians like head of the family but their role is important because they are people champions and are responsible for culture building and correcting."...**Aman Attree, Head, Group Corporate HR, Hindustan Powerprojects Limited**

"Ethics in an organization is owned in three tiers. The CEO is the ultimate accountable point. No ambiguity there. If there is any ethical infringement then it rests singly with the top person. His or her job is to ensure sufficient checks and balances are instituted for uncompromising implementation. The second tier is the BU or functional leaders. They execute the philosophy and keep a watchful eye. The third, and not much talked about owner are the employee themselves. They need to embrace the ethical priorities and internalize the same—more important, they should be the watchdog for any infringement that they may notice. By a combined effort of all three owners, the organization will raise ethical practices to a level of culture of the organization."...**Dr. Aquil Busrai, CEO, Aquil Busrai Consulting**

"Ethics are set of practices which are internalized as part of our personal core. I am a firm believer these are institutionalized during individual's childhood and reinforced through personal experiences. In organizations CEO is owner and this culture needs to be built over period of time. Embedded as core values, practiced via recognition, open communication, performance system etc. Zero tolerance tough policies with unbiased decision making. Supervisors play a key role along with top management in walking the talk."...**Gautam Srivastav, Head-L&D, Max New York Life**

"The ownership of the practice of ethical behavior lies with every employee. Defining the boundaries is the role of every leader. Ensuring continuous conversation to create a culture where people see it as a way of life is the role of the CEO with help from HR. Creating a mechanism for resolution of contentious issues and facilitating resolution in, is certainly HR" ...**Bimal Rath, Founder, Think Talent Services**

From the HR experts...

"At Rio Tinto, we have been stressing on the importance of making leaders accountable for all that has to happen in their respective teams. We have covered a substantial portion of the journey but it is a continuous one and results visible in a team are being shared with others in knowledge circles we create"...**Saurabh Singla, Head-Global R&T Operations, Rio Tinto Group**

"The initiator of work place ethics is the promoter of the company if owner driven or the CMD. As far as ethics is concerned it percolates from the top. The guardians undoubtedly would be the leadership team supposed to materialize the vision of the organisation, how they do it depends on their reading of the pulse of the top management. Once it is rightly drilled to this level then every employee with pride champions it. Unless the top is clean, it can never be injected in the DNA of the organisation. Many ethical employees prefer to work for a lesser salary in a company that fosters integrity and ethics. Work place does not change anyone abruptly. It largely depends on our upbringing and how and what we have seen and grown up. Opportunity for dishonesty exists everywhere but it is for the individual to choose and champion the right path."...**Dr. Aparajitha Ramadyani, EVP - HR & Admin, Jakson Group**

"The workplace ethics is derived by business ethics and personal values people inculcate in an organization. The promoters, founders or creators of an organization lay down the foundation of such business ethics. These are primarily moral, principle that determine action by leadership and individuals. HR leaders propagate and guard the action applying judiciousness towards "Right" and "Wrong" which is further championed by the employees thus building the organization culture. The leadership and HR who are custodian of ethics also allow the choice based on two factors: market and competition securing the value system..."**Runa Maitra, Founder and Director, People Talent International**

"The top management of every organization should advocate and practice workplace ethics. Ethics is closely related with personal values and it requires a conducive environment. If the top management is ethical and transparent in its approach, employees will follow suit. The reverse may not necessarily be true. 'Lead by example' the common adage will help set benchmarks. The fear of 'losing' revenue/ projects/ deals/ face is the biggest deterrent in nurturing workplace ethics."... **Daisy Kurien, Assistant Professor, Xcellon Institute, Ahmedabad.**

"Strong leadership is necessary in promoting a strong ethical culture. Genuine leadership efforts to foster awareness and harness employee enthusiasm for such culture can improve morale and corporate optimism and even result in the mitigation of potential unethical behavior. Looking beyond mere training to the benefits of integrating employees of all levels into ethical behavior program "ownership and accountability" efforts is necessary. The ultimate responsibility test of any company is not how cleverly it can craft its mission statement, but how deeply it can instill its values and vision into the hearts and minds of people."...**Ramesh Dasary, Founder, Improwise Talent Management**



"The CEO and the HR Head are responsible for initiating, guarding and championing the work place ethics. Their roles are interdependent for the purpose and neither can accomplish the objective singularly. The challenge is to ensure adherence to the work place ethics irrespective of the 'quarterly growth' pressures."...**Ketan Bhatt, Co-Founder and Principal Partner, Alkemist HR Enablers**