

Subject: Week 96 Learnings-Whistleblowing
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Dear All

The Donald Trump impeachment process is focusing efforts on a very important aspect – whistle blowing.

1. Whistle blowing is not new, it started in 1777, even before the adoption of the US constitution when two soldiers blew the whistle on a corrupt superior. If you look at a list of whistle blowing from the 1770s, the American armed forces leads the list with people whistle blowing against many of its leaders and practices.
2. After 9/11, the US government changed the policy and said that revealing classified information that could hurt national security is wrong. This is the challenge for current witnesses, especially government officials to come forward in the Ukraine quid pro quo case vs Trump.
3. The word comes from a simple expression which is , blowing the whistle to warn the public.
4. The word gained a positive note when Ralph Nader ran a case vs the Auto Industry. Ralph Nader wrote a book ' Unsafe at Any speed' and quoted from a number of whistle blowers about shoddy quality of the American cars. People give Nader the credit for compulsory seat belts in cars. Ralph Nader later ran unsuccessfully for the President of USA.
5. Famous whistle blowers are Edward Snowden, Mark Felt (Watergate) , Linda Tripp (vs President Clinton).
6. The most famous whistle blower case is Michael Woodford vs the Olympus company. Woodward was appointed CEO of Olympus and within 2 months he was fired saying he was unfit for the Japanese culture. In reality, he was challenging the various wrong documentation and the way expenses were being billed. This happened in 2011.
7. I heard him at the Horasis Annual conclave in 2013 and he was interviewed by ' hard talk host ' Stephen Sackur. It was a chilling interview in which he said that the moment he started the whistle blowing, he knew that two things were certain – he would get fired and next no one would hire him ever again.
8. Every company and country has a whistle blower policy. However, most do not seem to help the whistle blowers.
9. Whistle blowers are courageous people, they want to bring change and tell the truth in the interests of the company. I respect them and I believe that a company must check the facts. However, I have seen the following too.
10. The whistle blowing policy has sadly brought to the fore a number of disgruntled , gossip mongers who raise issues that are not true.
11. A person starts complaining when his performance is under scrutiny and he is put on a PIP or is asked to move on. I recently came across a post on my linked in when an ex ABG employee from the metals business was charging ABG with wrong doing. On checking I found that this person was given enough chances but didn't cut it. Once when I was running Nokia, a area sales manager complained of corruption against the regional manager since the regional manager was giving him a tough time on performance.
12. The key is to protect the whistle blowers identity and do the fact check in the most unbiased way. As leaders , it is our duty to the company not to brand people who raise the right issues. So , my message, don't be afraid to speak up, if you see something which is wrong, wrong in a way that it doesn't follow company policy.

Enjoy, wr,
shiv