

Compliance & Ethics Discussion Topics

Celebrate Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week

November 1-7, 2020

Use these compliance and ethics discussion topics to start conversations within your organization and reinforce your company's policies and procedures.

Ideas for use

Post a question and answer to your organization's intranet each day of Corporate Compliance & Ethics week.

Share a question via internal email communications and have your employees submit responses.

Use the questions in a meeting to spark conversations and reinforce your organization's policies and procedures.



Q1: An employee has a part-time job at night and needs to make copies for his PT job. It is only about 10 copies and he will leave five dollars for the copies he makes. He can't really see that there is an issue since he is paying for the copies. What do you think?

Even one copy for another job would be a conflict of interest. Always think about the perception of others. It's best to go to the nearest copy center and pay for the copies to be made.

Q2: Your company, along with other companies, is sponsoring a concert to support a worthy cause. The concert organizer offers you box seats and dinner at the event. What should you do?

Tell the concert organizer that you will have to check with your organization's policy to see if you can accept this gift. Most organizations have a policy around accepting gifts and what to do in this situation. If there is a policy, usually there are limitations around gifts and what the employee should do in this situation.

Q3: The company is looking to make a large order of pencils. Your brother is in the pencil business and has asked you for any hints and tips you can provide to help him win the bid. What should you do?

Tell him that you really can't give him inside information because it would violate your duty to the company in getting a fair bidding process. If you are involved in the purchase decision, let your manager know that your brother is bidding on the tender. He or she may decide to recuse you from the purchase process.

Q4: You happen to be surfing a social website and you come across a negative comment about your organization that you believe is false. You want to respond and set the record straight. What should you do?

Unless you are authorized to speak on behalf of your organization, you should not respond. However, you should note the item and report it to your organization's Public Relations Department or Legal. They will decide how best to respond.

Q5: A coworker tells you she needs to leave work a few minutes early to catch her son's high school game. She asks if you could punch out her timecard when you leave at the end of the shift. What should you do?

Be completely honest with her explaining not only are you uncomfortable with her request to falsify her time card and risk both of you getting fired, but if she needs to leave early she should do so with the supervisor's knowledge and approval. It's never right to lie regardless of the circumstances.

Q6: While at a business dinner meeting with a potential customer you want to offer the wine list to your guest and ask him to order the wine for dinner. Should you out of respect for your guest?

No, as the host you need to control the business meeting and not take any unnecessary risk that your guest might order a very expensive bottle. Instead, ask your guest what kind of wine they prefer, and you order the bottle consistent with your organization's business meeting guidelines.

Q7: A finance Vice President directs you to short cut your analysis and file a report that understates what the company owes the government. He says that no one really read these, and the company has lost money on other government projects, and all this does is even things out. What should you do?

Contact the compliance officer and let them know what the Vice President has asked you to do. Never file a false report.

Q8: Your direct manager says she is too busy to complete her annual compliance training. She knows the topic well, and even taught you something about it. She gives you her sign-in credentials and tells you to take the training for her. What should you do?

Since all employees are required to take training, you cannot take the training for her. Tell her you can't do that. If she insists, let the compliance office know what is happening.

Q9: Your division is falling behind in sales. To help remedy this your manager has come up with a program in which customers are being moved into a new "premium customer" program in which their order will automatically be increased by 10% but the price will increase by 5%. Customers will be automatically be enrolled in the program and will be notified when their new order arrives. If they call and complain they will be able to opt out but must return the 10% extra they received.

Not informing the customers and forcing them into a more expensive purchase is unethical. In addition, it can do serious reputational damage to the company.