

Chapter 8

Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility in Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, it is vital to draw attention to how ethics and social responsibility should be present in the management of organizations. One of the main functions affected is human resources, so we need to know how ethics affects their management and the implications that the incorporation of social responsibility has in this role. In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility arises because companies' action affects or may be influenced by relationship with stakeholders, so the engagement with them in support of the social responsibility of an organization should be guided by ethical criteria and arise from dialogue with them. Therefore, this chapter attempts to answer that need and meet the following objectives: Generate a sensitivity to the moral dimension inherent to everything human and social; draw attention to the ethical implications of decision making in the company and present the instruments that can be used to promote ethical behavior in the organization; and show how to integrate social, economic and environmental concerns into decision making processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays when news of corruption, evictions, unemployment, poverty and increasing inequalities appear in all areas, it is vital to draw attention to how ethics and social responsibility should be present in the management of organizations. One of the main functions for their quantitative and qualitative impact is the management of human resources, thus the need to know how ethics affects the management of human resources and the implications that the incorporation of social responsibility has in this role.

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In a complex world characterized by globalization, new technologies, time pressure, continuous innovation and a constantly changing environment, it is necessary to give consideration to ethical criteria in order to guide human behavior, for both personal and business decisions, because behind them is the human being who is present in all of them.

The values to be considered in these criteria depend on the beliefs, culture and circumstances. What is important is to reflect on the fact that decisions can have different outcomes depending on the values that are put into play and the importance given to some versus others.

Business ethics has to guide any event, from conception of a relation of ethics to corporate action called “moderate realism”, in which it is considered that the action affects the people involved in it from the perspective of human development, hence that every action has an ethical component.

In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arises because that corporate action affects or may be influenced by its relationship with stakeholders, so that the engagement with them in support of the social responsibility of an organization should be guided by ethical criteria and arise from dialogue with them.

One group of unquestionable interest in any organization is the staff or group of workers, for which reason we must ask what implications do companies need to assume for socially responsible commitment to these stakeholders.

Despite its importance, social activist Mark Albion explained that “business schools do not lead best practices, they adapt when students and alumni clamor for more attention to such topics as ethics, corporate social responsibility and globalization” (Galagan, 2009, 27). This has resulted in an increased awareness on behalf of companies to have staff trained in ethics and social responsibility, leading to a demand for more specific training about business ethics and CSR, and therefore, its incorporation into the curriculum of master programs as a core subject in the training of any professional (Cook, Holt & Reagan, 2014).

This chapter attempts to answer that need and meet the following objectives:

- Generate a sensitivity to the moral dimension inherent to everything human and social.
- Draw attention to the ethical implications of decision making in the company and present the instruments that can be used to promote ethical behavior in the organization.
- Show one how to integrate social, economic and environmental concerns into decision making processes.

Therefore, one of the initial sections discusses the incorporation of ethics into organizations and establishes its relationship to social responsibility. Later, the concept of social responsibility and its evolution is presented. Following, reference is made to the need to manage relationships with stakeholders paying special attention to the human resources of the organization, ending with an analysis of the main aspects that are part of an organization’s commitment to its staff and which therefore should be given special attention in human resource management.

Questions that lead to reflection and knowledge of reality related to the field of study are raised in this chapter.

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