22. Hold plenary question sessions at the introduction of a new/renewed code of conduct

Challenge

Involve as many employees as possible and let them have their say in the introduction of a new code of conduct or taking an oath (Bankierseed bv). This, of course, after employees have studied the new code of conduct. This creates a broad support within the organization and the employees have the opportunity to ask questions. To write a code of conduct, see tool no. 31 'Develop the code of conduct from within the organization'.

Solution

For the introduction of a new/updated code of conduct, ethics code or introduction of an oath, it's recommended to provide employees with the opportunity to ask questions after studying the code. This can be organized via plenary question sessions.

Make the expectations clear

Clearly indicate what the purpose of the plenary question session is and how it works. What is the topic, what preparation is expected (e.g. studying the new code), how are the questions dealt with/discussed, etc. It is a different meeting than usual. The intention is to have a conversation and that feedback is provided by the participating employees.

The question session itself

Collect the questions (in advance) and choose a number of topics or themes. Dealing with all questions is a time-consuming task and can result in lengthy discussions. Questions that are not dealt with can be published afterwards in the form of a Q&A.

Having a proper conversation works best in groups up to about 12-15 people. This requires good preparation from the compliance professional (and/or manager!) and good facilitation skills. To get the conversation going, there are different techniques: it can be based on a dilemma, the previously collected questions, or a vote can be taken. As a facilitator it is important to ask questions yourself, the compliance professional is not the one who knows everything within an organization. As a facilitator, make sure that everyone has their say. As soon as the conversation is ongoing, the participants can decide for themselves which topic is important.

This tool is close to the tool 21. "Organize a dilemma workshop" but is not the same. In this tool, it is more about making it easy for employees to contribute to the company's policy with regard to behaviour.

It is important that the compliance professional shows that something is actually happening with the input provided. For example, by publishing Q&A's. If something substantial is missing or not correctly included in the code, this must be added or changed. These types of sessions can also be a stepping stone to further explore certain topics. In any case, it is difficult to estimate in advance what the content of the follow-up should be. However, a proper follow-up is important.

In addition, these types of sessions make the code more alive and employees can better translate the code into their own work.

Actors

Compliance professionals, managers (only if they have these skills otherwise an external facilitator can also be hired), participants. The compliance professional can support the managers with suggestions, tips and/or instructions. The role and skills of the facilitator are essential for this to be a success.

Techniques

Facilitating skills

Role Compliance Professional

Facilitating, giving everyone a voice, follow up on what has emerged, coordination with managers about follow-up.