

Podcast: *HR Bartender*

Episode: Dr. Christopher Bauer Talks About Ethics Training

Summary:

Welcome to the *HR Bartender* podcast! Join this casual conversation to get practical advice on being a better employee, manager, and leader. In today's episode, Sharlyn Lauby, author of the *HR Bartender* blog and host of this podcast, is back for season 3 of the podcast focused on ethics. Her guest is Dr. Christopher Bauer, a clinical psychologist with over 30 years experience as a speaker, trainer, author and consultant on professional ethics. His articles on how to build and maintain great ethics in the workplace have appeared in journals like *CEO Refresher*, *CFO Magazine* and more. He also publishes a free, weekly ethics blog that's visited by thousands of readers worldwide. Dr. Bauer has been recognized as a Certified Fraud Specialist and a Certified Speaking Professional Designation.

To begin, Dr. Bauer starts off by saying there are three things you should think about when faced with an unethical dilemma. These include whether or not it's actually an ethical dilemma, is it a legal or compliance question and what are the stated values of the organization. This does not guarantee that someone will make the best decision, but will help them make the best decision with the information available. There is more to ethics training than a code of conduct and a document to sign. He sees resistance to ethics training in two ways: people think they don't need it, or they think they want ethics training, but they really want legal updates and compliance training. Organizations lose the bottom 5-7% of their company due to fraud and abuse, which only makes a fraction of all the ethics in a corporation. Each ethics incident usually costs the company \$300,000 and if unchecked, that number will continue to pay for itself multiple times over. Next, Dr. Bauer discusses how ethics training should be seen as a process—anytime is a good time for ethics training and it needs to be repeated. The organization needs to decide on their top values and if the goal is to build a culture that supports ethics, then all of those things you're doing already need to be implemented. He suggests building ethics training literally into the application process by asking about values in job interviews. This will reinforce the ethics message and build on that.

It is important for people to differentiate between regulatory, behavioral and cultural ethics. Regulatory ethics are a better fit for virtual training, which includes more informational content like rules, expectations, consequences, etc. In-person ethics training needs to be competent training where you are giving people ways to solve problems. If you teach people the values and how to solve problems well according to their ethics training, then employees will have a good idea for what to do when there

isn't a rule for something. For live training, you have to get people engaged and interested, and have eyes in the room to monitor how the training is going. Management should have an ethics program specifically for their team, but they still need to get the same training that all of the employees receive. If there is a change in legislation and the company has to change their ethics, then their code of ethics is based on regulatory practices. Your ethics code shouldn't have to change— it is based on the enduring, most existing values in the organization. If it's not in those policies, then update it.

Connect with Dr. Christopher Bauer on [LinkedIn](#).

Connect with Sharlyn on [LinkedIn](#) and check out her [HR Bartender Blog](#).