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Management Ethics - What A Concept!

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For as long as I can remember, there have always been tools that were available for us to use in handling "ethical situations." Most ice arenas have printed material for their particular operations that cover all kinds of ethical situations that may arise, from such simple things as what is considered right or wrong to such complex issues as sexual harassment.
One of the biggest challenges facing all industries, including ice skating and recreation, is that we don't use the tools that we have at our disposal. Failing to react or ignoring an ethical question is discouraging for the people involved and may put management into a questionable legal situation. The key to addressing the various situations that may arise is having an established set of ethical principles. These can be established in your policies and procedures, pre-employment manual and/or company disclaimers. If you wish to change the culture of your company, you may want to review all of these documents or produce some that you feel are needed.

Ethics Tools
o Code of Ethics: Your code of ethics explains the ethical rules by which your company operates. You must attempt to educate your employees and get them to buy into the purposes for your code of ethics.

o Code of Conduct: A code of conduct outlines your company's "shall" and "shall not" rules. This is especially important in our industry because families and children are a large part of our customer base. How your employees interface with customers and with each other should be instrumental in the administration of your code of conduct.

o Policies and Procedures: Use this document to detail the behavioral policies outlined in your company's code of conduct.

o Training: Schedule regular employee training sessions to review all of the ethics tools that your company has available. Produce some "what if" scenarios and then discuss the ways employees should handle those situations.

o Resolving Ethical Dilemmas such as:
- Great employee, but continuously tells off-color jokes after being asked not to do so.
- Good coach, terrible role model. Subscribes to the old saying "Do as I say, not as I do."
- Supervisor should lead by example, but never does. This situation becomes especially troublesome when he/she tells staff that they should lead by example but then doesn't follow the same code.

CYA - Cover your assets!
Believe it or not, your assets may be at risk if you do not have the ability or the tools to handle many different types of ethical situations. Do your homework and learn all you can about ethics management.

" Practical Ethics: What are practical ethics? Perhaps the most important, but sometimes overlooked, element of practical ethics is the ability to know right from wrong. This approach sounds overly simplistic, but you may be surprised by how many management personnel fail to look at the basic

approach to ethics - doing what is right. Many ice arenas do not have regular staff meetings during which "simple" right vs. wrong scenarios are discussed. If you don't hold such meetings, start. Don't get into long discussions on potential what-ifs. Look at the question head-on and determine what the "right" approach is.

" Realistic Ethics - Realistic ethics cover situations in which businesses may consider some ethical dilemmas simply irrelevant. They don't matter. They are not important. Wrong! Most of the time those situations are the ones that come back to haunt you. If you become aware of an ethical situation, handle it and be realistic about taking the direct approach to determine right from wrong.

" Ethics Programs - Ethics programs in the workplace can accomplish everything from educating your staff to helping to keep you out of more serious legal proceedings. Remember that having an ethics education program and using it are two different things.
You may be asked to prove that the policies, procedures and other programs that you have instituted to cover ethical situations have been made available to and reviewed with your staff. Document when any such material or program has been presented or distributed to all of your employees. Another important thing to remember is that "all employees" includes all management personnel as well.

" Managing Ethics - Whether you are the CEO, COO, facility manager, skating director or any other part of the management team, you must be a part of the process to address ethical problems when they arise. Don't become part of the problem; do all you can to be a part of the solution