Ethics vs. Legality in an Organization

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In the organization context, ethics defines moral conduct or what is considered right and wrong behavior while legality concerns acting in accordance with the law. I agree with the notion that ethics are more important than legality in the organization because it improves and maintains healthy relations both among staff and with the public. When business practices are ethical, they portray the organization as a caring organization which creates an excellent public image.

An unethical but legal action would risk tarnishing the public image and reputation of an organization, especially when the public feel offended by the organization practices (Baldelomar, 2016). For example, testing medicine or doing extreme experiments on animals is unethical but a legal (allowed by law). The practice harms animal life, which is against animal rights defined by animal activists and could lead to activism against the organization and mobilization for people to boycott the products or services of the organization. Unethical practices like mistreating animals in an experiment could also result in internal conflict, for example, when some employees or leaders do not agree with the mistreatment.

Moreover, unethical and illegal practice will not only tarnish the public image of the organization but also impose legal consequences and derail the success of the business. An example of an unethical and illegal organization practice is when a food company uses an illegal and harmful ingredient in their food products. The practice is wrong because it risks the customers' health. The organization is likely to lose customer loyalty and preference, leading to lower sale even for their other different products. Again, the organization will also face legal consequences like fines, license revocation, or jail time, depending on the magnitude of the offense.

# Reference

Baldelomar, R. (2016, July 21). Where Is The Line Between Ethical And Legal? *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/raquelbaldelomar/2016/07/21/where-is-the-line-between-what-is-ethical-and-legal/#b95a969250bb