Code of Ethics Design

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Grand Canyon University: LDR 800

September 29, 2016

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Each organization has individual reasons, be it philosophical or financial, for focusing on ethics and implementing ethics policies within their organization (Nelson, Weeks, & Campfield, 2008). The shaping and modeling of organizational ethics policies should come from the leader or leaders of the organization (Johnson, 2015). Leaders must ensure that messages concerning ethics are heard, and heard frequently (Johnson, 2015). Part of the implementation of ethical policies implementation is often through training, the central focus of which is usually related to the rules and policies of the organization as well as applicable government regulations (Sekerka, 2009). Training and monitoring occurs in different structural areas in different organizations including human resources, legal, or as a separate department (Sekerka, 2009). Another part of the implementation of organizational ethics policies should be frequent communication with followers regarding the value and mission of the organization and the importance of ethical behaviors within that organization (Johnson, 2015). Conflicts and issues stemming from ethical dilemmas or unethical behavior can impact staff morale, profit margin, overall culture of the organization (Nelson et al., 2008), and have long term impacts in many areas of the organization.

**Rationale**

The design of the following code of ethics is simple, with three overarching themes; responsibility, respect, and teamwork. Starting with those three categories was a strategic planning tool. By identifying key themes, the code of ethics had direction from the beginning. Justice, integrity, trust, social responsibility, and humility are all considered signs of healthy ethical climates (Johnson, 2015), therefore they were all purposefully considered and included throughout. This code of ethics was specifically written with brevity in mind. By keeping the code short, more people are likely to read, reference, remember, and follow it. One of the problems with many codes of ethics are that they are not widely read (Johnson, 2015). One goal for this code is to be vague enough to be applicable to many types of organizations, but also specific enough for there to be a way to hold people accountable to the code. Johnson (2015) stated that a code of ethics should not be vague and should outline the principles on which the code is based. This is another reason this code was written by first identifying three themes. These themes are the principles on which it is based. A very important part of the code was to include was communication, which is found under the heading of team work. This was recognized as important because Parboteeah et al. (2010) identified communication as a commonality in what was lacking in cases of corporate scandal which they examined.

**Code of Ethics**

In any organization there are responsibilities to best perform tasks, act as a professional and to behave in an ethical manner. This code is intended to outline not only how to do this, but what the expectations are for those expected to abide by this code. While the statements herein are broad, they are a framework which can and should be applied to decision making and individual situations.

**Responsibility**

Being responsible and honoring all responsibilities to self, others, and organization does encompass many things. Many of the principles and items to follow relate strongly to the idea of responsibility. It is important in all respects to remember that responsibility is earned and for all members of this organization to behave accordingly. Excuses or apologies do not negate or correct action and should not be used in lieu of responsible actions. When a mistake is made, the responsible action is to admit that and work towards creating and executing a solution. Conflicts of interest should be avoided and reported to superiors.

**Respect**

An ongoing goal for all those within this organization should be to earn respect. Members need also to respect other members, outsiders, and leaders, and the ideas of all parties. This organization holds a zero tolerance policy towards harassment of any kind. Property, intellectual and physical, should be respected. Finally, all members of this organization must respect and follow organizational and applicable government regulations.

**Team Work**

All members of this organization are expected to work as a team, both in individual divisions, small groups, and towards the group as a whole. Team work, as described here, has two main components; contribution and communication. Members should contribute to the education of other members regarding this code of ethics, general behavior standards, overall organizational goals, and individual and group assignments. Contribution also encompasses efforts towards solving any problems, conflicts, or issues which may arise. This applies not only to problem which are directly caused by or impact an individual’s work or division. Contributions of problem solving extend to overall organizational problems. Communication is an invaluable component of teamwork in many respects, problem solving included. Communication should be respectful, productive, and timely in all respects.

**Discussion and Personal Ethics**

Four things that I value greatly, both personally and professionally, are educational access, truthfulness, communication, and striving for personal bests. These are thinks I work to encourage and build in myself, others, and in my community. The entire code above is part of my own personal ethical beliefs, and the only thing missing from the code is educational access. This is not relevant to many organizations or industries, so it was purposefully left out. This code of ethics outlines my personal code of ethics quite well, but is different, due to its generalities, from some other codes of ethics.

**The National Education Association**

The code of ethics for this organization is based on the value of education. One of the strengths of this code is that it is so specific and the most important theme is easily identifiable to readers. The code is broken up into a preamble and two principles, which are commitment to the student and to the profession (National Education Association, 1975). Many of the more detailed items mentioned within each principle would be easily categorized under the headings of my code of ethics. Due to being more profession specific, this code gave specific examples of how to behave ethically under each principle (National Education Association, 1975). My code of ethics is noted as a framework to be applied to decision making and specific situations.

**American Library Association**

This code of ethics specifically notates why the organization has a code of ethics and why it is important by noting that when values clash, ethical dilemmas occur, as well as pointing out the librarians’ role in controlling information (American Library Association, 2008). This code differs from that of the National Education Association because it explicitly states that the statements do not dictate behavior in specific circumstances (American Library Association, 2008). This code of ethics is meant to be a framework which provides direction for decision making (American Library Association, 2008), similar to my code of ethics.

References

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