Leadership and Ethics . . . not Leadership or Ethics

Lara J. Mooney, MS, PHR
“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

- John Quincy Adams
Ethics
Did You Bring Your Ethics to Work Today? By Susan M. Heathfield
Ethical Issues in the Workplace

• Conformist
  – Follows rules rather than questions authority figures
  – Might look the other way if a higher-up were acting unethically, Obey
  – Need strict rules and well-defined consequences for not following them
Ethical Issues in the Workplace

• Negotiator
  – Make up rules as they go
  – Wait to see if the behavior affects their job, gets worse, or to see if anyone else notices
  – Encounter ethics-related trouble if required to exercise judgment without guidelines
  – Path of least resistance
Ethical Issues in the Workplace

- **Navigator**
  - Innate ethical sense to guide actions, even if decisions aren’t easy
  - Sound moral compass, which provides the flexibility to make choices, even unpopular ones
  - Other people respect, and count on this person
  - Will succeed in most organizations but will leave an organization that is unethical

The Different Ways People Handle Ethical Issues in the Workplace, by Mark Pastine
Ethical Issues in the Workplace

- **Wiggler**
  - Doesn’t give a lot of thought to what is right
  - Takes the route that’s most advantageous
  - May lie to appease a supervisor
  - Motivated by self-interest—getting on a manager’s good side or avoiding conflict
  - Run into trouble when others sense that they dodge ethical issues to protect own interests
Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- Time to heal
- Serious illness
- Chronic illness
- Compassionate Employer
- No fear of losing job
- Equitable

- Habitual offenders
- Monday morning flu
- Consistently tardy
- Abuse/play the system
- Unreasonable accommodations
“Relativity applies to physics, not ethics.”

— Albert Einstein
Marijuana, Legal or not?

- **Federal Law**
  - Schedule 1 controlled substance

- **State Law**
  - Legal under Amendment 64

“The voters have spoken and we have to respect their will. This will be a complicated process, but we intend to follow through. That said, federal law still says marijuana is an illegal drug so don’t break out the Cheetos or gold fish too quickly.”

- Gov. John Hickenlooper
• **Dish Network Case**
  - Colorado Lawful Off-Duty Activities Statute
  - Two lower Courts found in favor of Dish
  - Colorado Supreme Court heard Oral Arguments 9/30
  - Implications Win or Lose?
Marijuana, Legal or not?

• What’s Next?
  – Is Medical Marijuana a reasonable accommodation under the ADA Amendments Act?
  – Charlotte's Web Strain
    • High CBD, Low THC cannabis
    • Seizure disorders
“If ethics are poor at the top, that behavior is copied down through the organization.”

— Robert Noyce
inventor of the silicon chip
Setting Expectations

- Set employees up to succeed
- Clearly communicate goals and standards
- Adequate training
- Fair measurements
- Accurate data
- Timely feedback
- Course corrections
- Recognize and reward accomplishments
Setting Expectations

• Too high
  – Demoralizing
  – Unfair

• Too low
  – Boring
  – Promotes doing the bare minimum

• Just Right
  – Stretch, challenging but achievable
  – Requires learning
“It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.”

— Voltaire
Terminations

• Disciplinary process
  – Fair or witch hunt?
  – Communicate reasonable expectations
  – Opportunity (and time) to improve
  – Receive additional training
  – Set them up to succeed
  – Put the ball in their court
  – Document
Terminations

What NOT to say . . .
Terminations

“This is really hard for me”

“I feel really bad about this”
Terminations

“We can make arrangements for that later”
Termination

“Compared to Billy, you just aren’t cutting it”
Termination

“We decided to make a change”

“You’ve been a solid employee but we simple have to cut some staffing”
Terminations

“We can talk about this as long as you like”
Terminations

“We both know you aren’t happy here, so down the road you’ll actually be glad.”

“So, I’m actually doing you a favor.”
Terminations

“If there is anything I can do for you just let me know.”
Terminations

- Dignity and respect
- Compassion
- Honest
- Give them what is due to them

- Don’t speak ill of the dead
“Things change so fast, you can't use 1971 ethics on someone born in 1971.”

- Grace Slick
Different Common Sense

• PR firm pays a photographer $300 for use of a photo on a customer’s website
• A year later the photographer asks to have the check reissued
• Photo no longer appears on the website
• Do you reissue the check?
“The time is always right to do what is right”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.
Walk the Talk

• No shady HR deals
  – Hiring, firing, promotions, opportunities

• No bending the rules
  – Favoritism, Nepotism

• No waste
  – Expensive lunches, leather chair, first class flights

• No breaking the law
  – EEOC, DOL, fabricating data
Set a Good Example

- Honesty and Integrity
- Keep promises
- Loyalty
- Fair
- Caring
- Show respect
- Commitment to Excellence
- Reputation
- Accountability
“People who try hard to do the right thing always seem mad.”

— Stephen King, The Stand
“There are two types of people in this world, good and bad. The good sleep better, but the bad seem to enjoy the waking hours much more.”

— Woody Allen
Leadership and Ethics

THANK YOU