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Human Rights Training & Engagement

Employee training and engagement on human rights is a critical component of a company's overall approach to human rights. This guide helps companies design and deliver effective human rights trainings by segmenting their audiences, selecting the right content, and choosing the best methods to conduct their trainings and engage their employees.

Effective human rights training and engagement helps companies:

- » Integrate an understanding of human rights throughout business operations.
- » Proactively identify regions or departments with high exposure to human rights risks or opportunities.
- » Ensure that all relevant staff and partners are aware of and complying with human rights policies and commitments.

Getting Started

To get started, companies should:

- » **Prioritize:** Identify regions or departments where impacts on human rights could be severe, and train those groups first.
- » **Know what's working:** Identify whether established training programs in your company could include human rights.
- » **Identify the Who, What, and How:** *Who* in your company needs human rights training? *What* exactly do they need to know? *How* should that information be conveyed?

Who Should Be Trained?

Segmentation Criteria

Trainings tailored for specific audiences can be more effective. Possible segmentation criteria include:

- » Country level
- » Site level
- » Job function/department
- » Risk level of function/department
- » Timing—train when hired or promoted

Sample Target Groups

- » Legal, Security, Government Affairs
- » Senior Management, Human Resources, Communications, Finance
- » Line Managers, Country Managers, Customer Support, Product Engineers
- » Supply Chain, Vendors, Buyers
- » Community Relations; Health, Environment, and Safety

Hybrid Approach

- » Several companies start with companywide training and then develop trainings for specific groups.

About BSR

BSR is a global nonprofit organization that works with its network of more than 250 member companies to build a just and sustainable world. From its offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR develops sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. Visit www.bsr.org for more information about BSR's more than 20 years of leadership in sustainability.

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What Should Be in Human Rights Training?

While each company should tailor human rights training and engagement to its operating context, the following components should be relevant for all:

Explain the Human Rights Context

- » Define international standards: International Bill of Human Rights, International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- » Include relevant industry standards, such as the EICC and Voluntary Principles.
- » Describe all relevant human rights company policies, such as ethics, CSR, human resources, and suppliers.

Describe How Human Rights Apply to the Company

- » What is the business case for understanding human rights at your company?
- » How can understanding human rights impacts enhance decision making, lower risk, and help your company take advantage of opportunities to improve human rights?
- » What are stakeholders' expectations regarding human rights at your company?

Outline How Human Rights Are Relevant to Individuals

- » Use scenarios, role playing, or case studies to help individuals understand their personal responsibility for respecting human rights.
- » Include specific examples of how human rights considerations can make individuals' jobs easier, as well as the consequences for non-compliance.

Detail What's in it for Human Rights

- » Who are the rights holders affected by company decisions, and how do they benefit from rights-conscious decisions?

How Should Human Rights Training Be Conducted?

There are several approaches to human rights training. Companies should use a combination of the following methods to achieve the best results:

- » **Instructor-led:** Training course designed and delivered by internal or external experts.
- » **Train-the-trainers:** Equip an internal network of champions with the skills and training to teach human rights to their colleagues.
- » **E-learning:** Web-based trainings can be efficiently disseminated.
- » **Videos:** Short (anywhere from two- to 20-minute videos) can include messages from senior management and show scenes and role plays.
- » **Online blogs or forums:** Start discussions about real human rights issues that come up in the company.
- » **Resource center/website:** Provide an overview of initiatives as well as news, events, and other resources related to human rights.

Tips for Effective Training & Engagement

- » Bring human rights issues to life by using real work examples and through storytelling.
- » Incentivize subject mastery through positive reinforcement and recognition.
- » Adapt content to the corporate, local, or departmental culture.
- » Establish a cross-functional Human Rights team.
- » Identify internal human rights champions who will engage their colleagues.
- » Link human rights to compliance-based issues and training.
- » Consider using innovative training methods, such as gaming and competitions, if appropriate.

Training Resources

- » **UNEP FI Human Rights** Guidance Tool for the Finance Sector
- » **IPIECA & Voluntary Principles** Training Guides
- » **UN Global Compact (UNGC)** case studies
- » **UNGC Human Rights and Business Dilemmas Forum**