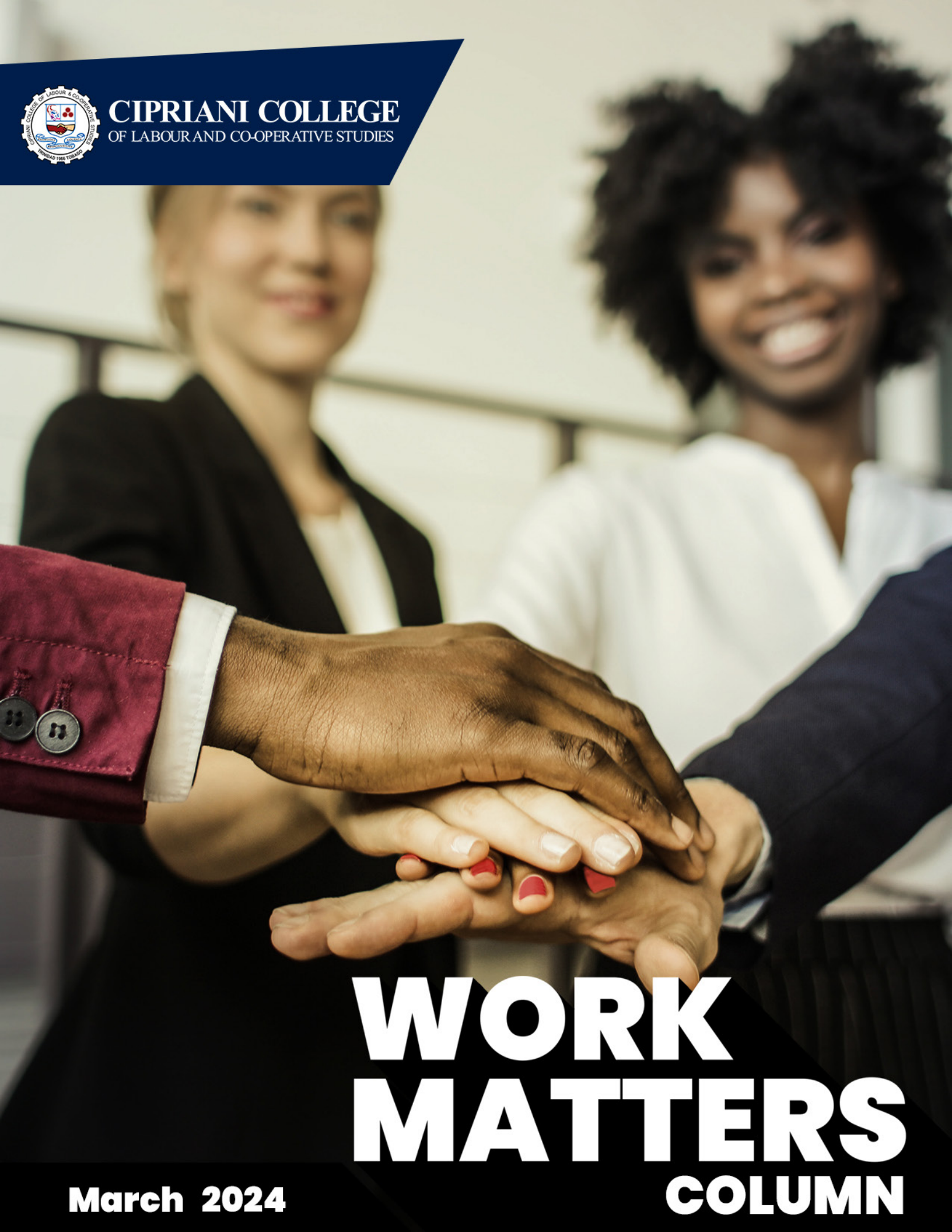




CIPRIANI COLLEGE
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES



WORK MATTERS

COLUMN

March 2024

Nurturing the culture of ethics in the workplace

In today's ever-changing corporate climate, workplace ethics are essential for long-term success. Business ethics is defined as the application of ethical ideals to business practices. This applies to both individual and organisational behaviours, and companies that place a premium on ethical conduct lay the groundwork for trust, transparency, and integrity in their operations. It is thus necessary to explore the wide realm of workplace ethics, including its importance, key components, and influence on organisational culture and performance.

Workplace ethics go beyond simply legal compliance. It includes cultivating a culture in which employees are guided by values other than money, and as we have seen repeatedly, the consequences of unethical action may be disastrous for an organisation. Corporations that value ethics demonstrate their dedication to ethical business practices by treating employees, customers, and stakeholders with decency and fairness, which in turn can enhance trust. It can be argued that trust among owners, managers, staff and customers is the foundation of many successful businesses, and workplace ethics is essential for establishing, building and preserving that trust. Employees that believe in their leaders and colleagues are more likely to be engaged, productive, motivated, and committed to the organisation, thus increasing the probability of success. Here, I argue that trust promotes a joyful and healthy working environment in which individuals may grow personally and professionally, and feel protected and secure, resulting in greater confidence and inventiveness.

Supporting the aforementioned points, ethical activities foster a positive work environment, thereby increasing employee morale and happiness. Employees who believe that their employers conduct business ethically are also more likely to enjoy their job and have a sense of purpose. This environment reduces employee turnover rates and may serve to attract top talent, since potential workers choose firms that foster respect and honesty and demonstrate a culture of inclusion, re-

spect, openness, and meritocracy. In organizations, the leadership sets the benchmark for ethical behaviour which will then permeates throughout the entire organization, serving to reinforce the bonds between and among workers and management/employers.

Leaders must provide an example of ethical conduct by making decisions that promote employee well-being while remaining true to the principles of the organisation. When leaders demonstrate integrity, justice, fairness, and respect, the employees are motivated to follow suit. As a point of departure, well-defined codes of conduct serve as a guide for employees by outlining the organisation's ethical standards, behavioural expectations, vision, and mission statement. This also helps promote a culture of responsibility by establishing a common understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable.

Open and transparent communication is also essential for establishing trust and upholding ethical principles in organizations; and as such, leaders should engage with their staff on a frequent basis, resolving problems, demonstrating openness, and managing conflict and anxiety. This also encourages employees to feel a 'part of the family' and contribute to the decision-making process, as they perceive a safe space to express their own opinions and concerns. Further, organisations should engage in continual training and education programmes to raise ethical consciousness among their personnel. These programmes can address issues like conflict of interest, diversity and inclusion, ethical business practices, and ethical decision-making. It has been accepted that regular training promotes the value of ethics and provides staff with the information and skills necessary to handle ethical problems.

The success of a company, particularly its reputation and brand image, is influenced by workplace ethics as demonstrated by employees and management alike. Companies with a strong image and a solid reputation are those that are usually recognised for exhibiting

high ethical standards. Recently, businesses are becoming more conscious of the role of ethics in their operations, which in turn impacts the quality of service/products that they provide to customers, ultimately leading to increased profits and brand awareness. Employees who feel valued and trusted by their employer are more likely to go above and beyond their job requirements, contributing to the increased organisational performance.

In addition, focusing on workplace ethics is closely tied to legal compliance. Organisations that adhere to ethical standards are more likely to comply with laws and regulations, reducing the risk of legal challenges that might jeopardise the company's reputation and financial viability. Any company that participates in unethical business conduct or ethical misbehaviour risks serious consequences. Depending on the gravity of the incident, the firm may have to spend time and money trying to recover its reputation and addressing legal issues/sanctions.

In essence, as the business environment evolves, workplace ethics emerge as a critical component for long-term success.

The value of ethical behaviour cannot be overstated, and I argue that organisations that promote workplace ethics also contribute to society as they promote values of honesty and accountability.

As we move forward, let us remember that ethical behaviour is more than compliance of laws; it is a philosophy that, when adopted at all levels, creates a healthy environment, and has beneficial impacts on individuals and society.

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