Ethical Issues in the Employer-Employee Relationship

A survey by Walker Information Inc. in association with the Society of Financial Service Professionals, March 2000

Background

- The survey was administered via telephone by Walker Information
- It was conducted from February 7 through February 21, 2000.
- Respondents were screened to be at least 21 years old, working with their current employer for at least one year and from organizations with at least 100 employees.
- Telephone interviews were completed with a cross-section of 557 American working adults, and a sample of Senior Executives.
- The breakdown of the combined samples by level of responsibility is as follows: 333 individual contributors, 186 Supervisor/Middle Managers, 79 Executive/Senior managers, and 42 Presidents/CEOs.

Study Results

- About 60% of employees and executives surveyed said they believe taking office supplies home for personal use is unethical; less than half considered sending personal e-mails from their desk to be unethical.
- About 40% of employees believed their employers are committing a serious ethics breach when they monitor their e-mails; only 33% of their employers agreed.
- Using e-mail to harass co-workers was the most serious breach of ethics by individual employees, according to 91% of the employees surveyed and - 94% of their employers.
- Regarding falsifying experience on a resume, 91% of employers said it was unethical compared with 81% of employees.

Some Summary Conclusions

- The survey uncovered similarities in the way workers rate the seriousness of various unethical employer practices and employee behaviors.
- Most employers and employees agree that violating the company's written code of ethics, although the behavior may not be illegal, justifies termination.
- The most serious employer ethical violation cited was making misleading promises to employees and customers. A majority of employees were also concerned about employer access to their personal health and credit records.
- Office Supply Misuse Outweighs E-Mail Abuse according to employers.

More information about this survey could be obtained from: Walker Information
Indianapolis, Indiana (Sales, Client Service, Telephone Call Center, Focus Group Facilities) 3939 Priority