

GET THE JOB

Reporting Something Offensive

Picture this. You overhear an offensive remark or a conversation about an unethical business practice at work that doesn't directly affect your role with the company. You feel the need to report it. Not only because it impacts business or the bottom line — because it impacts another human.

How you address it — there is no one-size-fits-all playbook — will determine if you are actually able to make positive change in your organization. You could potentially open yourself up for promotions or better job openings than the one you have.

TAKE IT TO THE TOP?

Let's say you're working on a smaller team and you notice some distasteful business practices occurring. You might think about consulting with a few of your team members to get their thoughts.

This approach, however, can spiral out of control



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quickly, especially if the people you're confiding in may not have your best interests at heart.

In a smaller company, you likely have the opportunity to go directly to your leadership team with a tough conversation. If you're worried about how they will react, trust your judgement of their ability to handle an uncomfortable topic and plan your approach accordingly.

USE HUMAN RESOURCES?

In a larger organization, you may not have immediate access to key decision-makers

within the organization.

Maybe you work remotely and have never met your chief executive officer. Maybe there are so many layers between you and the leadership team that it would take multiple, difficult efforts on your part to get your message across. And maybe even then, you may be concerned about your personal ability to influence change.

Larger companies have fully functioning human resources organizations and employee handbooks to help with these uncomfortable situations. Be sure to align your approach with the processes

that are already put in place.

KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL?

You can also consider making a confidential complaint. This can achieve your goals of reporting an unethical situation without having to directly confront an unstable or unreachable leader.

This approach can help protect you from any collateral damage that may come from reporting a sticky situation. You should be able to make a confidential claim through your human resources department, which likely has a defined practice for doing so.

WHY REPORT IT?

When it comes to workplace safety and integrity, we all play a part in maintaining a healthy, people-first culture.

Reporting incidents is essential since it raises an organization's awareness about the things that might be potentially damaging to its employees, equipment, buildings and reputation.

Furthermore, your transparency can help good leaders develop and implement corrective and preventative actions. Without the communication channel provided by incident reporting protocols, a variety of threats to safety could add up and cause an organization to undergo severe damages.

These threats, according to EHS Today, can include:

- Faulty or malfunctioning machinery/equipment.
- Improper behavior (sexual harassment, bullying, showing up to work under the influence of alcohol or banned substances).
- Lack of safety equipment, training, and controls.

Be open and honest about things you see within your company. No voice is too small, and as an employee looking to advance your career, your contribution to the overall health and safety of the company and employees will not go unnoticed.