

# Workplace Ethics

Wisconsin Asphalt Pavement Association  
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# Workplace Ethics

- Set of principles that forms the rules of conduct for a business and its employees
- Values driving this: honesty, fairness, integrity, professionalism, respect

Colleagues

Reliability

Company Management

Loyalty

Regulators

Trustworthy

Community/Public

Responsibility

Customers/Suppliers

Consistency

# Importance of Workplace Ethics

- Protects the interests of the company
- Protects the rights of employees
- Fosters a positive public image
- Promotes cooperation and teamwork
- Develops a culture that supports employee recruiting and retention





# Basis for Workplace Ethics

- Laws and Regulations
  - Code of Ethics for Public Officials
  - Bribery
  - Bid Rigging
  - Procurement Rules
  - OSHA, Environmental Regulations
  - Discrimination, Harassment
- Agency Policies
  - WisDOT Facilities Development Manual, Employee Handbook, Regional Office Policies



# Basis for Workplace Ethics, con't

- Professional Standards
- Company Values
  - Beliefs, missions, philosophies and goals
  - Impacted by:
    - Company structure, business purpose and complexity, regulatory burden, labor structure
    - Business priorities such as safety, quality, compliance, innovation, customer service

# Basis for Workplace Ethics, con't

- Code of Conduct
  - Relevant legal requirements, professional standards
  - Gifts to customers, suppliers, government officials
  - Use of company resources
  - Confidentiality of company information
  - Government compliance responsibilities
  - Discrimination and harassment
  - Political activity
  - Electronic communications



# Basis for Workplace Ethics, con't

- Code of Conduct, con't
  - Procedures
  - Other: preferential treatment, gossiping, dishonesty, verbal harassment
  - Whistleblower protection
- Personal Values
  - A judgment by an individual that certain things are “good” or “bad,” “important” or “unimportant”
  - Standards of behavior for determining a correct course of action when societal norms, laws, ethical standards are ambiguous or unclear

# Pressure and Ethics

## Expectations

- Deadlines
- Budget Goals
- Customer Satisfaction
- Management Directives/Goals
- Job Security

## Information Void

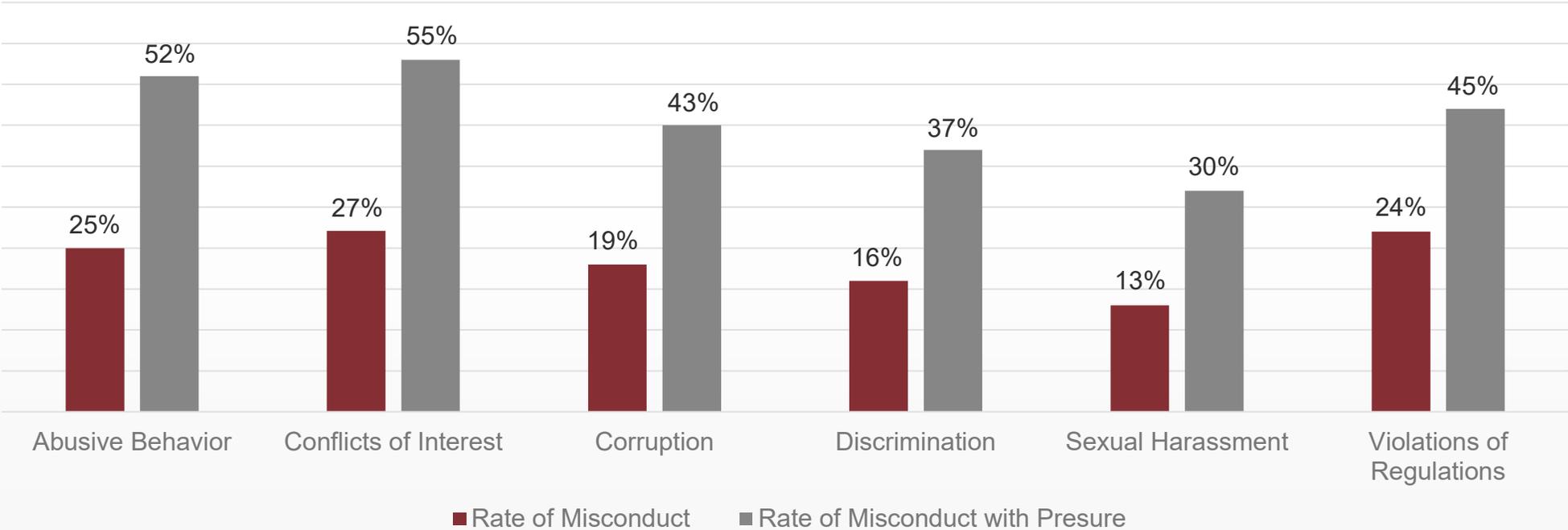
- No Code of Conduct
- No Training
- Poor Communication
- Limited Feedback

## Confusion

- Lack of Leadership
- Lack of Accountability
- Lack of Consistency
- Organizational Changes

# Pressure and Ethics

Observation of Misconduct



See Global Business Ethics Survey, Ethics & Compliance Initiative, 2020 Report 1



# Employee Confusion: Lack of Leadership

- Pressure is over three times higher for employees with a weak organizational leader than with a strong leader and over two times higher for employees with a weak direct supervisor than with a strong supervisor. Percentage of employees feeling pressure to bend the rules:



See *Ethics & Compliance Initiative, Global Business Ethics Survey, 2020 Report 1*; *Ethics & Compliance Initiative, Global Business Ethics Survey, The State of Ethics and Compliance in the Workplace, March 2021*.



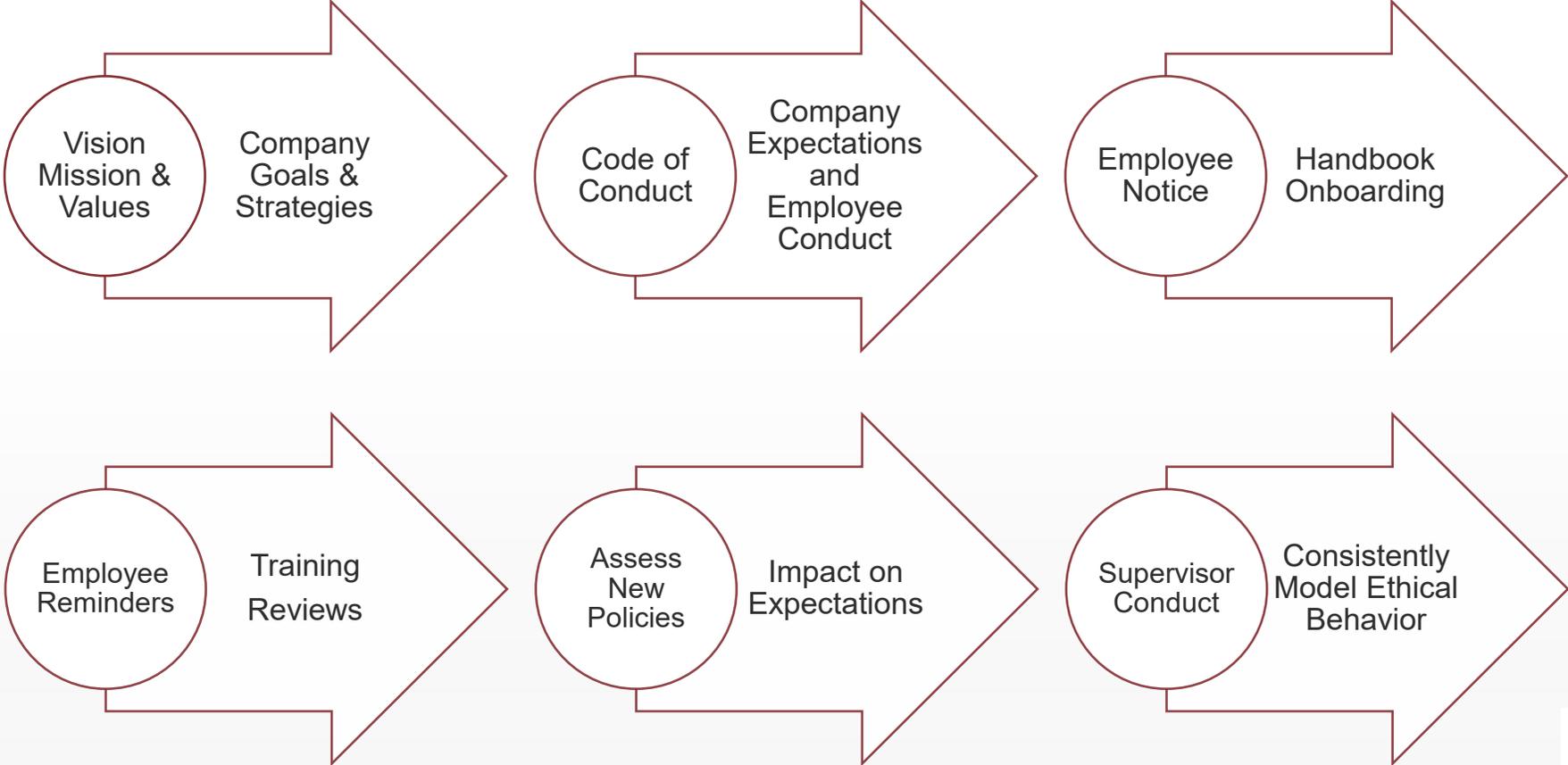
# Employee Confusion: Organizational Changes

- Employees working in organizations with four to seven significant changes in 12 months were two times as likely to say they observed misconduct than employees working in an organization without any significant changes.
- 37% of employees said that their organization had implemented new policies in response to COVID-19.
- 44% of employees said that they were experiencing more pressure compared with before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

*See Ethics & Compliance Initiative, Global Business Ethics Survey, 2020 Report 1; Ethics & Compliance Initiative, Global Business Ethics Survey, The State of Ethics and Compliance in the Workplace, March 2021.*



# Reducing the Pressure



# Ethical Decision-Making Steps

- Stop and think
- Clarify goals
- Determine facts known and unknown
- Develop options
- Consider foreseeable results of options
- Consult resources – professional standards, laws
- Consult with staff, outside resources as appropriate
- Decide the course of action and take it

*See Steps to Ethical Engineering Decisions, NSPE Ethics Reference Guide, National Society of Professional Engineers, 2020*



# Questions?

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