Public Interest Legislation in Manitoba: Employee Reaction

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to do an attitudinal study of employees of the Manitoba Civil Service and public agencies in Manitoba. Manitoba has the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blower) Act, our investigation is a review of the degree such protective legislation is regarded as such by each level of the civil service. Do employees at all levels view such protective legislations as protective, or is it just political window dressing to satisfy the public concerns about the government acting and being seen to be a reasonable employer?

Our study will investigate how the current legislation could be made more effective in the opinion of the citizens it covers. What are the grass-roots perceptions of the application of the current legislation and what could be the application of improved legislation? Would more effective conflict resolution organization processes are of assistance to ensure positive results oriented business activity within the public sector, reducing the need for whistle blowing activity? What is the view of the Ombudsman’s department of the application of the legislation? Is it too cumbersome, is it meeting the intent it was set out for?

The other aspect of the study is to utilize political theory as an evaluative tool concerning what role are whistle blowers allowed to play within the political system and why they are an important element of it. Is the whistle blower an invention of the myth of a civil sociopolitical system based on an ideology of fairness? As well as such questions as: is there a different degree of social and political compliance in Manitoba compared to other provinces? What is the degree of fear in employees working for a civil sector employer? What is the level of bullying and harassment? Are the policy makers stating that there is a level of tolerance of dysfunctional behaviour by not having stricter laws of compliance? The general jurisprudential rule of the whistle blower privilege was developed to protect citizens who assist in running of public sector organization and to encourage others to do the same. The question is to what degree is this occurring and why or why not?

The constant demand on sound effective service from government demands new and unmet needs of society which include more comprehensive information, understanding and accountability of government Ministries and agencies. For society to move toward a more sustainable collaborative processes are necessary—one which engages citizenry and encourages public sector employees to come from awarding effectiveness to assist in the betterment of the organization.
Methodology

The study would need at least 200 employees in three separate Ministries willing to cooperate in the study. There would also be focus groups and individual interviews of senior level staff. All information would be kept solely confidential in the highest order. The study would start in February 2010. All questions would be vetted off of both of your departments in January. But we from BU will be the researchers and manage all research activity. Owner of the data will have to be discussed between the parties.

Future

It is our plan to do this study regardless, your involvement and support would be essential to the success of the study.

Brief Conclusion

Faster and more effective transmission of new and existing knowledge to policy - and decision-makers, and better communication of this knowledge to the public, will all be required to meet the challenge of the public sector. The above mentioned initiative is an effort in accountability to move to such a participative transparent model/s of governing. It is our hope that we may work collectively with you in this most significant study.