

The Rights and Responsibilities of Engineers

Lecture 5



An Engineer can whistleblow

An engineer has a duty to protect the public, by blowing the whistle if necessary, when he perceives that something improper is being done in his organization.



Professional Responsibilities



01

Confidentiality and
Proprietary Information


02

Conflict of Interest


03

Competitive Bidding


Professional Rights




Rights to privacy, rights to participate in activities outside work, rights to object company policy are common.



The most fundamental right of an engineer is the right of professional conscience.



Rights to conscience includes “Rights of Conscientious Refusal”.



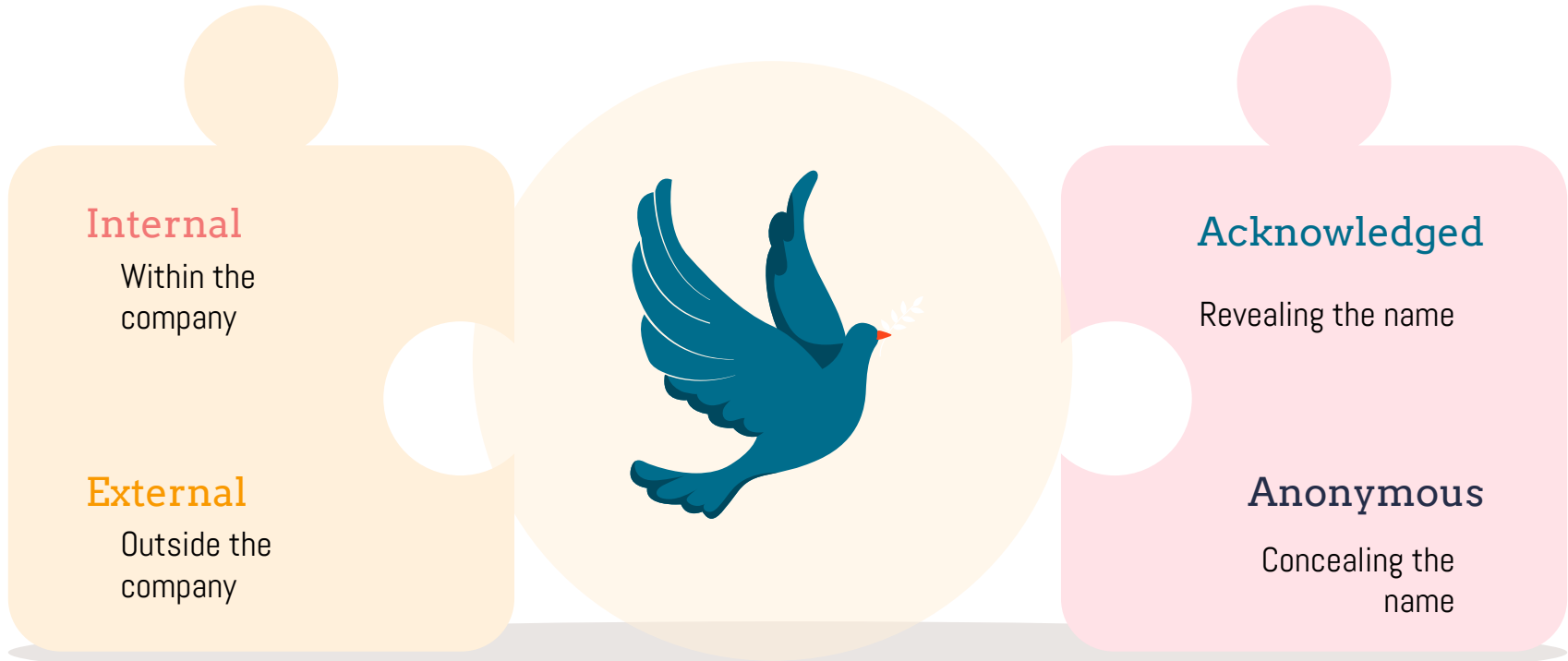
Employers should also be reasonable in accommodating professional requests.

Whistle-Blowing

Whistle-blowing is the act by an employee of informing the public or higher management of unethical or illegal behavior by an employer or supervisor.



Types of Whistle-blowing



When should we Whistle-blow?

01

Need

Clear and important harm

02

Proximity

Closely related

Capability

Reasonable chance of success in stopping

03

Last Resort

No one else more capable or proximate available

04



We should blow the whistle only if these conditions are all met.

Preventing Whistle-blowing

4 ways to solve the whistle-blowing problem within a corporation.



Ethics Culture

There should be strong ethics culture between all employees including managers.

Communication

There should be clear lines of communication within the corporation.

No Retaliation

There should be meaningful access to managers with guarantee of no retaliation

Admit Mistakes

There should be willingness of management to admit mistakes

Homework



Case Studies

The BART Case

Engineers and
the Defense
Industry

