

HRM Ethics: Revealing Practices That Deceptively Manipulate Good HRM Policies

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Abstract

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a business discipline that handles one of the most crucial components of business: People. Anyone who has ever managed or led people knows the sensitivity and complexity of ensuring that everyone is in sync with the goals while balancing the ever-changing diversity of the human nature. In responding to this challenge, HRM has evolved into a broad range of sub-disciplines to address the complexities of guiding people in meeting business goals. These include staffing (HR planning, recruitment, selection), training and development, employee and labor relations, performance management, compensation, safety and security management. Organizations must ensure legal and ethical compliance in all these areas which further challenge businesses to not only balance human diversity but do it within the confines of the law and social mores.

This paper will discuss two cases that reveal some disturbing manipulation of HRM policies implemented within a structure of legally sound and ethically grounded procedures, but cleverly conducted in ways that undermine the basic goals of fairness, dignity, and honesty in treating employees. The author examines 4 possible causes of such behavior including 1.) “buddy” nepotism 2.) tribal culture 3.) false sense of company pride and 4.) lack of personal integrity and analyzes the symptoms and consequences that flow from each factor to provide

recommendations that focus on creating a solid implementation of HRM policies through a strong, values-based organizational culture.

The Cost of Integrity and Decency

Companies work hard to be in compliance and develop workplace policies and procedures to ensure a safe, fair, and productive workplace. It is big investment of time, manpower, money, and materials to have these policies in place. The cost of non-compliance is unfeasible. This may include increased cost of operations from disruptions in the workplace, administrative costs, loss of personnel time, conflict resolution, and possible lawsuit. In addition, complaints cause low morale which leads to decrease in productivity. Therefore, reputable firms develop sets of policies and procedures to guide and educate staff on how to maintain a fair, respectful, and productive workplace. Thousands of dollars are spent developing these guidelines. Policies are driven by the mission and vision that supports company goals. Procedures are then designed to implement such policies.

Given the vast resources involved in setting worker policies, it is baffling to see how a manager would ignore these in order to accomplish a personal agenda. But it happens. This hidden agenda may include personal hatred towards a subordinate or a push to “meet budget” or “make the numbers.” Some managers fire, demote, transfer, cut benefits or do some similar adverse action against workers which may be discriminatory or unfair, undermining the spirit of policies against such behavior. Those who engage in these practices are aware of employment-related rules. Yet they may cover-up their acts to have an appearance of compliance. This paper will discuss such kinds of deception which involves manipulation of policy enforcement or implementation, rather than in the lack of policies that prevent unfair and discriminatory

practices. Issues on integrity and decency come into question. In some cases, upper management would join forces to aid and abet the lower level managers in order to protect the company from a major lawsuit that the initial cover-up has evolved into, adding one more layer of sophistication to the web of lies that have already begun. The court is not the simplest avenue to fix such transgressions in the workplace. The amount of evidence required and length of process are not in any party's favor. Financially disadvantaged workers may give up their fight but influence a trail of unfavorable public opinion about the company. The court of public or popular opinion is as powerful. A panel debate titled "Supreme Court and Public Opinion" discussed that "the justices and the people are partners in a "marriage" that sidesteps the two elected branches....that the justices and the people are not always in agreement, "but rather that they come into line with one another over time." (University of Pennsylvania | Law School National Constitution Center, 2010). Therefore, both parties lose in an unfair employment relationship.

Below are a couple of scenes that demonstrate the several layers of manipulation that can transpire in organizations and how one malicious goal could evolve into a systemic conspiracy. Note the amount of waste is involved in expending personnel time, effort, and loss productivity in such systemic manipulation.

Scenes of Deception and Manipulation

Manipulation is to change by artful or unfair means so as to serve one's purpose (Merriam-Webster), or a shrewd or devious management, especially for one's own advantage (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009)

This is exactly what happened in the workplace scenes below.

Scene 1: Disabled Employee

An employee, who we will call “Mr. Z” has worked for company Y for over 20 years and is now in his early ‘60s. His work involves designing rooms for clients which includes some hands-on handling of supplies and materials. He was injured and the doctor gave him a minor 15-lb. restriction on the use of his left arm. He is right-handed so his work is not so much affected except when he needed to push a small cart containing supplies (similar to those used by hotel housekeepers). He then informed his employer of his injury and the doctor’s restrictions. He requested to have newer wheels for the cart so it is easier to maneuver. The manager of his division saw this opportunity to fire Mr. Z in order to squeeze in his best friend who has been eyeing this post. He immediately responded by transferring Mr. Z to “light duty” administrative work as his accommodation. Mr. Z was puzzled because he can do all the functions of his job as he still has full use of his right arm which is what he mainly used for work. His doctor provided a note to the employer that he can perform the essential functions of his job with the lifting restriction to 15 lbs. and suggested minor accommodation. The manager promptly notified HR that Mr. Z is an ADA eligible employee and needed to be transferred to light duty. This case scenario is not about an analysis of the law, but rather a demonstration of how a manager can manipulate the implementation of the law in the workplace so as to serve his personal agenda. First, the manager did not conduct an “interactive process” which requires a dialogue between the employer and employee on how to best accommodate the disability (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990) (ADA). Mr. Z suggested a minor equipment modification which does not bear additional cost but the manager persuaded HR to transfer him to “light duty.” Per ADA, the company has options on the manner of accommodation which include: (A) making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; and (B) job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position,

acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities. (Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2008); 42 U.S.C. § 12111(9); 29 C.F.R. § 1630.2(o)(2). The manager pushed for the transfer option because this would temporarily remove Mr. Z from his actual job during the accommodation period; and if he does not get back in shape soon, he will have to be reassigned to a vacant position or be legally terminated. The company did not cut his pay at the time of the initial accommodation to light duty. Therefore, the transfer seems like a noble move until one sees that the final outcome of this choice was to legally terminate the employee. The transfer to light duty was a temporary accommodation to purportedly “wait” for the reassignment to a vacant post. Several deceptive maneuvers were conducted before the employee was let go. As mentioned, ADA requires only to reassign the employee to a vacant position, not to create a new one. Mr. Z was encouraged to constantly watch for job openings in the company and apply for one that fits his qualifications – he has to compete with others and will not be given preference. He was eventually terminated. While Mr. Z worked the light duty, his doctor continued to send regular updates on his progress and reports that he can perform the essential functions of his job with the restriction. He also noted that Mr. Z has full use of his right arm. The “modification of equipment or devices” option would have enabled Mr. Z to keep his regular job. The company was questioned as to why he was not allowed to keep his regular job. They replied by showing a manipulated document as proof that he cannot perform the essential function of the job. Here, the company used their internal expert to complete a matrix that documents their assessment of Mr. Z’s job description along with his disability. The matrix has 2 columns. The first column contained the list of essential job functions and the adjacent column

contained the question “Can employee perform this task with or without accommodation”? As one can already suspect, under each and every item, the expert wrote “NO,” but without any explanation. This is one big flag that these tools were merely crossed off or checked off as “DONE” to show that the process was technically conducted even though the matter was not honestly evaluated. The tools were used not only to justify the pre-determined result that is always adverse to the employee, but also to show that the employer or malicious manager did everything that the policy and procedures ask them to do. The company was further asked to explain the procedures conducted to justify the responses for the job accommodation analysis. The reply was that the expert assessed it and his opinion was that Mr. Z cannot perform the functions due to his restriction – a totally circular reasoning that did not provide any intelligent, honest information. This document was used to justify Mr. Z’s transfer to light duty because they claim that he cannot perform the essential functions of the job even if they modified the cart (putting new wheels). Thereafter, after massive scrutiny of all the medical records, the company was asked to explain how the expert’s opinion contradicted the doctor’s note that the employee can perform the job’s essential functions. This set in motion the third phase of manipulation - the company changed the question for the doctor regarding Mr. Z’s ability to perform the essential functions such that the doctor was to answer in the negative. After having a full set of documentation to justify the transfer, the company believed that it can legally terminate Mr. Z because ADA does not require companies to do any of the burdensome practices below:

Accommodations that are Unreasonable as a Matter of Law

1. Ineffective Accommodations
2. Paid or Indefinite Leave of Absence
3. Elimination of Essential Functions
4. Hiring a Helper
5. Overriding Collective Bargaining Agreement
6. Ousting/Bumping Other Employees
7. Promotion

8. Forcing Others to Work Harder
 9. Creating Light Duty Jobs
 10. Lowering Production or Efficiency Standards
 11. Transferring Outside of Regular Transfer Policy
- (MICHAEL V. GALO, JR., 2001)

The employer needed only to find one of these to be relieved of the accommodation requirement. However, the question was not whether the employee needed light duty to begin with – he could perform the essential functions with minimal accommodation. But the first manipulative act was for the employer to choose another path allowed by law that would eventually lead them to what the manager wanted to happen – terminate Mr. Z. It is perplexing why a manager would want to lose such stellar employee. And why engage the whole team to support such malicious move? Some of the causes will be discussed in the sections to follow.

The above scene only highlighted the key points of the actual case. Piles of documents had to be examined in careful detail to uncover the milestones of manipulation. Many professionals have to be involved, including physicians who honestly did their part, but whose words were twisted to fit the picture that the manager wanted to portray. The justice system had to be used and court time wasted to uncover the malice that underlies the conspiracy in the workplace. At the end of the day, the only thing accomplished was the shallow whim of an unscrupulous manager to terminate a loyal employee who did nothing but be in the way of a manager's friend who needed a job. What could be done to prevent this? Could HR or the next level manager have just admitted foul play and correct the mistake internally? Why is it so hard to admit and punish a wrongdoer? Why do companies try to cover these up and risk being exposed in the justice court or in the court of popular opinion? A lot of these matters settle out of court. But a major part of this settlement is for the company not to admit guilt or liability. The wrongdoer goes about with no conscience to clean.

Scene 2: You're not one of us

Our next scene involves a gang-like workplace culture in a suburban setting. Ms. A is a 60 year-old immigrant who had an impeccable 20-year work history with the company. A few years ago, she filed a discrimination complaint against Mr. B through the company's internal grievance relations office and won. When she filed the complaint, her supervisor, Mr. C asked her to immediately retract it because he claims that the person she complained about is a good worker. The company fired the wrongdoer after they found him guilty. After the firing, Ms. A's supervisor warned her that whatever she did to Mr. B, "she's gonna get it." A year passed and Ms. A applied for promotion to an open position. She was the most qualified and most senior in the division. The position required that candidates pass a series of tests, including practical hands-on tests on two special equipment. The company was very organized and had elaborate, well-designed policies and procedures. The job examination process had to follow rigid guidelines and paperwork. The scoring process was exquisite and intelligently designed. Forms were in place to document each step of the process. One may think that the system was fool-proof. But there was always a way to go around and about this intricate web of procedures for the intelligent manipulator.

Ms. A was known to be the best in operating the equipment and the company calls her to fill-in to work on these whenever a regular operator was absent. There were 5 eligible internal applicants who knew that Ms. A will get the position due to her superior qualifications. But she did not. She was documented to have scored second to the lowest of the 5 candidates. She purportedly failed the two equipment tests to everyone's surprise, including the person who won the job. He had no experience in any of the equipment. Ms. A filed an internal complaint and

requested a review of the examination. The internal investigation found no mistake. Ms. A then took her complaint externally and sought legal help. The external investigator conducted a thorough scrutiny of the entire process to figure out how a system so fool-proof could be manipulated to this level. Let us examine the different layers of deception that was uncovered here.

Layer 1 revealed that the examiner was asked by Mr. C, the supervisor, to make sure that Ms. A fails the exam. The next layers reveal the gang conspiracy to cover up and support the manipulation done by the examiner to complete Mr. C's instructions. Layer 2 is a manipulation of words contained in the performance tests to justify Ms. A's failure in equipment 1. Here, a letter from the internal investigator responding to Ms. A complaint stated that Ms. A was not able to correctly answer a question which required the examiner to give her an automatic fail in equipment 1. This caused Ms. A's score for equipment 1 to be so low. The letter noted: "you failed to answer question 1" (which was correct), but then it continued to say that "failure to answer this *mechanical test question* is an automatic fail." This is a deliberate mislabeling of "question 1" as a *mechanical test* section of the test. The manipulation here is that question 1 was NOT a mechanical test question but a normal question that only carries 1 point; mechanical test questions are automatic fails which warrants stopping of the exam; Ms. A did not correctly answer question 1 but should have been allowed to move on with the rest of the test and earn points. The examiner automatically failed her, and the investigator tried to justify this by qualifying her mistake under the automatic fail section. Investigation revealed that the investigator intentionally misquoted the rule with a mislabeled the test to support the examiner's score. Layer 3 consisted of manipulation of Ms. A's score on equipment 2. Here, the examiner again stopped the test at the beginning because she purportedly did not respond to the question

correctly. Ms. A challenged this by presenting copies of the manufacturer's operating manual showing that Ms. A correctly answered the question. She also presented affidavits of other examiners supporting her answer, as well as statements from other equipment operators. The examiner rebutted this by saying that in his expert opinion the mistake in the answer called for an unsafe maneuver (contrary to what the manual states). Layer 4 was another cover up the investigation committee stating that they had completed their internal investigation and found no merit to Ms. A's accusations and supported this by repeating the examiner's words that she failed the tests on both equipment. Upon interrogation as to what was done during the internal investigation, the division merely said that they talked to the examiner and reviewed the scores – the manipulator and the manipulated documents. Ms. A was never interviewed in the process, nor was the other people who supported her. Layer 5 involved an even perplexing cover-up. The company has an external grievance board comprised of a panel of experts from various parts of the organization who were supposed to conduct an impartial hearing of employee complaints as a final attempt to resolve issues. This external body (which was still part of the company) conducted an arbitration-like hearing and rendered a decision. The decision plainly reiterated the findings of the investigation committee on layer 4. No one in the company conducted an honest, sincere investigation but merely completed superficial paperwork to complete their file and show that the elaborate process has been followed. The court found otherwise. It ruled for the employee and found the collusion, aiding and abetting amongst several key members of management based purely on their own manuals and documents that have been manipulated through misquotes. The entire scheme that involved time and effort of over 20 key staff and the court, plus hard costs and expenses, was based on a personal agenda to retaliate against a loyal, hard-working employee who won a complaint against someone favored by the supervisor.

Probable Causes of Deception and Manipulation of Company Policies

I propose 4 possible causes that may have contributed to the disintegration (or lack) of ethics within the firm that allowed the incidents to progress to a full-blown conspiracy of illegal deceptive practices: 1.) power of buddy nepotism, 2.) tribal culture, 3.) false sense of company pride and decency, and 4.) lack of personal integrity and decency.

Nepotism is defined as favoritism based on kinship (Merriam-Webster). Klaus Kneale wrote that playing professional favoritism with family members in business is a controversial subject - that it can wreak havoc or work wonders (Kneale, 2009). Kneale says that nepotism at the top is very common at family companies and legal concerns surrounding nepotism are few but not to be ignored (Kneale, 2009). This suggests that nepotism is not a bad act in and of itself, but the manner in which it is practiced is what matters. Nepotism, as it is applied in the workplace, restricts hiring of relatives that would be under the manager's departmental control. This assumes that managers would always give preferential treatment to the relative. However, hiring or making any human resource decision based on merits is not nepotism even if it involves a relative – because this would show that the relative was not given preferential treatment of favoritism. Only acts that show favoritism for a relative that has no meritorious basis should be nepotism in its pure form. Favoritism has demoralizing effects if other workers can see the preferential treatment. Therefore, I propose the expansion of nepotism to friends who are given favors based purely on the relationship. This also calls for a rethinking of how anti-nepotism policies are applied in the workplace as this can create some type of reverse discrimination against a person who is best qualified for the job but is rejected because he or she happens to be a relative of the manager. The focus on nepotism should be on the act of “favoritism” and not on

the relationship. Having established this concept, very little, if any, has been discussed to associate the power of favoritism amongst friends. “Buddy” nepotism, a term introduced here, refers to favoritism based on friendship, or expanding nepotism to friends. Friends may have as tight of a bond to the manager as any relative or kin, sometimes exceedingly so. Therefore, I propose anti-nepotism policies that highlight the bad act of favoritism rather than the relationship. In rethinking anti-nepotism policies, it should not forbid decisions (hiring, promoting, etc.) based on the relationship, but rather forbid any form of favoritism in the workplace. As one can imagine, it is easier to define acts of favoritism (which could be as simple as “preferential treatment without any merit”) than trying to define or present evidence of “friendship”. As our case demonstrates, the manager’s friend had preferential treatment in the hiring decision. The entire case on scene 1 stemmed from a self-serving interest of a manager who used the company to please his friend.

Another factor that may trigger acts of deception and manipulation in the workplace is a professional type of gang mentality that I would call “tribal culture.” An organization may contain pockets of tribal culture characterized by cliques formed from various areas of the organization based on some common tie that bonds the members. A typical workplace clique is an informal group of people who share a common bond (ethnic, social, work discipline, age group, etc.) within a narrow geographic spread in the organization (sometimes within the same department.) However, a tribal clique may form from a wide area spanning various geographic regions of an organization, transcending various ethnic, social, or demographic differences. The only commonality amongst the members may be a common enemy, or a common goal, and members could be acting in defense or attacking an “enemy” of one member of the group. These may be formed on an ad hoc basis depending on the existence of the common bond. This term is

derived from the author's application of some characteristics of Indian tribes described as follows:

Tribes were often (but not always) composed of generally autonomous and independent bands and villages. Although the people of these bands and villages shared common languages and cultures, Indian tribes seldom had permanent political structures that unified them throughout the year. Instead, there were mechanisms which brought together the people of different bands or villages for particular purposes, such as spring fishing, ceremonial and religious gatherings, trade, and the like. Through these gatherings, different bands and villages created bonds with one another which were necessary in hard times or which could be called upon for defense against a common foe.

(What is A Tribe?)

Perhaps we have become oblivious of our primordial behaviors, but we somehow manifest a type of archaic and tribal characteristics that adapt to modern society. As demonstrated in scene 2, various members from several layers of the organization ganged-up to help Mr. C against a common enemy (someone who complained discrimination-Ms. A), or an enemy of one of their "members" (here, Mr. C, the supervisor). The tribal clique may have also formed to protect the company from a potential lawsuit (the tribe's "hard time"), and their collective protective act was to cover up Mr. C's bad act and retaliate against Ms. A as the person blowing the whistle against the company.

A third cause may be a false sense of company pride. Company pride is not bad. It flows from the pride of workers for the product or service that the company has successfully developed. Such pride may be instilled in the minds of the workers such that accusations of wrongdoing threaten this precious notion. Sometimes, a knee-jerk reaction is to cover-up the

mistake, or not to admit a flaw or wrongdoing because of a false sense of superiority. An example is when executives deny that there is a flaw in production and they allow the product to flow in the stream of commerce instead of admitting the mistake and fixing the flaw. Another may be a false sense that the company can do no wrong and therefore the rest of the staff would behave in a group-think fashion evolving in a full-blown conspiracy to cover up a mistake of one of their people, hoping that this movement would cover up any trace of the mistake or wrongdoing. This may be one feasible explanation for our disability case on scene 1 where managers involved in the case simply signed off on an obvious wrongdoing, instead of conducting an honest investigation, correcting the mistake and ensuring that this does not happen again. This brings to light the concept of corporate decency. Should we expect an organization to act like decent, morale members of society? Decency is defined as conformity to prevailing standards of propriety or modesty, or conforming to social or moral standards (Merriam-Webster) – but what are today's standards? Pressures to meet the bottom-line at whatever cost? Pressures to meet departmental budgets and goals? What is today's social order? In my opinion, decency must be defined by an ethical attitude not to outwit, trick or outsmart people with the goal of manipulating them to serve only one's personal agenda. Corporate decency can only be achieved through an ethically solid organizational culture sustained by internal checks and balances and external audits. Without these controls, the culture could easily collapse due to the diversity of individual values comprising the whole.

As one can assess from the two case scenarios above, personal integrity and a sense of individual decency are traits that can out-manuever and outsmart any sound policies in every aspect of society. Laws will be written only to be outsmarted by some creative application. The Enron case was one of the biggest scandals of our economy in 2000. It demonstrates how the

company used an accounting principle to hide debts which senior executives claimed they knew nothing about (Easy Guide to Understanding ENRON Scandal Summary, 2011). The Sarbanes-Oxley Act was passed in order to address some of these flaws. However, within the same decade, bigger scandals erupted as more legal loopholes were stimulated, and dishonesty and greed became the social order of the 21st century. The lack of personal integrity of leaders highlighted the show – the corporate shield could not protect the arrogant display of their corruption. Our two cases clearly demonstrate a total lack of propriety and modesty whenever personal agenda usurps the rights of other individuals and undermines the value of the firm.

Recommended HRM Areas to Focus for Solutions

Solutions focused on key areas of HR may effectively address and eliminate the factors that breed deceit and manipulation within a company. Nevertheless, inherent values and personal morales have deeper roots that are too personal for even the most conscientious program to address. This will have to be resolved by the individual through personal motivation for change. The company’s role is to seek out those who align with its own organizational values. The chart below summarizes suggested areas of focus for change. Further research and study on this topic would greatly enhance awareness of these issues.

Table 1: Cause and Effect Diagram with Recommended HRM Solutions

PROBABLE CAUSES OF DECEPTION AND MANIPULATION	SYMPTOMS AND EFFECT*	RECOMMENDED HRM Areas to Focus for Solutions
Buddy nepotism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favoritism • Low morale • Bad hiring • Discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection and Staffing • Performance Management • Employee relations and discipline • Ethical training

Tribal culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groupthink • Conspiracy • Discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • HRM Audits • Employee Relations
False sense of company pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to evaluate flaws in internal processes • Inability to correct flaws • Slow or minimal product or service development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • HRM Audits
Lack of personal integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft and other rule violations • Conspiracy • Workplace conflict • Lack of Teamwork • Other bad acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection and Staffing • Performance Management • Employee relations and discipline

*All these have an ultimate impact on the company's finances.

The scene 1 issue on disability discrimination resulted in a protracted legal battle which cost the company hundreds of thousands of dollars and a bad reputation. Buddy nepotism undermined the company's hiring process when the manager positioned the staff based on his personal agenda and not on their qualifications and abilities. Mr. Z was transferred to another unrelated job despite his impeccable qualification for the original position. The manager's friend was hired as replacement without competition from others who may be more qualified.

To eliminate bad behavior, companies must start by seriously investing in the staffing process. Careful attention is encouraged in designing the selection activities. The right people make for simpler HR management. Having the right fit allows management to focus on retaining and developing talent rather than on activities that police the workforce. Regulatory activities

are more time consuming, thus involves more cost to the company. Selection activities should include criteria to screen out people who are prone to mal-adaptive behaviors, such as non-merit based nepotism. Questionnaires, work history, background profiling, behavioral testing and other creative selection tools should be engaged and honestly implemented. To emphasize the point of this paper, the existence of deception and manipulation in the workplace lies not in the absence of sound HR policies but in the honest implementation of such. Nevertheless, a rethinking of some existing policies may be key to achieving honest implementation. An example is the proposed anti-nepotism policy described above. Selection is also a crucial step in identifying people who lack the integrity to uphold company values and ethical standards. This may not be the answer to eliminate bad actors but without careful screening the company stands a higher probability of doing bad hires. It has been well documented that some fraudulent actors move from state to state hiding their past history. Serious background check should go as far back depending on the sensitivity of the job position.

Performance management (PM) should be enforced in a manner that sustains the integrity of staff and ensure alignment with policies. Most highly functioning companies design evaluation tools that include several pages of templates containing well-designed job-related assessment criteria. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by our case on scene 2, even the most sophisticated forms and templates guiding staff on how to assess certain job-related criteria can be completed superficially without regards for the substance of its content just for the sake of complying with paperwork. In our case, the expert job assessor simply filled-out the form without any back up activity justifying why he believes that the employee cannot perform the particular essential task. Therefore, performance management should extend beyond documentation and have a system of checks and balances to ensure that

a.) assessments are conducted on the merits, and
b.) decisions are based on assessed merits [thereby preventing nepotism or bias of any type].

A system of checks and balance may include procedural safeguards such as:

- Supervisor reporting the activities and results of evaluations to the next level manager, or to a panel of other supervisors;
- Creating a performance management committee comprised of members from several departments serving on rotation for a set period. The task of this committee will be to review promotions and other major personnel decisions, including demotions, layoffs, transfers, terminations. The HR leader facilitates the review process. Final decisions involving **key** personnel should be submitted to the executive committee (e.g., CEO, CFO, COO, VPHR.)
- Conduct HRM audits that include an assessment of the success of the performance management activities and link PM's contribution to the company's ethical scores.

Workforce training is essential in communicating and reshaping the values of an organization. How this is delivered is the emphasis of this paper. With regards to ethics training that reinforces company pride, values, and integrity, it is the author's belief that every manager who leads people must be a good trainer him- or herself. They must be able to effectively pass on or reinforce the organizational ethics or values training at every opportunity. These types of training cannot be limited to a companywide program delivered one time, but must be reinforced regularly through some informal sessions by every supervisor or manager in their own creative way that fit the make-up of their distinct set of personnel. An example would be to incorporate

these messages in their meetings, orientation, or any type of employee gathering, including daily operations updates, weekly motivation sessions, monthly financial reports, etc... Each supervisor is more equipped with the knowledge on what delivery method would work best for his or her crew and their readiness for learning, as he or she is expected to know their staff in a more personal level. This is important for retention of learning and successful implementation of the training goals. It is important to emphasize that training is more oriented to addressing the technical aspects of the company's policies, rules, and procedures rather than in attempting to change employees' personal integrity and moral values. However, environmental psychology, which deals with behavior in relation to the physical environment including materials and human beings, hypothesized that environment influences behavior at several levels and that immediate behavior is a function of the settings in which it occurs (V. George Mathew, 2001). Applying this hypothesis, we may assume that a strong ethical environment where workers adhere to strict moral values supported by extrinsic rewards, recognition, and other manifestation of appreciation for adherence could influence one's personal integrity. Therefore, it is the resulting contribution of ethics training on the culture that could change one's behavior, rather than a training program itself.

Employee relations policies deal with avoiding and resolving issues concerning individuals which might arise out of or influence the work scenario (Juneja, Himanshu and Prachi, 2008) . Strong employee relations practices supported by procedures that reinforce good behavior will be instrumental to influencing personal integrity and enhancing organizational ethics.

The true enforcement of every HR policy should be given the same importance as the creation of such policies in order to achieve the goal of each program. HRM audit is an effective

tool in linking the result of each program to the goals of the policy that its supports. In addition, creation of a system of checks and balances outside the HR department may help ensure the integrity of its policies and practices.

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