Business Ethics: Issues You May Face

As an employee or a manager working in either the legal office or engineering department, it would have been pretty difficult to prevent this kind of incident. I am not sure that you could have prevented it in its entirety. In order to have prevented this type of incident, you would have needed much intimate knowledge of the operation and its people. The company would have had to only hire ethical people with a strong set of core values. “A decision is ethical if it satisfies certain commonly accepted measures of utility (e.g., greatest good for the largest number), or commonly accepted measure of motivating or duty (e.g., authenticity)” (Jayaraman & Min, 1993). There is no real test that will truly tell you who someone is, only time. “One has to find out, explore, discover. Creative problem solving and anticipating unintended consequences” (Jayaraman & Min, 1993) This is why you could not have stopped what happened in Volkswagen’s case. I believe there probably were steps that could have been taken to mitigate the potential of an incident like this happening.

The first issue I would address would be to suggest creating a set of core values for the company to promote and lead as an example. As the CEO of any company, you are responsible for what the employees and company stand for. An organization set’s the values through a collaborative process that runs thru all levels within the company. Each and every person that is hired needs to believe in what they are doing and be taught by example and teach the core values. The reason is so every person has “buy in” into the company. When organization values and employee values merge the outcome is devotion. Employees who are united under a set of core values will provide multiple opportunities. “Bringing people together from di?erent perspectives in one way allow them to appreciate one another’s perspectives enhances the design and implementation of policies”(Feldman, M. S, 2006). By starting with this type of structure it would have helped in preventing the Volkswagen incident. As the manager, you need your employees to want to follow you and believe in the company they are working for. This usually means that they trust that you have their best interest in mind. If this is the case, then it is less likely that they would leave.

The second issue is to become a credible leader in your organization. “Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (MacArthur, 2010, 1 Peter 5:3). Credibility is when what you say matches up to what you do. Think about how devastating it would be for an organization not to be credible, it could bring down company's and potentially put many employees out of a job, and cause financial chaos to all the stockholders and investors. Let me see if I can put it into perspective for you. You own a donut shop and you are open from 5am-8pm. Every morning you open up at 9am because you oversleep. Don’t you think you would lose many of your customers? Absolutely, the reason is that you are not credible as a business, by not being true or consistent by example. When you first meet someone, do you automatically trust them? You typically watch a person and how they act, carry themselves, and speak to people before you look to trust someone. “You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?” (MacArthur, 2010, Matthew 7:16). Once you have established that the “fruits” are being bared you will start trusting that person.

The third issue I would ask is to be a CEO you must be trustworthy. After you have established

credibility you can now move onto trust. Trust is very important and the cornerstone of any relationship and or organization. The employees have to have trust in knowing that the CEO is doing what is best for them and the organization. The CEO has to trust that the employees are doing what is best for him and the organization also. Trust is a two-way street and none of it happens overnight. Take a look at the incident at Volkswagen; it is apparent that trust, credibility, and values were major issue. A true leader serves and protects those in his or her flock. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves (MacArthur, 2010, Philippines 2:3). Having a servant leadership mentality is how you can inspire people to want to follow you. The most influential leader in our history is Jesus. Leadership is having the ability to influence someone to accomplish any task. They accomplish this task not because you told them to, but because they want to. This is exactly what Jesus accomplished while on earth. He worked, served, and bled with and for his people. The words he spoke were always followed through with action. Out of all the people that followed him, only one betrayed him.

As the CEO of the company, I would express my apologies to my customers, stockholders, and anyone else who stands by and supports the Volkswagen Company. As the CEO I would have acted swiftly and with prejudice to remove all involved in this incident There is an inherent responsibility I have as the CEO to ensure that the safety of our vehicles can be trusted by our customers and their families. If our customer's loyalty is misplaced by distrust in our company then we are faced with the difficult road of trying to regain the loyalty and trust back from our customers, which could and can take many years. I would replace the existing members of the board with members who are not engineers since the existing board members are engineers.

What happened at Volkswagen unfortunate as it was could and can happen anywhere and in any type of business. People are by nature evil and are easily tempted. This does not mean that there are not steps that an organization can take to mitigate potential issues. This is why you have to set up core values, establish credibility and develop trust throughout the company.

References

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