

How to prevent whistleblowers

By [Deon Binneman](#)

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The three ladies that Time magazine awarded the prize of Person of the Year 2002, may have set a precedent for employees thinking that it is okay to act as whistleblowers. However, why should an employee seek that route? Should an organisation not promote open, honest and transparent sharing of ideas and problems? Unfortunately whistleblowers will thrive in an environment of closed understanding.

Here are a few tips for creating a fostering environment for openness in your own company and those of your clients:

- Create an atmosphere ("culture") in the business that encourages compliance with legal requirements.
- Set up internal systems that encourage upwards flow of information system such as a "hotline" or suggestion schemes. Use the communication system process of the Occupational Health & Safety Act representatives.
- Use email or audio voice mail system for staffers to report non-compliance to the practice. Select a respected individual to respond to calls.
- Consider an outsourced system or service to answer calls and take/forward messages such as Deloitte's Tip Offs anonymous.
- Have an issue resolution process in place to follow for every call.
- Contact counsel to preserve attorney/client privilege before an investigation starts.
- Do not retaliate or harass those who report. REWARD them!
- Follow-up with progress reports to the caller and staff if necessary.
- LISTEN to employees.
- Ask employees questions regarding compliance in evaluations and interviews.
- Encourage two-way communications on all compliance issues.
- Ask for input when developing the compliance plan for your department.
- Stay up-to-date with latest legislation and administrative changes to legislation.
- Communicate with personnel throughout the organisation regularly about compliance issues.
- Let your employees know that you care about the issues they present.
- Use the Internal Auditors and the Training department to feedback relevant information so that issues and trends can be detected.

Smouldering crises in organisations are defined as any serious business problem which is not generally known within or without the organisation, which may generate negative news coverage if or when it goes "public" and could result in fines, penalties or unbudgeted expenses.

ABOUT DEON BINNEMAN

Because your reputation matters.... Deon Binneman is a speaker, trainer and consultant in reputation management and strategic communications. As CEO & President of Repucomm he speaks locally and internationally on issues affecting corporations and CEOs. Reach him at email: deonbin@icon.co.za, Phone/Fax: +27 011 4753515, Cell: 083 425 4318.

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