Code of Ethics Plan

Hilary Chubb

Grand Canyon University: LDR 800

October 13, 2016

Code of Ethics Plan

Leaders must act in an ethical manner to set an example for followers, but the simplicity of action is not enough, they must also set an example through communication (Johnson, 2015). This is why it is so important for leaders to believe in the code of ethics of their organization and for it to reflect their personal ethics. The code of ethics for this organization (see appendix) reflects three main themes; responsibility, respect, and teamwork. Each of these themes is important to the success of this organization, the leadership, and the followers. In order for the code to be effective it must be upheld by leadership, be reflected in consistent messaging throughout the organization, and have a clear plan for implementation, enforcement, and evaluation.

**Organizational Documents**

As part of the organizational code of ethics implementation plan all other core organizational documents will be reviewed, edited, and updated. This will ensure that each document complies with, reflects and complements the code of ethics. Consistent messaging is an important part of the organizational implementation plan for the code of ethics.

The mission statement will reflect the organizational objectives of respect for all people within and outside of the organization, as well as the value of working as a team and contributing to the work of the organization. The mission statement will also directly reference and refer readers to the code of ethics. Organizational policies will reflect the values embedded in the code of ethics and utilize the code as the foundation for all policies. An example of this would be the sexual harassment policy. That policy will obviously state that sexual harassment will not be tolerated, it will also reference the code of ethics and remind employees that obeying this policy is part of the organizations valuation of respect.

All organizational documents which are distributed publicly or organization wide will be reviewed in this manner. This will ensure consistent messaging as well as draw organizational attention to the way policy, information, and any other communication is formed and distributed. This is important because it reinforces another tenet of the code of ethics; communication. This review will also serve as a constant reminder to members of the organization to the importance and the content of the code of ethics.

**Implementation Plan**

**Launching the Code**

The first part of launching this organization's code of ethics is updating and ensuring alignment of other organizational documents, as described above. The second part is making the code of ethics easily accessible and visible to all members of our organization. The third part of the implementation is training and continuing education about the code of ethics as well as ethical behavior in general for leaders and followers within the organization.

The organizations code of ethics will be featured on the organization's website for all members and people outside the organization to view. It will be included on the page with the organization information and with human resource and job posting material. All computers provided by the organization will have the code of ethics document preloaded on the desktop. Ensuring members are aware of the code of ethics as well as continuing frequent communication about ethics is an important part of promoting ethical behavior ( Checkwa, Ouhirra, Thomas, & Chuckwuannu, 2014; Johnson, 2015), so communication should begin early and continue.

When a new member joins the organization they will learn about the code of ethics in two ways. First, they will sign a document acknowledging having read the code and agreeing to follow the ethical guidelines. Additionally, during initial member orientation, one of the leaders will lead an hour long discussion about not only what the code of ethics states, but why the organization has this document and why the organization has included each principle within the document. Research has shown that training on ethics is often concentrated when a member first joins an organization and is limited to online activities after that (Sekerka, 2009). To avoid this oversight, the following measures will be taken. Continued face to face training and education will be required on a yearly basis for the organization as a whole, and a semi-annual basis for each department. It is important to include both organization wide and department specific opportunities to learn about the code because ethical failures are not caused by individuals or simple factors, they are caused by organizational factors (Johnson, 2015). The continued training on a specific schedule will ensure that those responsible are accountable for keeping ethics a part of the organizational culture (Sekerka, 2009).

Leaders within the organization will also receive further training within their first months at the organization, and then on a yearly basis, because developing leaders is an important part of organizational ethical development (Johnson, 2015). This training will focus on setting an ethical example for followers to enhance credibility (Johnson, 2015), communicating importance of the code of ethics and ethical behavior, and communication mechanisms for reporting violations and the system of enforcement. Creating an ethical organization requires acknowledgement that followers must also be considered (Johnson, 2015), which within this organization means followers and leaders at multiple steps throughout the experience with the organization.

**Enforcing the Code**

This organization's code of ethics will be enforced in five ways. First, through annual reviews, the process for which are already in place and expanded in order to provide evaluation of ethical behavior. Second, members of the organization will complete semi-annual reviews of their leaders and supervisors regarding their ethical behavior and communication. Third, a system of rewards will be developed with overarching organizational guidelines, but specifics being determined by individual departments. Fourth, efforts will be made to cultivate a culture of openness within the organization so that ethical failings are reported to appropriate parties in a timely fashion. Finally, a system of punishments will also be developed for appropriate situations.

An important part of enforcement is the inclusion of both rewards and punishments (Johnson, 2015). That is partially because people will not change without motivation (Johnson, 2015), rewards and/or punishment can provide that motivation in a few ways. Rewards in this organization will include financial and other types of rewards (Johnson, 2015) such as commendations, additional responsibilities and opportunities for professional and personal growth. Using simply compliance tactics for enforcing the code of ethics will not be as effective as also focusing on moral competencies over time (Sekerka, 2009), for this reason one of the 'punishments' developed will be additional morality and ethics training in an effort to promote development. This should not only deter individuals from unethical action to avoid additional tasks or trainings, but if they do participate in one of those trainings it should inform their future behaviors in a positive way. In cultivating an empowering culture, the organization will also be able to motivate people to change (Partboteeah, 2010) both in avoiding unethical behaviors and also to contribute to organizational success and ethical culture. One part of cultivating an empowered culture is providing followers the opportunity to evaluate leaders. One part of that evaluation will be how consistently the leader communicates messages of ethics and if the followers feel the leader allowed any ethical messages to be overpowered by other priorities, because moral leaders should ensure ethical messages are heard (Johnson, 2015).

**Evaluation**

The code of ethics for this organization, along with the implementation plan must be reviewed regularly because moral work is ongoing (Johnson, 2015) as the evaluation of this organizations work must be. One of the issues seen in many codes of ethics is that they do not improve the ethical climate of the organization (Johnson, 2015). To assess this the organization will examine the ethical climate of the organization through detailed and anonymous surveys completed by members of the organization. The productivity of the organization can be measured in quarterly reports detailing output and accomplishments. Because moral workers result in better and more efficient work and contribute to better organizational functioning (Johnson, 2015), the implementation of the code of ethics should have an impact on these reports.

**Conclusion**

This code of ethics will succeed where others have not because it is based on research, strategy, and a true desire to better the organization and the members. Many of the common issues seen in codes of ethics have been addressed including narrow distribution, not improving ethical climate, being used as a public relations document, and lack of enforcements and rewards (Johnson, 2015). The implementation plan for this code of ethics was designed to be cohesive, extensive, and to permeate the culture of the organization. This will occur through early introduction, ease of access to the document, and regular communication and education on the code and ethics in general. It is imperative for this organization to utilize the code of ethics to the fullest extent in order to build an ethical climate and productive organization (Johnson, 2015). This will be achieved through the use of this implementation and evaluation plan.

References

Chekwa, C., Ouhirra, L., Thomas, E., & Chukwuanu, M. (2014). An examination of the effects of leadership on business ethics: empirical study. *International Journal of Business & Public Administration*, *11*(1), 48-65.

Johnson, C. E. (2015). Meeting the ethical challenges of leadership: Casting light or shadow (5th). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN-13: 9781452259185

Parboteeah, K., Chen, H., Lin, Y.-T., Chen, I.-H., Lee, A., & Chung, A. (2010). Establishing organizational ethical climates: How do managerial practices work? *Journal of Business Ethics*, *97*(4), 599-611.

Sekerka, L. E. (2009). Organizational ethics education and training: A review of best practices and their application. *International Journal of Training & Development*, *13*(2), 77-95.

Appendix

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.