Nomination: 9111

Innovative Ethics Training for a Unified Culture

Page: General Information
Provide information about the company to be considered for the award. If you will be nominating an individual, specify the nominee's employer.

Name of Organization/Company

AMERICAN SYSTEMS

Mobile Phone Number

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Additional Contacts

I do not wish to list additional contacts

Page: Entry Information

Entry Title

Innovative Ethics Training for a Unified Culture

Category

B01 - B67 Achievement > B65 - Most Innovative Learning and Development Program

Achievement Submission Format

Written Answers

a. Briefly describe the nominated organization: its history and past performance (up to 200 words). Required

AMERICAN SYSTEMS is a 100% employee-owned government defense contractor with a longstanding commitment to ethical excellence. Founded on strong values, we rely on nearly 1,600 employee-owners nationwide to uphold the ethical standards essential to government contracting. To ensure ethical compliance, AMERICAN SYSTEMS has established an innovative and unique Ethics Compliance Training Program.

Unlike conventional, less effective vendor-supplied training, our program is unique: in addition to an annual review of our Code of Business Ethics & Conduct (Attachment A), we release quarterly interactive, video-based lessons created entirely by our employee-owners…for our employee-owners! Employees across the company—from our CEO in Chantilly, VA to team members in Millington, TN—collaborate with our Ethics Committee to write, perform in, and produce training vignettes based on real workplace challenges. This in-house approach fosters relatability, deep engagement, and retainability.

Since implementing this employee-driven initiative, participation rates and positive feedback have dramatically increased (see Attachment B). What was once obligatory training is now highly anticipated, with many staff voluntarily revisiting lessons. AMERICAN SYSTEMS' history of ethical leadership and continuous improvement is reflected in our passionate, united workforce—demonstrating that integrity is not just a policy, but a defining characteristic of our culture and performance.

b. Outline the team's or organization's achievements since the beginning of 2023 that you wish to bring to the judges' attention (up to 250 words). Required

To ensure AMERICAN SYSTEMS employee-owners are prepared to confidently face ethical dilemmas they may encounter while doing business with the government, we vary the topics of our training to cover an array of situations—from conflicts of interest, gift-giving, to accurate time reporting…and much more! When possible, we theme our training to popular media like television shows, commercials, or movies to help commit the training to memory.

The following examples highlight just a few of ethics topics covered since the beginning of 2023 and their completion rates within the first week of release, showcasing employee engagement with our program.

(Video-1): In Q2-2023, we released a parody of "The Office" discussing conflicts of interest and outside employment. 66% of employees completed in the first week.

(Video-2): In Q4-2023, ahead of gift-giving season, we released a vignette themed to The Price is Right on the topic of giving and receiving gifts, perceived value, and dollar limits for government employees. 61% of employees completed within the first week.

(Video-3): Released in Q2-2024, our training was based on an actual timesheet falsification incident at our company that was discovered and resolved before issue. Given the serious nature of this topic, we opted for a news broadcast theme. 63% of employees completed within the first week.

(Video-4): In Q4-2024, we released training themed to "Parks and Recreation" to discuss the rules and ethics around ridesharing with government employees. 60% of employees completed within the first week of release.

c. Explain why the achievements you have highlighted are unique or significant. If possible compare the achievements to the performance of other players in your industry and/or to the team's or organization's past performance (up to 250 words). Required

Our transition from third-party to employee-produced ethics training has set us apart in our industry and established a new standard within our company. Before reinventing our Ethics Compliance Program, a meager 15% of employees completed the training within the first week, reflecting widespread disengagement. Today, over 50% of our employee-owners complete their training within the first week. Specifically, in the case of the highlighted examples in this nomination, 60% or more of our 1,600 employees completed their training within the first week (Attachment B, Fig. 1). This dramatic increase clearly demonstrates enhanced employee engagement.

Beyond engagement, our approach targets retention—a persistent challenge known as "the forgetting curve," which suggests most learners forget the majority of new information within a month. To counter this, our program leverages regular, quarterly releases, highly relevant scenarios, and strong interpersonal connections fostered by featuring familiar faces across our company. Unlike many industry programs that are impersonal and abstract, ours is designed to be memorable and relatable.

We verify the program's impact through scenario-based challenge questions embedded in the training. Consistently, more than 80% of employees answer these correctly (Attachment B, Fig. 2), indicating real knowledge retention.

Perhaps most uniquely, our initiative has strengthened our culture. By using collaborative production tools like Microsoft Teams, we have bridged geographical distances and created a program that is educational, fun, and truly unifying for our nationwide team. Our results—and the enthusiasm we've generated—clearly distinguish AMERICAN SYSTEMS' Ethics Compliance Program from others in our field.

d. Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words). Optional

• Attachment A: Our Code of Business Ethics & Conduct PDF. We post this publicly to our website and require our employees to review annually.

• Attachment B: Measuring employee engagement through a comparison of the number of employees who complete the required training within the first week of release—both now and when we began creating our own video training. This document also shows the percentage of employees who respond correctly when presented with challenge questions during training.

• Video Link 1: https://vimeo.com/1079529847/aeb05476bc This full-length (5 min. 2 sec.) example parodies the hit sitcom The Office to discuss outside employment and conflicts of interest.

• Video Link 2: https://vimeo.com/1079531876/6e51150f83 This full-length (6 min. 56 sec.) example goes through the rules AMERICAN SYSTEMS employees must follow when it comes to offering and accepting gifts.

• Video Link 3: https://vimeo.com/1079533951/0dc5d42bc1 This full-length (5 min. 42 sec.) example discusses the consequences that can arise from false billing claims.

• Video Link 4: https://vimeo.com/1079535161/0cfa5d83a6 This full-length (4 min. 11 sec.) example parodies the hit sitcom Parks & Recreation and explores various ridesharing scenarios and how to properly handle them as a government contractor.

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Would you like to add an additional supporting document?

Yes

Would you like to add an additional supporting document?

No

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