

2011 National Business Ethics Survey

Ethics Resource Center

2011

Objective:

This survey is done every other year to “provide business leaders with a snapshot of trends regarding workplace ethics”. The survey also identifies “strategies that business leaders can adopt to strengthen the ethical cultures of their businesses”.

Methodology:

4,800 employees were polled, all of whom were 18 years old or over and worked at least 20 hours per week. 4,683 of these employees worked in the for-profit sector, and their responses were used.

Key Findings:

- 45% of employees witnessed misconduct at work, a record low for this study (down from 49% in 2009)
- 65% of respondents witnessed bad behavior, a record high for this survey (up from 63% in 2009)
- 22% of employees who reported misconduct say they experienced retaliation
- 13% of respondents perceived pressure to compromise standards in order to do their jobs
- 42% of companies have weak ethics cultures
- 34% of employees say management watches them more closely than in the past
- 42% of employees say their company has increased efforts to raise awareness about ethics
- 30% of employees agree that bad actors in their company are laying low because of fears about the recession
- Active social networkers report far more negative experiences in their workplaces
- Active social networkers are 32% more likely to feel pressure to compromise ethics standards than less active social networkers and non-networkers
- 56% of active networkers say they experienced retaliation, compared to only 18% of less active social networkers and non-networkers
- Active social networkers show a higher tolerance for certain activities that could be considered questionable

Conclusion:

According to the survey results, employees are doing the right thing more than ever before, but some are experiencing more retaliation or pressure than in the past.

[**Full Report**](#)