Introduction

Trust and openness are crucial elements of an ethical organizational culture. Only when employees are able to voice the problems they see can ethical lapses be discussed and resolved. A first step in building this kind of culture involves a hiring approach in which companies actively seek those individuals inclined to speak up when ethical challenges surface. Based on findings from the behavioral sciences, some individual dispositions deserve every screening committee's attention.

Source: https://hbr.org/2016/12/6-traits-that-predict-ethical-behavior--at-work

1. Conscientiousness

Individuals showing this trait are careful, reflective, and reliable, which means that they tend to be responsible organizational citizens. Research shows that conscientiousness is indeed positively associated with higher levels of moral reasoning, leading people high in this trait to display less antisocial, unethical, and even criminal behavior.

2. Moral attentiveness

This describes the extent to which individuals are aware of the various ethical dilemmas at hand. A morally attentive person will see ethical issues where others may see none. It may sound a bit obvious to say, but being aware of the ethical dilemmas at hand are a prerequisite to start talking about it.
Building an ethical culture not only requires that people be aware of ethical challenges, but also that they have the intention to take them seriously. Two types of orientations can influence this in particular:

- Duty orientation
- Customer orientation

3. Duty orientation

Individuals with a strong sense of duty tend to be loyal and mission-oriented, and motivated to take action on what they perceive as a problem. Research has shown that a high sense of duty orientation leads employees to voice their concerns more quickly.

4. Customer orientation

Employees who are strongly motivated to prioritize the needs of customers also tend to adopt more ethical attitudes in the experience and execution of their job. Customer oriented employees tend to be more ethical because they value the others' needs as highly as their own and create fewer conflicts of interest in their relationships with others. As a result, they are more likely to notice and willing to address challenges that violate ethical rules and expectations. Research shows that exactly those serving qualities make that customer oriented sales agents engage in less unethical behavior than their sales-oriented counterparts.. Finally, in addition to noticing ethical issues and being motivated to address them, employees need to act. In this respect, two personality types are especially important:

- Assertiveness
- Proactivity

5. Assertiveness

Although assertive individuals can sometimes be regarded as grating, the trait of assertiveness is essential in building ethical cultures. In any group, the pressure to conform is high. As a result, the default is often not to question decisions – much less ethically questionable ones. Assertive individuals are the ones who can prevent such groupthink by standing up to the pressures of conformity even (or especially) when doing so carries risk.

6. Proactivity

Individuals with a proactive personality feel less constrained by situational forces. When it comes to ethical issues, this tendency helps them be more active in keeping a moral course. Research has shown that employees with a proactive personality engage more often and more quickly in acts of whistle-blowing. Other research has found this to be even more likely in cases where the companies' stated ethical values conflict with what's happening. In other words, when companies are serious in stressing the importance of an ethical culture, those employees with a proactive personality will be extremely useful in voicing any initial ethical failures or threats to the companies' integrity..

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