Encouraging Integrity in the Workplace

As a supervisor, promoting integrity is essential in establishing a productive work environment. By promoting integrity, you are allowing honesty, fairness, and trust to thrive in your office. It is important that this message of integrity resonate from the top of the organization down so that your employees understand integrity is one of the organization’s key values and that it is built into the work culture. Therefore, supervisors and managers need to be an upstanding model of integrity and also encourage their team to act with integrity. By doing so, your employees will be able to trust one another and have confidence in management. The following are suggested methods for promoting integrity among your employees.

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE INTEGRITY AMONG YOUR EMPLOYEES:

- **Train your employees on how to act with integrity.** You can provide examples to your employees of situations where questionable activity may arise, and promote discussion by asking employees what they believe the correct course of action may be. Go in depth with proposed solutions by examining the possible moral, ethical, and legal outcomes. At the end, provide the solution for the best-case scenario and go through the outcome to explain why it was the best solution. Training allows your employees to become familiar with situations where integrity-compromising situations may arise, and also provides them with examples on how to avoid them. Discussing integrity in the workplace should also not be a one time event. You should continue to reinforce the importance of integrity to your employees from time to time, particularly during goal-setting and planning meetings. It can be a quick 5 minute reminder at the end of the meeting with a new example or a reiteration of the District’s commitment to integrity.

- **Promote open and honest communication.** Keep an open door policy and encourage your employees to come to you whenever they have any ethical concerns or are unsure of how to respond in a compromising situation. Also let them know that there is zero tolerance for retaliation against employees that bring out their concerns. Of course, communication is a two way street so be sure to provide honest dialogue to your employees too. Share upcoming deadlines or changes to the organization, do not wait until the last minute and blindside your employees.
**Lead by example.** Employees often look to their leader to see how they should act, so make sure to be a good example of integrity. As a leader, you should honor your word and fulfill your promises. Your employees should be able to trust what you say and be able to rely on your actions. Likewise, if you make a mistake, admit it and sincerely apologize for it. Make sure to quickly resolve the issue and do not push the blame on to your team members. Whenever someone brings their concern to you on ethical issues, carefully and patiently listen to them. Treat every concern seriously by investigating thoroughly and make sure to refer any extraordinary situations to the appropriate office.

**Provide recognition to an employee who acts with integrity.** When a situation occurs and you discover that an employee acted with integrity in the face of inappropriate activity, recognize the employee and commend their actions. These can be situations where an employee admits a mistake and takes responsibility to fix it, discovers a matter of potential legal concern and reports it to you, or helps educate another coworker when they see them leaving confidential documents in the open. Recognizing them can be as simple as providing them words of gratitude during a one-on-one meeting, or for extraordinary circumstances, you could acknowledge them at a staff meeting or submit a Notice for Outstanding Work Performance for their personnel file.

Valuing and exemplifying integrity is essential for an organization’s success and provides a stable and safe working environment. A leader with a strong foundation of integrity is a guiding light to all of his/her employees and sets a good standard on how everyone should behave. Take a moment to reflect on how integrity is presented to your team members and how you may use some of the examples above to further integrate it in your team.

We’d like to hear from you! Please visit the following survey link to provide us with valuable feedback on our bulletins: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FV69R3B](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FV69R3B)