

## **ENG3004 - Individual Assignment 1**

**Chiu Chun Wai 22020052d**

Every employee has to know the basics of identifying and handling confidential information from the organization and from other parties. This starts when a new employee starts working for your firm and should be updated on a regular basis to account for ongoing ties.

Information revealed to or known by a specific employee as a result of that person's employment with a corporation is often referred to as confidential information. This information is either not widely known outside of the firm or is legally protected. Every type of information, including written materials, records, and digital data, can be considered confidential.

### **Examples of How Confidential Information Can Be Used**

- Protection concepts that give a business or person a competitive edge so they can gain a jumpstart on the competition (e.g., an idea for a new type of product or a new website).
- Keep confidential any additional knowledge that you have that is valuable and not commonly recognized by your competitors (e.g., a list of customers ranked by how profitable their business is).
- Properly protect important business data including client lists, cost and price information, and marketing strategies (such as a company's intentions to introduce a new product line).
- Prevent competitors from finding that a product or service is under development and from learning about its technical or functional features (e.g., how a new software program works).
- Keep "negative know-how" safe. In other words, knowledge you've gained via study and development on what to avoid doing or what doesn't work well (e.g., research revealing that a new type of drug is ineffective).

## Protecting Company Confidential Information

Confidential information is crucial to the competitiveness and profitability of businesses. Ensure that corporate trade secrets are protected by applicable state and federal laws. According to these statutes, a corporation must make reasonable measures to keep its confidential information secret. As a result, the following procedures have to be taken into consideration.

- General protection: Only those who have agreed to keep the material confidential should be permitted to access it. All of a company's confidential information should be kept out of the public's access. Trade secrets should be safeguarded with reasonable care.
- Electronic information security: Only people who have a duty to protect the information's confidentiality should have access to computer systems that store it. Passwords and logins for employees shouldn't be shared with anybody.
- Distribution of restrictions: Where possible, only individuals with a true business need to know should be given access to confidential information.

## Employee Responsibilities

The capacity to use confidential information for a specific purpose within a corporation is frequently what gives it value. The correct management and protection of confidential information belonging to the business and to third parties should be known to all employees working in various departments.

According to a confidential information policy, each employee should have the following obligations:

- An employee should treat any confidential information with trust and confidence both while they are employed and after they are fired. Only when performing their obligations for the firm may the employee view, access, keep, or share confidential

information. All state and federal laws, as well as any corporate regulations, that relate to the access, use, and disclosure of confidential information, must be followed by all employees.

- An employee shouldn't try to gain any confidential information about any situation that is unrelated to their job responsibilities.
- Unless it is essential to carrying out their work responsibilities, an employee should not remove items from the department that contain confidential data.
- Only via a company's information systems should an employee keep or transmit confidential information.
- Any knowing violation of the company's confidentiality policy by an employee or a third party should be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor by the employee.

#### How Can Confidential Information Be Better Protected?

Create written confidentiality policies and procedures: Every company/organization should have a written confidentiality policy (typically in its employee handbook) outlining the kinds of information that are considered confidential as well as the steps that employees are required to take to protect that information. For the protection of confidential information, we advise employers to at least use the following measures:

- Only individuals with a "need-to-know" for the business should have access to any confidential papers, which should be kept in secure file cabinets or rooms.
- Before leaving for the day, employees should clean their workstations of any confidential information.
- Firewalls, encryption, and passwords should be used to safeguard any digitally confidential information.
- Use software tools to erase any data from an old computer before throwing it away, or have the hard drive destroyed.

- Restrict the collection of confidential client information (such social security numbers, bank account numbers, or license numbers) unless it is necessary for the business transaction, and only allow those with a "need to know" basis access.
- Whether it's on paper or in an electronic form, all confidential material should be clearly marked as "confidential".
- It is important to appropriately dispose of all confidential information (e.g., employees should not print out a confidential document and then throw it away without shredding it first.)

The level of privacy that staff members can expect in relation to their own personal property (e.g., "for your own protection, do not leave valuable personal property at work and do not leave personal items, especially your purse, briefcase, or wallet, unattended while you are at work") and personal information (e.g., "your medical records are kept in a separate file and are kept confidential as required by law") should also be outlined in a confidentiality policy.

Lastly, to guarantee compliance with state law, all firms and organizations should have their confidentiality policies reviewed.

In order to let the employees follow the confidentiality policies, we should state that Employees who violate the policy must face disciplinary action in accordance with the employer's corrective action policies. And sometimes, they may face legal penalty which may lead to imprisonment and amercement, and affect their future life.