

# Canadian employees reticent to raise concerns, reveals Institute of Business Ethics' survey

Wednesday 26 June, 2019

## A quarter of employees were aware of misconduct, but only 56% of them reported it

**DATE: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019** The Institute of Business Ethics today publishes the results of a survey which asked Canadian employees their views of ethics in their workplace.

This was the first time that the [IBE's Ethics at Work survey](#) has been conducted in Canada. It asked employees how they experience ethics in their day-to-day working lives and their perception of how ethical conduct is supported in the workplace. It asked whether they had been aware of misconduct; whether they reported it; and what if anything stopped them from doing so.

The IBE has surveyed British employees since 2005, but given that organisations are increasingly taking an integrated approach at the international level, we have expanded the number of countries included in the research to cover France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the UK within Europe, as well as Australia, Canada, Singapore and New Zealand.

This survey report presents the findings of public research undertaken by ComRes on behalf of the IBE and the Stewardship Institute. It describes the Canadian findings and provides comparison with Switzerland and the UK.

A quarter of employees in Canada (25%) were aware of misconduct during their past year at work. Nearly a third of Canadian employees who were aware of misconduct also felt pressured to compromise their organisation's ethical standards (30%), in comparison with just 5% of employees who were not aware of ethical misconduct.

Yet only 56% of employees in Canada who were aware of misconduct say they raised their concerns with management or another appropriate mechanism.

Of the 41% of employees in Canada who were aware of misconduct at work and decided not to speak up, the most common reasons were because they did not believe corrective action would be taken (38%), or that they would be seen as a trouble maker by management (35%).

Managers play a key role in promoting ethics within an organisation, and it is worrying that Canadian managers are less likely to be aware of their organisation having a code of ethics or similar document than non-managers.

Philippa Foster Back CBE, Director of the Institute of Business Ethics said: *"The lack of confidence which Canadian employees have in their Speak Up procedures is worrying, given the pressure which they are under to compromise ethical standards. If organisations demonstrate their commitment to addressing concerns, employees will be more inclined to speak up about misconduct. Providing support for employees to do the right thing is vital in establishing a culture in which employees feel confident to 'do the right thing'."*

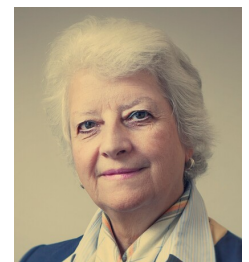
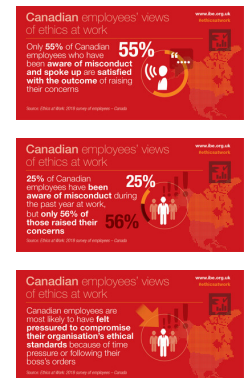
#ethicsatwork

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To obtain an advanced press copy of the report, or Op-Eds please contact Katherine Bradshaw, Head of Communications 07771 517700 [k.bradshaw@ibe.org.uk](mailto:k.bradshaw@ibe.org.uk)

## EDITOR'S NOTES

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## Ethics at Work: 2018 Survey of Employees: Canada

By Guendalina Dondé, Katja Somasundaram, Loic Frank

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### About the Ethics at Work survey

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This survey report presents the findings of public research undertaken by ComRes on behalf of the IBE and the Stewardship Institute.

This report describes the Canadian findings and provides comparison with Switzerland and the UK. The survey was completed by a representative sample of about 750 working adults in each country aged 18+, including 766 working adults in Canada. The survey was undertaken between 5th and 25th February 2018. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. [www.comresglobal.com](http://www.comresglobal.com)

### The Institute of Business Ethics

The Institute of Business Ethics, whose purpose is to promote high standards of business behaviour based on ethical values, is an important partner to any business wanting to preserve its long-term reputation by doing business in the right way.

For over 30 years, the IBE has advised organisations on how to strengthen their ethical culture by sharing knowledge and good practice, resulting in relationships with employees and stakeholders that are based on trust.

The IBE is a registered charity funded by corporate and individual subscriptions. [www.ibe.org.uk](http://www.ibe.org.uk) @ibeuk

**The IBE would like to thank our national partner the Stewardship Institute for their support for this project:**

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### The authors

**Guendalina Dondé** is Head of Research at the Institute of Business Ethics. She writes and researches on a range of business ethics topics for the IBE.

Before joining the IBE, she collaborated in developing the code of ethics for the Italian Association of Management Consultants and worked for a European CSR Business Network in Brussels. She holds a

Master's degree in Business Ethics and CSR from the University of Trento in Italy.

She is the author of the IBE survey report *Corporate Ethics Policies and Programmes: 2016 UK and Continental Europe Survey* and co-author of the 2017 IBE report *Setting the Tone: a New Zealand perspective on Business Ethics*, the 2017 TEI & IBE *Ethics and Compliance Handbook*, the 2016 IBE *Codes of Business Ethics: examples of good practice* and of the French and Italian editions of the 2015 IBE survey *Ethics at Work: 2015 Survey of Employees*.

She is also responsible for reviewing corporate codes of ethics and related policies, benchmarking them against other organisations'.

**Katja Somasundaram** worked at the IBE as Research Assistant, where she provided support for the Research Hub by researching and writing on a number of business ethics topics. She worked for the IBE from 2017 to 2018. Katja holds a master's degree in Corruption and Governance from the University of Sussex.

**Loïc Frank** is Director of Operations at the Stewardship Institute, a foundation based in Switzerland. He co-created the IMD Global Board Center at IMB Business School. Over the past 10 years he has managed a large number of board education programmes, board evaluations and reviews. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration as well as a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Project Management, Managing Information Systems and Economics for Business, both from Business School Lausanne.

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### Institute of Business Ethics

T. 020 7798 6040

E. [k.bradshaw@ibe.org.uk](mailto:k.bradshaw@ibe.org.uk)

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