

“Whistleblowing” and It’s Effects

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The topic of whistleblowing is one that is filled with controversy and ethical concerns. When an employee discovers actions in their workplace that are illegal, unethical or immoral, they have a difficult decision to make about how to solve the problem. One solution to the problem could be found in whistleblowing. Whistleblowing is the term used to describe the employee’s decision to inform an authority, whether it is their boss, the media or a government official, of the problem they have discovered. Before that person can come to their decision however, he or she has many ethical considerations to think about. Many people struggle with the choice to reveal the truth or to just stay out of it. It is a difficult situation that an employee can find themselves in unfortunately. Once it has been done though, there are many benefits to both the workplace, and society. Whistleblowing is an effective method for the detection of fraudulent activities and can even help with its prevention. As people grow up, they are taught that “tattle-tale-ing” is wrong but in some cases it is needed, as it is in cases of whistleblowing.

Many people faced with the decision of whistleblowing have a difficult time seeing that choice as anything but “tattle-tale-ing” or “snitching.” In truth though, it is much different. “Tattle-tale-ing” is often the result of childish tempers or pouts used to take the blame off of themselves. The child wants to get somebody else in trouble for their actions. It is not like that with whistleblowing. While the employee does want the culprit to be blamed, it is not a direct attack against that person; they simply want the illegal or unethical actions of that person to be stopped. One concern that the employee often has is that they would be betraying their fellow employees or their company. Employees are supposed to work together and nobody wants to be seen as the person who turned their back on the team. The employee will have a complicated choice to make between their loyalties to their fellow employees and the ethical obligation that

they have to expose the truth. While they know that the actions occurring are wrong and need to be revealed, they may not want to be the one to do it. They are probably concerned with the consequences that their actions will have. They could be shunned, lose the trust of coworkers and even lose their job. The person blowing the whistle is not usually affected personally by the illegal actions but simply aware of them and wants to alert others. He or she is merely the messenger that can inform other people who can do something to solve the matter. Many people still associate whistleblowing with “tattle-tale-ing” however and that is why it has such a negative reputation. People don’t realize the positive effects of whistleblowing can save money, jobs, the reputation of the company and sometimes even lives.

Whistleblowing has many positive effects. Carefully considered whistleblowing can lead to the end of unethical business practices. If someone is stealing money from the company, that action can be stopped and the money can be returned if the authorities are notified. Sometimes huge amounts of money are misappropriated. For example, in the Sponsorship Scandal, millions of dollars were put into the wrong hands but thanks to Allan Cutler and many others, the authorities were alerted and the activities were stopped. Even though he knew he would lose his position, Mr. Cutler did the right thing and spoke up about the improper documents that the government was procuring. Not only money can be saved through whistleblowing but severe damage to the environment has been stopped as well. Employees have come forward with the knowledge that the company they work for has been knowingly breaking laws and polluting water systems or dumping toxic wastes in areas that they shouldn’t be. When these people come forward, the pollution, as well as the damage to the environment, can be stopped. Most importantly, whistleblowing can save lives. Every day, people all over the world trust doctors, nurses and medical staff with their lives and the lives of those they love. If one of those

individuals is acting unethically with patients or being negligent, someone needs to be alerted.

These people can save lives but if they are careless, they can also contribute to deaths.

Whistleblowing is extremely important in this area to make sure that lives *are* saved and patients receive only the best care. Whistleblowing is an effective method for stopping all of these unethical, illegal and dangerous actions.

Whistleblowers provide a warning system that can alert the authorities of illegal actions before it is too late. If no one is aware that there is a problem with the business dealings of a company, nothing will be done to stop it. Once the authorities are aware that there is a problem though, they can try their best to remedy it. Whistleblowing can inform the authorities that need to know, about unethical business dealings, fraud, corruption, damage being done to the environment, and medical negligence. Often, whistleblowing is the only way that these activities can be brought into the open. It is a very important part of the detection of these actions and can also help with their prevention. If a person is contemplating trying to steal money or slip money to a friend or family member, the possibility of being found out will weigh heavily on their mind. Knowing that somebody could blow the whistle on them will make them doubt the intelligence of the actions they are thinking about. Nobody likes to get caught so people usually try to avoid it by staying out of activities and situations they would be ashamed to be caught in. The possibility that somebody would discover their actions and report them would be a heavy deterrent from fraudulent activities. Whistleblowing is sometimes needed in society to keep people and businesses working in ethical and acceptable manners.

Whistleblowing may have a negative image to some people but it is an important and needed action in today's society. The concept of whistleblowing is quite controversial because it makes people choose between doing what is right and doing what is easy. The easy thing to do is

to just stay out of it and let somebody else take care of it. The right thing to do is to come forward with the knowledge of illegal or unethical actions. Unfortunately, doing the right thing, blowing the whistle, is in no way easy and requires the teller to have courage and tenacity. Blowing the whistle puts a person in a very uncomfortable situation because many people see them as traitors to the company or group. They may lose their job, friends and even to some extent, their reputation. Thanks to the people that do have the guts to come forward however, many unethical problems have been resolved. Thanks to them, the people responsible for those actions can be apprehended and thanks to them, cases of fraud can be detected and prevented. Informing the authorities of a wrongful deed is always the right thing to do, and whistleblowing, though sometimes seen as wrong and simply a glorified case of “tattle-tale-ing,” really is the right thing to do.

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