

Human Resource Management

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What Is an Ethic Code?

According to Dessler (2013), an ethic code is a set of principles governing the conduct or behaviors of an individual or that of a group. These principles are used in making a decision on what and how the behaviors should be. Ethical conduct largely depends on the frame reference of an individual (Dessler, 2013). Dessler (2013) asserts that ethical behaviors are not always legal and legal behaviors sometimes may fail to be ethical. For instance, legalized segregations were once challenged by civil rights movements, which classified such conducts as civil disobedience behaviors (Dessler, 2013). This later resulted in the society changing the ethical and legal attitudes towards discrimination legality.

What Methods Do Firms Use to Monitor Employees and Ensure Their Compliance with Ethic Codes?

Employee monitoring reassures the employers that the employees' behaviors are in line with the ethic codes outlined by any organization. Employers have a duty to ensure that their workers comply with the set ethic codes. According to Dessler (2013), monitoring improves productivity, protects computers from viruses, detects any leaks of critical information that is confidential and guards against harassment suits and illegal actions that may result from employees' misuse of information. Monitoring is becoming commonplace in many organizations today. Employers have the right to access employees' internet screens and read their emails in order to monitor their productivity, including other activities (Dessler, 2013). Usually, employers can monitor the employees' Internet usage, e-mail activities, and telephone calls to check whether the ethic codes are being followed (Dessler, 2013). However, they should notify their employees before performing any form of monitoring.

Monitoring employees using electronic means, however, raises ethical and privacy issues. For instance, electronic performance monitoring (EPM) allows the supervisor to monitor the amount of data processed by each employee on a daily basis (Dessler, 2013). In the United states, millions of workers have their performance monitored using electronic means, and this has triggered legislations aimed at having the employees receiving prior notifications when such strategies are used. Wireless communications and cell phones have enhanced EPM, and employers can use GPS to check the whereabouts of their employees (Dessler, 2013). The U.S. federal government now requires that cell phones have GPS functionalities and this increases the number of employees directly monitored by their employers. An increasing number of employers now use biometric scanners to ensure that the same employee clocking in the morning is the actual one in the records.

Workplace monitoring is faced by two key legal restrictions: the common law protection against privacy invasion and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) (Dessler, 2013). Common law protection against privacy invasion have not been documented as laws, although they demonstrate the worthiness of the many years of decisions that have been made by judges. The ECPA was intended by the Congress to deny monitoring and interception of wire and oral communications (Dessler, 2013). Employers have legal reasons for using electronic monitoring strategies on their employees. For instance, it is practical for an employer to use the strategies for employees who use the organization's computers to download and swap music files. This practice can easily result in the employer being involved in legal suits. In general, employee monitoring largely improves the employees' productive in firms and reassures that the employees are following the ethic codes specified by the organization.

References

Dessler, G. (2013). *Human resources management (13th ed)*. New Jersey: Pearson Education