

ENG3004 - Individual Assignment 1

Question:

Company's most valuable assets is information. Employees are supposed to maintain the confidentiality of information (whether or not it is considered proprietary) entrusted to them not only by the Company, but also by suppliers, customers and others related to the business. If disclosed, might be of use to competitors or harmful to the Company, or its customers or suppliers. With reference to the above, recommend how the company can make certain that the privileged information is handled properly by the employee?

Note: Your answer to the question above must not exceed 5 pages (A4 size) with font size 12. Please submit by 16 Feb 2023.

Introduction

When dealing with confidential information, it is important for a company to teach the employees how to handle it correctly, whether it is related to the customers or employees. Failure to properly protect the data may lead to litigation and damage the company. Here are several ways for companies to ensure that employees correctly handle privileged information.

Employee training

Once data has been effectively tagged and an agreement has been made, all employees must be continuously trained from the beginning of the on-boarding process to ensure that they adopt best practices to handle sensitive material. They must be aware of where to store information and with whom they are allowed to share it.

Plan Periodic Audits of Waste Systems

Follow-up employee training with periodic audits of recycling bins and trash cans throughout the workplace to ensure that appropriate disposal protocols are being followed 100% of the time. When document disposal procedures are clear and convenient, there is no reason to find confidential information in employee blue bins.

Sign Non-Disclosure Agreements

A best practice that all companies should implement is having non-disclosure agreements with employees, contract workers, service providers, suppliers, investors, or any third parties that have access to confidential information. A non-disclosure agreement can ensure that individuals do not distribute or disclose secret information or intellectual property. This formal confidentiality agreement can also prevent unnecessary legal circumstances from arising.

Limit Access to Confidential Information

Providing limited access to confidential data on a need-to-know basis can prevent a serious breach from occurring. When granting access, employers should keep records of what confidential information has been disclosed and to whom. This permission should also be revoked when the project is completed, the employment relationship is terminated, or it is no longer suitable for visit.

Develop an Information Destruction Policy

The Information Destruction Policy is a formal, company-wide written policy that guides employees to safely dispose of documents that are no longer needed. The information destruction policy will examine what types of data must be destroyed and how to destroy them, rather than throwing information into the trash can or recycling bin, so that confidential information can be protected from improper disclosure.

Safeguard Confidential Information with a Visitor Policy

Every company should formulate an appropriate visitor policy to protect its employees and guests, as well as business secrets, intellectual property rights and other confidential information. All organizations, for example, should require visitors to check in and check out, sign a non-disclosure agreement, wear visitor badges and be accompanied by an employee for the duration of their visit while on company property.

Utilize Off-site Document Storage

Storing confidential information within the workplace increases a company's chance of a purposeful or accidental information leak. By storing documents off-site with a third-party records management service, confidential information is securely contained and managed with around-the-clock surveillance and strict safety protocols. Organizations also can set predefined access control lists to restrict who can request and receive electronic copies of physical documents in storage to prevent unauthorized access of confidential information. When documents reach the end of their lifecycle, a records management service can carry out secure destruction to maintain government record-keeping requirements and ensure company confidentiality.

Hire a Shredding Service to Destroy Confidential Information

Properly destroying confidential information is critical for any company, but it can be a complex, expensive and time-consuming process when handled in-house by employees. Outsourcing document shredding and media destruction to a professional service provider not only frees up valuable time and resources, but it also keeps organizations compliant with privacy laws and provides protection to all parties to avoid a confidential information leak.

Conclusion

By following these steps, the company can ensure the privileged information is handled properly by the employee.

Reference

1. GrantMcGregor (2017, May 1). *5 Top Tips for Handling Confidential Information in Your Business*. Blog.Grantmcgregor.co.uk. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://blog.grantmcgregor.co.uk/2017/5-top-tips-for-handling-confidential-information-in-your-business>
2. Blue-pencil (2018, February 22). *How Do You Protect Confidential Information in the Workplace?* Www.Blue-Pencil.ca. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.blue-pencil.ca/how-do-you-protect-confidential-information-in-the-workplace/>