Integrity in the Workplace

A discussion on integrity in the workplace is expected to have unlimited boundaries with respect to where it applies. The definition of a workplace describes it is as a location where someone works for his or her employer, and a place where work is done. It becomes clear that the workplace can be a physical space that is provided by the employer, or in a home where arrangements for telecommuting have been established. There can be no disputing of the fact that from the highest office holder of a state to the lowest level worker, that they remain subjected to being accountable.

Based on this definition, persons who work for the state and are paid out of the public's purse, those who work in the private sector and those who fall under the category of the self-employed, cannot divorce themselves from following standards, principles and best practices that govern their line of work. These three things combine to constitute what is known as ethical behaviour. Whether as an employer, member of the management team, or as an appointed, selected or elected official, it remains the responsibility of each individual to observe a sense of commitment to openness, transparency, accountability, honesty and the promoting of high standards. Basically, the sum total of what is expected and required, would be workplace honesty, accountability and ethical behaviour.

The integrity of the workplace can be compromised by the actions and attitudes of the leadership, management and the individual worker. This is rooted in their failure to practice honesty and share and exhibit strong moral principles. Workplace integrity can be safeguarded where those operating at all levels, follow the workplace policies which have been developed for the expressed purpose of guiding best practices. Policy dictates help to inform the exercising of responsibility behaviour, which serve the purpose of building and maintaining a positive reputation, trust and confidence in those associated with the organization and the organization in itself. With this being manifested, it demonstrates a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization, a demonstration of respect for the both the internal and external customers and the general public.

The building of workplace integrity commences with a display of values, morals and principles that are committed to the promotion of ethical behaviour. The ability to determine or judge between right and wrong encapsulates the principles that each individual believes in. Morals relate to undesirable behaviour, which is considered as

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unacceptable to society. The denouncing of undesirable behaviour is driven by the evidence that the individual has failed to play by the rules. Principles are derivative of the values which the individual holds. Basically, values guide the behaviour of the individual, and the behaviour which they find acceptable.

In taking a broader look at the subject of workplace integrity, it is necessary that the wider perspective addresses the fact that it is not limited to fraudulent and dishonest behaviour. Acts of this nature have become common place, and tend to either go undetected, ignored, or the perpetrators are given a slap on the wrist. It would appear that such behaviours are not condoned, but in the interest of protecting the imagine and reputation of the workplace or organization, instances as reported or investigated, tend to be swept under the carpet.

In an effort to preserve the integrity of the workplace, it requires that employers, managers, employees at all levels, Chairpersons and Directors of Boards, elected and appointed officials, undertake to lead by example. Respecting the opinion of others, being accountable for mistakes made and engaging in open and honest communication, form part of the expected responsible behaviour. Such actions can only earn trust and respect. The avoidance of short cuts, the misuse of the internet, text messages and social media, are actions that have no place and stand to undermine one's personal integrity. It is required that best practices are followed, good decision making and a display of a sound work ethics that include honesty, trustworthiness, dependability and reliability, are showcased.

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