

Types of whistleblowers



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This article focuses on different types of whistleblowers.

The "watchdog" whistleblower discovers and exposes the wrongdoing, illegal and corrupt practices in order to avoid safety or financial disasters, for example bribery, fraud and mismanagement of funds due to incompetence and/or abuse of power by managers.

The "protest" whistleblower has a political dimension, meaning a decision making or governance dimension and raises general concerns about the effects of their employer's activities, e.g. environmental destruction by construction and mining companies.

The "defensive" whistleblower is a calculating employee who, in anticipation of disciplinary proceedings for poor performance, reports a concern to divert attention from the real issue, or to establish that the true reason for disciplinary action was victimisation for speaking out. Such activity is common among semi-skilled employees and managers. However, it can also be the opposite situation. For example, when an employee files a claim of victimisation against his or her manager due to victimisation, such manager files a counter claim of misconduct against such employee that he or she wants to see fired from the company

due to personal reasons.

The "vengeful" whistleblower is a former employee of an organisation who discloses an employer's wrongdoing as a form of retribution for perceived mistreatment. The reason why it happens after employment has been terminated could be that the whistleblower has been too exposed to victimisation during his or her employment to blow the whistle. It could also be due to a personal vendetta against the employer and/or other employees (Rose Ackerman). People report corruption and wrongdoing for different reasons and therefore they can be classified as different types of whistleblowers. The discussion is neither mutually exclusive in its demarcation of the different types, nor exclusive to the types as discussed.

• References

Rose-Ackerman, S. 1999. *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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