

You can't stop whistleblowers, but you can sure try

Stopping whistleblowing is best done by encouraging it

Ever since Donald Trump's call to Ukraine scandal hit media, all people can talk about are whistleblowers. All businesses, nonprofits included, are having issues with whistleblowers coming forward and revealing inside information, especially information that calls them out on not-so-ethical behavior. Many nonprofits, even larger ones such as the American Red Cross and the Humane Society of the United States, have faced an ongoing series of whistleblower situations within the past two years. With all of the chaos, it's essential to put a whistleblower policy in place...unless you want to end up like the Red Cross.

Despite an increase in whistleblowers, it's never been less safe to be one. Currently, [57%](#) of whistleblower reports are anonymous. Not a bad number, but in 2009 it was [65%](#). The question nonprofits need to ask themselves now is whether or not it's worth it to have a whistleblower policy. Those opposed to whistleblower policies claim it will encourage employees to find something to criticize.

Whistleblower policies are undoubtedly a safe and intelligent move to make. They encourage employees to go to leadership in the organization instead of jumping to the media. Organizations can make it known they want to hear feedback, positive or not.

[Only 41%](#) of nonprofits have whistleblower policies, but it's easy to find guidelines on how to create one. The pieces of whistleblower policies secure it as a smart move to make. The policy enables paths and outlets for employees to follow when a concern arises. Individuals or groups accused of unethical behavior don't have the option to fight directly against the "whistleblowing" individual. Whistleblower policies designate a specific employee to act as a compliance officer. All people involved in the situation are assumed to act in good faith and are consistently confidential. Whatever issues arise are sent through a clear, pre-defined process explaining the lengths an organization will go to fix them.

It's hard to find an issue with implementing a whistleblower policy. The claim that it will only encourage criticism is void because those criticisms will go through a process that works to fix them. In fact, more issues headed early on can prevent build-up into a larger problem. Nonprofits should implement a whistleblower policy because there is no loss to implementing one. If the ten minutes it takes to write down a policy makes you step away, you deserve that whistle.