

## **Organizational Integrity**

The expected behaviour and actions of persons within the leadership of organizations, is primarily based on the practice of some core principles. The set of principles referred to include honesty, maturity, respect, trust, wisdom, objectivity, dependability, compassion and generosity. For the most part, many leaders take these for granted. Regrettably, some may go as far as to ignore them. At is at this point, that members of the organization need to have some concerns, as this can be the signal of an intent to deviate from the observance of best practices and the observance of standards by the leader.

There is the possibility that some leaders who would have earned the confidence of the membership at the polls, take that vote of confidence to mean that they have the latitude and liberty to govern in the way they see fit. The actions of those leaders who resort to departing from standard practices which are observed in the organization without any consultation, disregard the opinions of members, senior members and past leaders, and show little or no respect for the traditions and customs of the organization, should be enough to raise a red flag about the qualities of the leader.

The integrity of an organization comes under the microscope where the leadership falls short by being truthful, failing to do the things promised, and not communicating what needs to be said. The leader who is prepared to compromise on these is guilty of undermining the values that are ascribed to satisfying organizational integrity.

This brings into sharp focus the importance attached to organization integrity. The integrity of the organization is grounded in the ethical behaviour that guides the actions of the leader(s). Those whose show an indifferent attitude, display a lack of respect for the institutional culture and exhibit a low level of professionalism, are certainly in breach of promoting a level of honesty. Since honesty is an important pillar of integrity, those leaders who are purporting to represent what they are not, and whose behaviour and actions are driven by narrow self interest, are doing an injustice to their organization. This lends to calling the integrity of the organization into question.

The integrity of an organization will be preserved where there is evidence that trust, honesty, accountability and the empowerment and engagement

of people prevail. The character of the organization would be enhanced where leaders take collective responsibility for failings, rather than resorting to passing the buck by laying the blame for failings squarely at the feet of others. It should follow that where praise, credit or an accolade is given, that leaders don't assume the glory to themselves but instead remember that they are part of a team. Those who project the 'I' as oppose to 'we,' are simply doing themselves and the organization a disservice.

It has always been said that a man's word is his honour, and hence those leaders who fail to honour their word or to play by the rules, are unlikely to garner and maintain the confidence of their members. Actions such as these do not inspire or motivate, but serve to tarnish the image and reputation of the organization.

The integrity of an organization can be preserved, where upon the leader/ leadership of the organization demonstrates a willingness to take the advice of others, not to engage in the practice of taking unilateral action(s), or undertake to publicly condemn and ridicule their own organization and external organizations with which there is an association.

As the expression goes, 'respect is not gained, but is earned'. Trade unions as organization which pride themselves on the observance of standards and best practices should discourage and denounced any irresponsible behaviour on the part of trade union leaders, which have the potential to destroy the integrity of the labour movement.