COO Advocates Values-in-Action Courses for All Students

Barclays, Lehman Brothers, JP Morgan – it seems every time we turn around, another financial giant is accused of lying, cheating and stealing.

It's not your imagination, says Rakesh Malhotra, a longtime COO who has worked in Asia, East Europe and United States and led cross-cultural diverse teams.

"White-collar crime convictions in the United States alone have increased 17.8 percent in the last five years alone," he says. "Last year, the Securities Exchange Commission filed a record 735 enforcement actions."

And it's not just hedge fund operators and money traders. White-collar crimes include identity theft, cheating on taxes, health-care fraud – crimes as readily committed by employees at the local big-box store as suits in penthouse offices.

"The problem is one of values," says Malhotra, author of Adventures of Tornado Kid: Whirling Back Home Towards Timeless Values (www.FiveGlobalValues.com). "I have worked in several countries, recruiting, hiring, training and retaining employees. I found that in every culture, the same core values play a key role in the success of both employees and the corporation.

"Unfortunately, they are not taught in school – not in grade school or in most business schools. While we would benefit from having values taught at all age levels, for now they are learned mostly from parents, mentors, inspiring teachers and others who shape young lives."

It's as important for the business to have what Malhotra has identified as five essential global values as it is for the employees, he says.

"The business has to show that these ethics are implemented and acted upon. Otherwise, the employee with values, the one instructed to, say, lie about a product, will feel secure about reporting such conduct without being fired."

What are these values and how can they be taught?

• Responsibility: There is nothing more fundamental to being an adult in our society than accountability. Parents can create cause-and-effect circumstances, such as letting a teen borrow the car provided they put gas in it. Breaking such a pact though, because of a bad grade in school, creates a mixed message. When children learn responsibility, they know that happiness comes from doing the right thing.

• Compassion: It's not just a term for being nice; compassion is a form of intelligence – an empathetic ability to see a situation through another's eyes and to feel what another person feels. When adults are compassionate, they reach out to help others because they can feel others' pain – and the relief and gratitude of help, sympathy or encouragement.

• Integrity: Integrity is the glue that holds together all of the values. When given an option to stray from our values, such as lying for the sake of convenience, integrity is there to hold us accountable.

• Peace: Our ability to manage conflicts amicably is a direct result of a peaceful mind and attitude. Those who value peace view anger, jealousy and hostility as the barriers to communication that they are. In all settings, business and domestic, conflicts will arise – it is inevitable. We must work through these peacefully if we are to move forward.

• Love: You must love what you do, passionately. Do your work and your organization in some way contribute to the welfare of people? That is the reason for your passion. With love, you contribute to the greater good and feel gratified.

About Rakesh Malhotra

Rakesh Malhotra has worked in, lived in or traveled to more than 40 countries. During this time, he studied human behavior in relation to core values as a means hire, promote and manage effectively. He has focused on what influences performance and what makes some employees

perform at a higher level than others. Malhotra holds a master's in Public Administration and several diplomas in business education.