COMPARING CODES OF ETHICS AMONG THE TOP COMPANIES
IN AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND THE USA

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ABSTRACT

In the twentieth century, industrialized economies around the world enacted legislation to protect free and fair trade. These legislative initiatives were often precipitated by exposure to unethical business practices. With the fairly recent corporate business scandals around the world, ethics is once again at the forefront of concerns about commercial exchanges. This situation has become more complex with the globalization of commercial trade. Subsequently, there have been various attempts by international organizations to regulate the conduct of global corporations. One key technique to try to regulate the conduct of corporation is the use of codes of ethics. This study examines corporate codes of ethics and the measures in place to communicate the ethos of the codes to both internal and external stakeholders in three countries. A questionnaire that was non-sponsored and unsolicited was sent to the top companies operating in the private sector within Australia, Canada and the USA. Nine key areas of corporate ethics are examined and they are divided into two categories as follows:

Regulation
Consequences for a Breach
Ethical Performance Appraisal
Conduct Ethical Audits

Staff Support
Support of Whistle blowers
Guide to Strategic Planning
Ethics Committee
Ethics Training Committee
Staff Training
Ethics Ombudsman.

References Available Upon Request