

# 5 STEPS TO COMMUNICATING AN ETHICS REPORTING SYSTEM

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# About WhistleBlower Security



## Making Good Companies Better

WhistleBlower Security Inc. is a Canadian based global provider of customized ethics reporting services dedicated to safeguarding businesses against risk, and committed to promoting a culture of integrity, collaboration and transparency for our employees and clients. WhistleBlower's 24/7/365 hotline, reporting and analytic solutions are combined with advanced security and data management to equip organizations with the tangible tools that will deter and prevent ongoing fraud. For more information, visit [whistleblowersecurity.com](http://whistleblowersecurity.com).

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# Snapshot of Global Corporate Risk

No industry is immune to corporate risk and economic crime. In their 2014 Global Economic Crime Survey, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), gathered information from 5,128 respondents from 99 countries to obtain their results. This PwC survey has been called the most comprehensive global survey of economic crime data available to businesses. Among the report's findings, is country and sector-specific data and a summary of the industries experiencing the highest levels of fraud.<sup>1</sup>

The four industries where fraud was most reported (% of reported frauds):



In view of the global economic climate with its inherent risks, some corporations accept fraud losses and other economic crime as inevitable. However, this need not be the case. Many corporations are seeking the means to be better equipped to deal with economic crime, and a key method to mitigate corporate risk is the implementation of an ethics reporting system. Read on to learn the six steps to implement an ethics reporting system.

<sup>1</sup> PwC, "Cybercrime: protecting against the growing threat. Global Economic Survey." <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/economic-crime-survey/>

# Introduction: Communication



Communicating your Whistleblower Policy company-wide is vital to the success of your organization. Many organizations have a policy in place but have not communicated it fully to achieve its optimum success. You've taken the time to put a policy in place in order to promote your organization as a responsible employer who values its employees and you want to protect them and your business. But if your employees don't know about the program, how can it be effective?

Organizations should have a formal whistleblower policy as part of their Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics is motivated by the desire to respect and treat all employees fairly, to ensure the success of the organization. Most importantly, in order for a program to be effective, it must have the commitment of top management and leadership and must be effectively communicated to employees.

A successfully implemented whistleblower policy will help prevent retaliation against employees for expressing concerns about perceived wrongdoing. It will help the organization in the prevention of public disclosures of alleged organizational wrongdoing and it will create a more just workplace where employees will thrive.

In this eBook, we'll discuss 5 easy ways to communicate your ethics reporting program throughout your organization in order to educate and engage your employees about the program.

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## Step 1: Onboarding

As new employees **come on board**, one of the first things they should be made aware of is the organization's whistleblower policy and how it positively fits into the organization's culture. Employees need to know that it is their duty to report possible wrongdoing within the organization and they also must trust that their concerns are taken seriously and investigated. That's the motivation behind the policy.

**"The art of communication is the language of leadership."**

- James Humes

- Asset misappropriation accounts for **69%** of reported fraud
- **49%** of global CEOs are concerned about cyber threats
- Companies experiencing bribery & corruption reported losses of over US **\$5 million** in 2013



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## Step 2: Training

Employees need to know where and how to report any wrongdoing. Have **training** videos available on the internal intranet demonstrating how to access and use the whistleblower program. Remind employees about the videos and the policy in a company newsletter, or conduct a lunch and learn where you talk about sanitized cases and get your team to role model. Any opportunity to talk about the policy and what sort of ethical dilemmas your employees may encounter helps reinforce the policy as well as management's commitment to the Code.

**“A tool to empower employees to identify wrongdoing and to protect the integrity of the organization”**

Training serves to support management's commitment to a fully transparent system that protects the integrity and reputation of the organization.

### Training

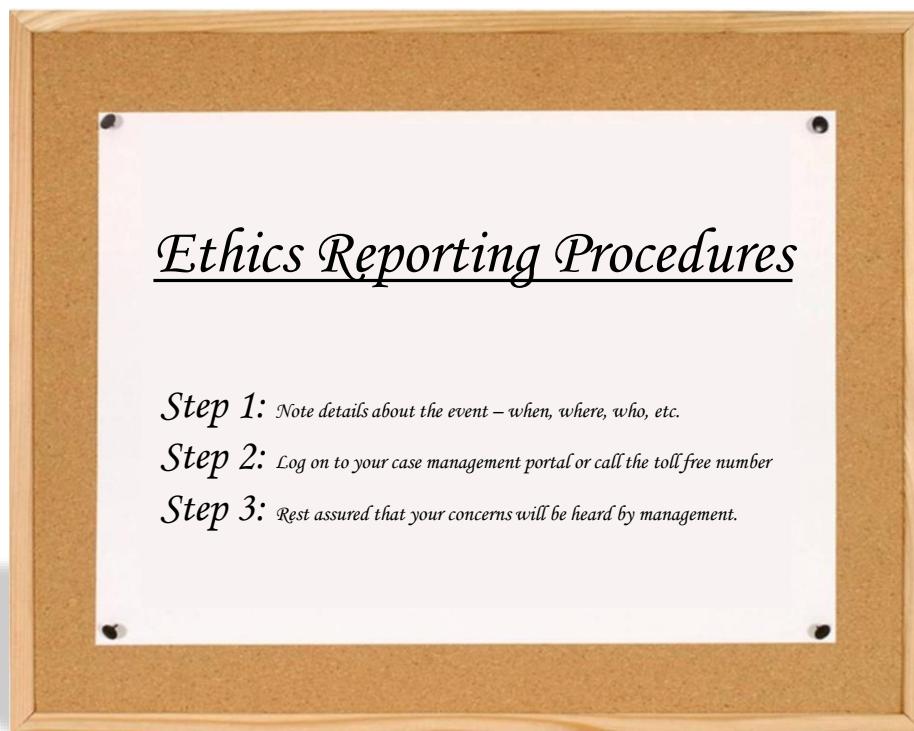
Knowledge, competencies, professional development, teaching of vocational or practical skills provides the b  
• On-the-job training take aw

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## Step 3: Posters & Literature

The use of **posters and literature** located in communal areas, on notice boards or the internal intranet, keep the program in plain sight. Supply each employee with their own wallet card with information on how and where to communicate a possible wrongdoing.



**“Visual communication can be just as effective as verbal communication”**

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## Step 4: Ethical vs. Employee Relations Issue

Employees should know the difference between an **employee relations** issue and a true **ethical dilemma**. An effective corporate Code of Ethics should outline true unethical situations that the company deems inappropriate and should warrant the use of the whistleblower program. At the same time, employees should also know whom to turn to in the organization to express their concerns about any perceived employee relation issue.

**“Ethical dilemmas rest on personal feelings—you generally know what is right or wrong”**

The longer you leave an ethical dilemma unresolved, the more chance there is for repercussions to the organization.

*“Workplace conflicts can involve competing core values, perceived inconsistencies between actions and values, or varied perceptions of reality.”*

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## Step 5: Review

Review your whistleblower policy once a year. Have employees been able to use it effectively? Have employees felt comfortable using it? Do employees feel that their concerns have been taken seriously and investigated? By reviewing and refining your Code and your communication with your staff, you can improve both the recognition of the program and reinforce when employees should use it.

**“Make sure management of your Code of Ethics is ongoing and active.”**



Your code of conduct and whistleblower policy plays a key role in establishing your organizational culture. What the code says and how it is applied can help your organization and its employees respond appropriately to corruption risks and ethical challenges posed by a continuously changing environment.

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## Conclusion

Whether a small business or a large enterprise, the implementation of an ethics reporting system can benefit any organization. When your employees are fully versed on your ethics program, how it fits into the organization's culture and how it relates to their position within the organization, your team will be sure to benefit positively and maintain a commitment to an open culture.



**Whistleblower Hotlines** should be used within any size of organization – from small operations to SOX-mandated public companies.

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## Request Your Demo

Click on the link below for a free demo or  
contact WhistleBlower Security for an industry-specific, no obligation quote today!



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**Shannon Walker** is the founder and CEO of Whistleblower Security Inc., an ethics and risk management company with clients worldwide. A frequent speaker on corporate ethics programs, internal communications programming and compliance, Shannon is one of North America's foremost experts on whistleblower and related policies.

Shannon earned a B.A. in Communications at Simon Fraser University, BC, and a M.A. in Communications at Pepperdine University, California. She has worked with numerous organizations, including the NFL's Los Angeles Raiders and at the United Nations in New York City.

As a strong advocate of community participation, Shannon has served on many Vancouver, BC-area, boards in the past. She was elected as a West Vancouver District Councillor from 2008-2011 but did not run in the 2011 election. Currently, Shannon sits on the Dr. Peter Aids Foundation Board, the Dr. Peter Housing Society Board, and the West Vancouver Community Centre Services Society Board.

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