Case Study One

Damon Richardson

Beulah Heights University

Case Study One

In our case study, Harry's behavior was on full display on his personal social media web page and although he may consider it private and non reflective of his organizational behavior and work ethic, social media posts are public and as such can have adverse impact on the organization that the employee represents publicly and while we may have freedom of speech, we are not free from the consequences of such speech. Cho, Park and Ordonez (2013) stated, "information on job applicants' social media pages is often considered as crucial information for evaluating their personalities and making hiring decisions" (Cho, Park & Ordonez, 2013, p. 794). While Harry may not think so, his social media pictures of himself with two bottles of alcohol with his company t-shirt on demonstrates a lack of judgment on his part by not connecting his public behavior with his own companies public image and putting it on social media for the public to draw certain conclusions.

Harry should recognize that as an employee of the Merton Corporation, he is representing his clients for investment advice and his public behavior on public display can reflect negatively on his personal judgment and negatively impact the perceptions of his clients as to his judgments with their investments. Schultz et al. (2015), argue that issues related to negligence in hiring can arise if certain behavior on social media can reflect negatively on the applicants ability to perform the job, such as the legalities involved in a negligent hiring claim by a patient of a nursing home for example, that claims that a nursing home was aware of prior to hire, a

nurses social media pictures displaying drunken photos and references to

drug use, "which created a dangerous environment to the patient" (Schultz

et al., 2015, p. 43).

        Merton Corporation should develop a code of ethics and organizational

policy that directly addresses employee social media usage in order to

communicate clearly company expectations and to help employees

understand the ways in which social media behavior can negatively impact

the organizations image and their future with the organization.

"Organizations, however, need to formulate written policies and procedures

to minimize their legal exposure. Instituting policies and procedures to

reduce potential liability should be thought of as a corporate shield of

protection (Schultz et al., 2015, p. 45). Organizational policies should follow

training which is the key managing social media behavior, because it makes

employees aware of the responsibilities to professionally represent the

organization and how their social media actions can lead to negative

consequences for both the employee and the organization such as

termination and the organizations exposure to legal actions (Schultz et al.,

2015).

        I would advise Martin Findley to consider first the confidence of

Merton's clients considering that the case study revealed that Martin knows

that Merton's clients would not think highly of Harry's Facebook posts.

Schultz et al. (2015) mention that organizations need to be aware of their

liability to third parties because of the social media activities of their

employees. Such activities may damage the organization's reputation, causing lawsuits for deceptive trade practices or defamation actions (p. 45). Harry needs to have a discussion with a Human Resources specialist who can help him understand how his public social media life is in reality an extension of his workplace and is not a matter of freedom of speech. Harry needs to be educated on how social media is now being used by organizations not only for marketing but also for recruiting and as a window into the prospective hire's life to determine fit and suitability for the organizations values.

References

Cho, J., Park, D. J., & Ordonez, Z. (2013). Communication-oriented person-organization fit as a key factor of job-seeking behaviors: millennials' social media use and attitudes toward organizational social media policies. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking*, *16*(11), 794-799. Doi:10.1089/cyber.2012.0528

Schultz, M. D., Koehler, J. W., Philippe, T. W., & Coronel, R. S. (2015). Managing the effects of social media in organizations. *Sam Advanced Management Journal (07497075)*, *80*(2), 42