

NEWS RELEASE

NEW BEST PRACTICE GUIDE ON EFFECTIVE 'SPEAK UP' PROCEDURES

London, March 30, 2007: A practical guide for businesses on how to develop and operate an effective Speak Up policy is published today by the Institute of Business Ethics. This is the first of the IBE Good Practice Guides - a series of booklets on practical aspects of ethical programmes.

This guide points out that, according to IBE research, a quarter of employees are aware of dishonest practices at work, but of that quarter less than half have reported it. Organisations need to provide effective mechanisms to encourage their staff to speak out against any wrong doing without fear of retaliation.

An effective Speak Up policy, sometimes called a whistleblowing policy, will encourage employees to raise concerns internally about anything they believe to be unethical or unlawful, in order to prevent it becoming a more serious problem. It also sets out how the organisation commits to handling concerns.

In the guide, entitled Speak Up Procedures, the IBE outlines a number of key factors that contribute to an effective Speak Up policy. It will:

- Be part of an established ethics policy
- Communicate the organisation's commitment to supporting those who speak up
- Give assurances of confidentiality, and if necessary, anonymity
- Give explicit reassurance against retaliation
- Ensure that all calls are properly investigated and give individual feedback
- Communicate generically on the outcomes to encourage others to come forward
- Be piloted internally, with training in its use and implementation

"A Board cannot realistically know everything that is going on in a business. But they can ensure that there is a policy and a process that encourages people to speak up when they discover what they believe to be wrongdoing. Employees need to feel confident that any concern they raise will be listened to and that they will be supported by their organisation if they raise it, on the basis that 'every call counts'," said Philippa Foster Back, Director of the IBE.

The report includes details of Speak Up procedures, drawn from a survey of good practice in large companies. A checklist for setting up an effective Speak Up policy and handling calls are also provided.

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Notes:

Further information or copies of the report
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IBE Good Practice Guide: SPEAK UP PROCEDURES

The IBE Good Practice Guides offer practical assistance and guidance for making ethics policies and programmes effective.

Edited by Katherine Bradshaw

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Available from www.ibe.org.uk

The Institute of Business Ethics was established by business in 1986 to encourage high standards of business behaviour based on ethical values. The IBE aims to lead the dissemination of knowledge and good practice in business ethics. It is a registered charity.

- We raise public awareness of the importance of doing business ethically.
- We help organisations to strengthen their ethics culture and encourage high standards of business behaviour based on ethical values. We assist in the development, implementation and embedding of effective and relevant ethics and corporate responsibility policies and programmes. We help organisations to provide guidance to staff and build relationships of trust with their principal stakeholders.
- We collaborate with other UK and international organisations with interests and expertise in business ethics.

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