Week 6 Strategic Integration of Positive Social Change

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**Bill O Reily and 21st Century Fox**

**Q1**

One of the biggest ethical scandals to hit the news media was the Bill O Reilly and Fox news scandal. After the Harvey Weinstein scandal, this was the second major revelation regarding sexual harassment and the #MeToo movement. On April 1st, the New York Times posted a story which detailed multiple number of women’s allegation of sexual harassment against Bill O Reily. What was even more astonishing about this was that the investigation revealed that around five women were paid a total sum of thirteen million dollars by either Bill O Reilly or Fox news (Van der Linden and Panagopoulos, 2019). This was hush money so that these women do not pursue litigation against Bill O Reilly and not to go public with their harassment allegations. Due to this Bill O Reilly was finally fired from Fox News.

The cause for these harassment charges stemmed from a myriad of reasons. Specifically, each accuser had its own story to tell. The accusers were all mostly women. Furthermore, each of the accusers was either working directly under Bill O Reilly or had the chance of appearing on his show in Fox named The ‘Reily Factor. The women accused him of multiple derogatory remarks and actions. Some of the complaints cited unwanted sexual advances, lewd comments and verbal abuse from Bill O Reilly’s towards them. Out of the five women listed above, four cited complains involving sexual harassment and the last one was citing verbal abuse allegations.

These actions of Bill O Reilly and Fox news were abhorrent and had vast negative and positive aspects of the society. These allegations showed that people in power will do anything they please. This is because they understand that no one will be able to say anything to them. Moreover, if someone does get the courage and stand up for him or herself, their voice would be shut down. This is exactly what Bill O Reilly and Fox news did. Fox News knew of Bill O Reilly’s action but chose to stick to his side and worked on silencing the voices of the ones who actually needed help.

**Q2**

The primary failure in governance that could be seen within this scandal is that the company chose to secure its and its top ranking host position and this was given the first priority. Rather than bringing the accused to task, they worked on saving and securing their face through any means possible. Even if that meant silencing the voices of the women that he had hurt (Peters, 2015). This clearly indicates that the company preferred its bottom line and ratings rather than implementing an ethical decision framework within its operation. Had they done this initially this would not have come to pass.

The second failure in governance that was seen in this scandal was that the value of different stakeholders was not proportional to each other. The first time that Bill O Reilly was accused by these women, no strict action was taken against him. Whereas, the company only worked on helping him cover up those allegations. Further, when the Times report came out they still did not take any action against him. Only when advertisers started pulling out of their shows di Fox news take any action against Bill O Reilly. This shows that the company did not value its employees and its guests and value more the benefit that it was receiving from its advertisers. Again its focus was more on protecting their financial backing rather than secure the rights and complete the responsibilities that they had towards their guests and employees.

Another failure in governance that was seen during this scandal that business deals always triumph over ethics. Same was the case with this scandal because on further research by news agencies it was revealed that another reason for Fox news firing Bill O Reilly was appeasing it critics of its Sky news deal. British media regulators were actually of the view that 21st Century Fox should not be considered as a proper owner for the British broadcasting service, Sky. In order to mitigate such a risk to their deal, they chose to fire Bill O Reilly in order to appease its naysayers.

**Q3**

Within this scandal, multiple factors prevailed in the company that led to the downfall to the ethical culture and climate of the company. The executives at Fox News and Bill O Reilly had no integrity within them. This showed profusely in their actions and how they were operating the business. Bill O Reilly and Fox News did not show any senes of honesty and fairness in their actions (Morais and de Moura, 2018). This is why the ethical culture and climate within the company fell apart. This was evident when they worked hard to pay hush money to victims of Bill O Reilly’s sexual harassment victims rather than giving Bill O Reilly what he really deserved.

The second most prominent reason why the ethical culture and climate within Fox news fell apart was money. Bill O Reilly was one of the most-watched TV personalities of all time. His show garnered millions of views on every episode and every screening. This showed that he was a real earner for the company and an asset to it as well. Even when claims were brought forward against him they stood by him and helped him. This was because a lot of money was at stake. This money was from the traffic that Bill O Reilly’s show created. Rather than lose their star and the high amounts of cash that they were making the company sought to silence the victims.A culture within which money is above everything else will never be ethical.

These two were the prominent reasons for promoting an unethical culture within the company. This unethical culture was so ingrained into their framework and operations that it left no space for ethical culture to develop. From the top till the bottom, Fox News and its commentators such as Bill O Reilly have done their best to promote unethical behaviour within the company. All these reasons became the cause of the failure of ethical culture within Fox News.

**Q4**

In order to prevent such an action from occurring again, companies such as Fox News can employ ethical policies. One of the ethical policy is quite simple, Fox News needs to create a sexual harassment policy that is clear and id further implemented into its framework from top to bottom. It should define what sexual harassment is and should state that it will not be accepted in any circumstance. There should be listed a clear pathway for filing complaints against sexual harassment and that each complaint would be fully investigated. Fox News should also clarify that any actions taken against the complainant of sexual harassment would not be tolerated.

Another ethical policy would be to train its employees such as Bill O Reilly about what sexual harassment is. This should be conducted in seminars an should be done on a quarterly basis. Attendance should be made mandatory for these events for everyone. Furthermore, within these seminars, people should be taught that it is their right to work in a harassment-free environment. Moreover, employees should be encouraged to use the complaint procedure and review its progress.

Other than employees managers and executives should also be trained regarding sexual harassment. Their sessions should be separate from the employees but should also be conducted on a quarterly basis. These sessions would help to educate the people in power at Fox News regarding what sexual harassment is and they can deal with the complaints regarding sexual harassment. This will lead to the building of a culture that is ripe with ethics and morality and will decrease any chances of sexual harassment occurring within its premises.

**Q5**

If I was the leader within this company the first action or choice that I would have made when allegations of sexual harassment had surfaced, I would have conducted an investigation into the allegations made. If the investigation had resulted in proving that the harassment complaints were true, I would have fired Bill O Reilly on the spot. I would have helped the victims any way I could in any actions they would want to pursue against the accused. Furthermore, I would conduct a company-wide review to analyse the reseasoning behind the appearance of these sexual harassment allegations. This review would allow me to focus on the causes of unethical behaviour prevailing within Fox News. With the reasons identified i would revamp the company’s policy regarding sexual harassment. This revamp of the policy would focus on the reasons identified in the review for sexual harassment within the company. The policy would be framed to provide the utmost support to the victims and the highest punishment for the perpetrators. Additionally, training sessions would also be made mandatory at all levels of hierarchy within the company. This would allow for making everyone understand what sexual harassment is and how it can be removed from the workplace. They will also be informed of the complaint system in place for such actions and would be duly informed of the penalties if the allegations turn out to be true. These actions of mine, I truly believe would lead to implementing positive change within the company.

References

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