Instilling Ethical Values in Large Corporations

Center for Business Ethics, Bentley College
Journal of Business Ethics, November 1992.

OBJECTIVE:

This is a follow-up survey to another survey 'Are Corporations Institutionalizing Ethics?' This survey was done to find out what companies have done to build ethical values within their institution.

METHODS USED:

A questionnaire was sent to the CEOs of Fortune 1000 Industrial and Service Companies. 24% (244 companies) responded to the survey.

KEY FINDINGS:

- 93% (192 of 207 responses) of the companies have been taking steps to incorporate ethical values and concerns within their organization.
- 95% companies want to be socially responsible. 94% want to provide guidelines for conduct to incorporate ethics within their companies and 79% want to ensure compliance with the laws. (Total 216 responses for each case.)
- 96% (42% very satisfactory) of the companies which have taken steps to incorporate ethics are satisfied with their progress so far. (Total 232 responses.)
- 93% companies (212 of 229 responses) use a code of ethics to integrate ethical values into their corporation. 52% use training workshops in ethics.
- Training regarding corporate ethics is largely addressed to senior management and salaried employees as compared to hourly employees.
- Almost 100% (224 responses) of the companies communicate ethical policies to their employees in the form of printed material.
- 89% companies (199 of 224 responses) use dismissals as a means to enforce ethical policies. 44% use demotion from existing positions.
- Social Audits performed within a company usually have 'Equal Opportunity Employment' (91%), 'Compliance with Laws and Regulations' (84%) and 'Workplace Safety' (72%) included in their reports. (Total 124 responses)
- Audit Information is declared mostly to executive officers (77%) of the time.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion to this survey, it's clear that large corporations are more likely to instill ethical values in their corporations now as in the past. Having ethics committees and in-house training in ethics are the most common practices in achieving the ethics objective of companies.

LINKS:

Center for Business Ethics
Full Document of the Survey