



ISO 37002

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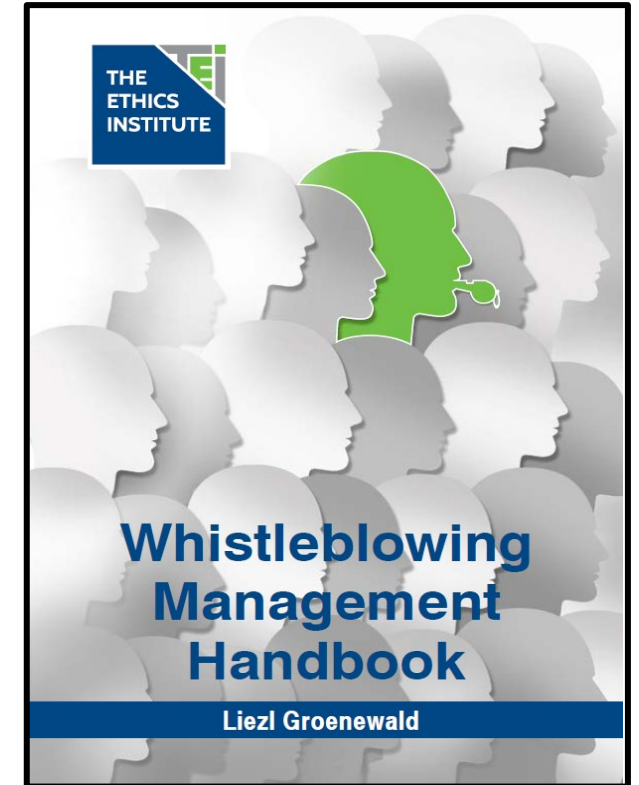
Whistleblowing Definitions



Origin



Several Definitions



TEI view

Origins of the term whistleblower

- The term whistleblower appears to have a historic connotation to law enforcement officials in the 19th century that used a whistle to **alert the public or fellow police of a crime occurring.**



More definitions



One of the first modern uses was by US consumer activist Ralph Nader in 1971 who described whistleblowing as “an act of a man or woman who, believing that the public interest overrides the interest of the organization he serves, blows the whistle that the organization is involved in corrupt, illegal, fraudulent or harmful activity” (Rongine, 1985: 28)

*“The disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, **to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action**”*

*Near &
Miceli*

*[Whistleblowing is] the disclosure of information about a perceived wrongdoing in an organization, or the risk thereof, **to individuals or entities believed to be able to effect action.***

*Transparency
International*

The TEI view

Simply put, whistleblowing means the act of **organisational stakeholders** (e.g., employees, customers, or service providers), either former or current, **calling attention to wrongdoing** that has occurred, is occurring or is about to occur in an organisation. This is **done to internal or external parties** who they believe can act. It is aimed at overcoming **criminal, irregular, and unethical conduct** in organisations, both public and private.



Are whistleblowers important?

Some responses from organisations:

- They upset the apple cart
- They are disloyal
- They are traitors
- They are disgruntled people
- We have an ethical culture - evident from the fact that we do not receive whistleblowing reports

INFORMER

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS
SNITCH

And Sir, I am not disgruntled, angry or bitter. I have more than enough but I am very persistent about protecting innocent human lives like yours and mine.

“Many see whistleblower as a derogatory term for a disloyal employee, but we’ve found that the whistleblower is often forced to go outside [the organization], either by fear, inaction, or both.” – Dr Patricia Harned, CEO, Ethics & Compliance Initiative (Businesswire, 2012)

Do whistleblowers make a meaningful difference?

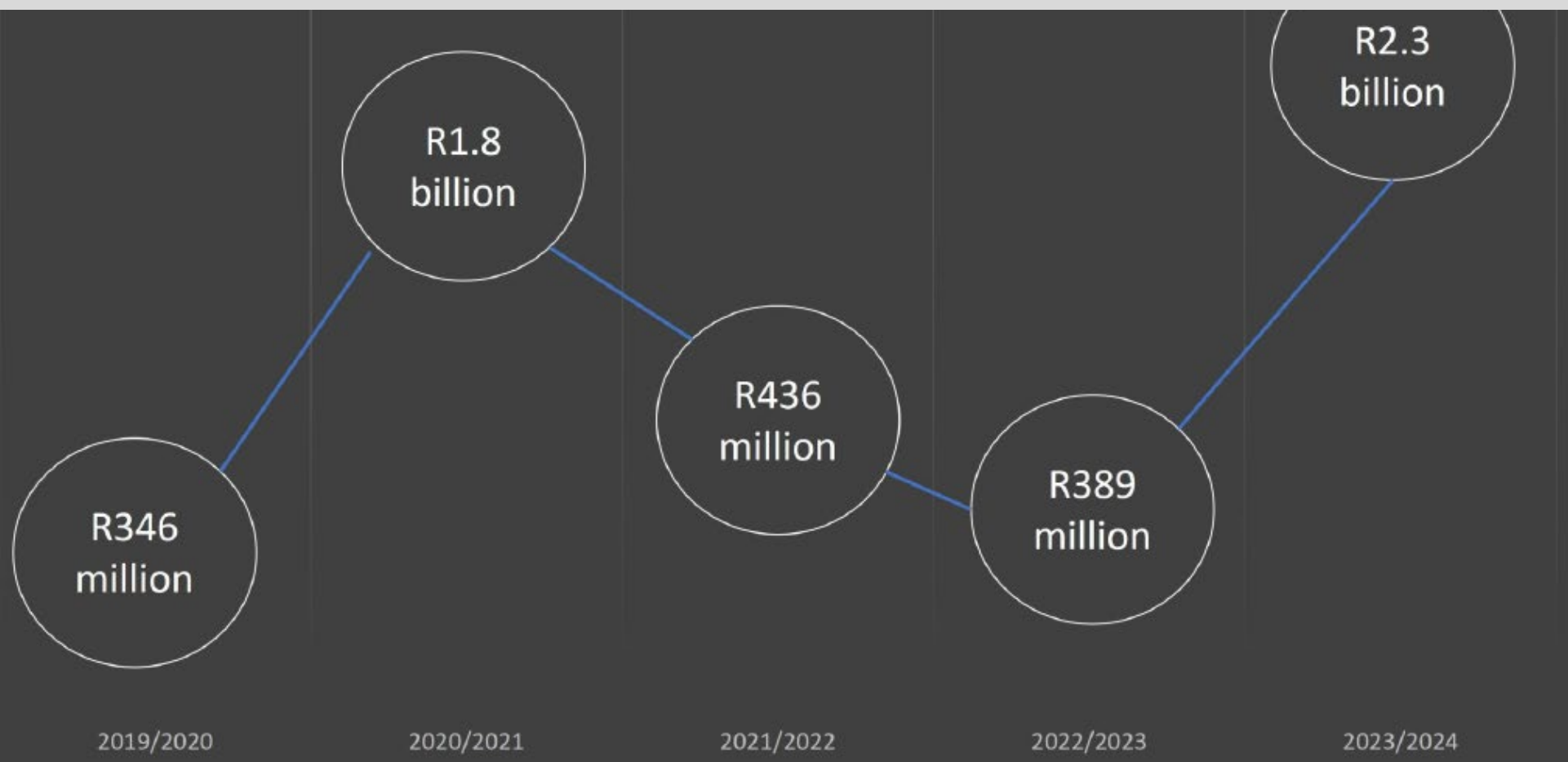
Year	Event	Whistleblower	Value
2015	SARS Bain	Athol Williams	R217 Mill
2016	Trillian	Bianca Goodson	R1.6 Bill
2016	SAA	Cynthia Stimpel	R250 Mill
2017	PRASA	Martha Ngoye	R2.5 Bill
2021	Dep of Health	Babita Deokaran	R850 Mill

Do whistleblowers make a meaningful difference?

Not sabotage or disloyalty—it's about *protecting the organisation and society*.



Value of actual cash/asset recovery



Why whistleblowing matters

Whistleblowers often stand between misconduct and catastrophe



The Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, April 8, 2025, 236 fatalities and over 180 injuries.

The collapse occurred during a live performance by merengue musician Rubby Pérez. **The incident has been linked to structural flaws.**

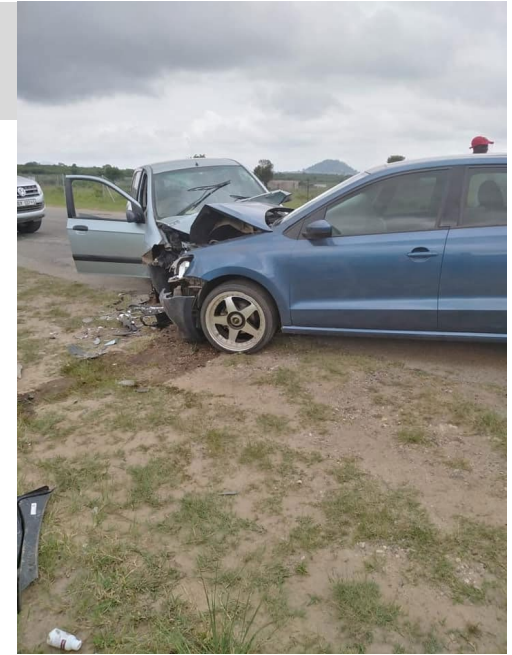
Why whistleblowing matters

The case of Boeing 747 MAX

There were reportedly 12 whistleblowing reports of safety problems with the Boeing 737 MAX made to the US airline regulatory body, the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) in April this year. The reports came from employees of both Boeing and the FAA itself. Here is the significance of the reports being made in April: It was the month that followed the crash of Ethiopian Air flight 302, which itself followed just five months after the crash of Indonesia's Lion Air flight 620 in October 2018.

If only these whistleblowers had spoken up before there was a combined death toll of 346, before Boeing's share price dropped \$13 billion in a single trading day and before Boeing's reputation was damaged – possibly beyond repair. It is reported that a preoccupation with competition and speed to market rather than aircraft safety dominated board-level considerations. All the while, the Boeing specialists who could predict the adverse consequences of their Board's demands had access to the FAA anonymous hotline. They just used it too late.

Why whistleblowing matters



A child was killed in a five-car mishap that was believed to have occurred due to potholes in India.

Whistleblowing is real

SA
2024
34%

SA
2021
28%

During the past year at work, have you been aware of any conduct by your employer or colleagues that you thought violated either the law or your organisation's ethical standards?

25%

2024 Global Average

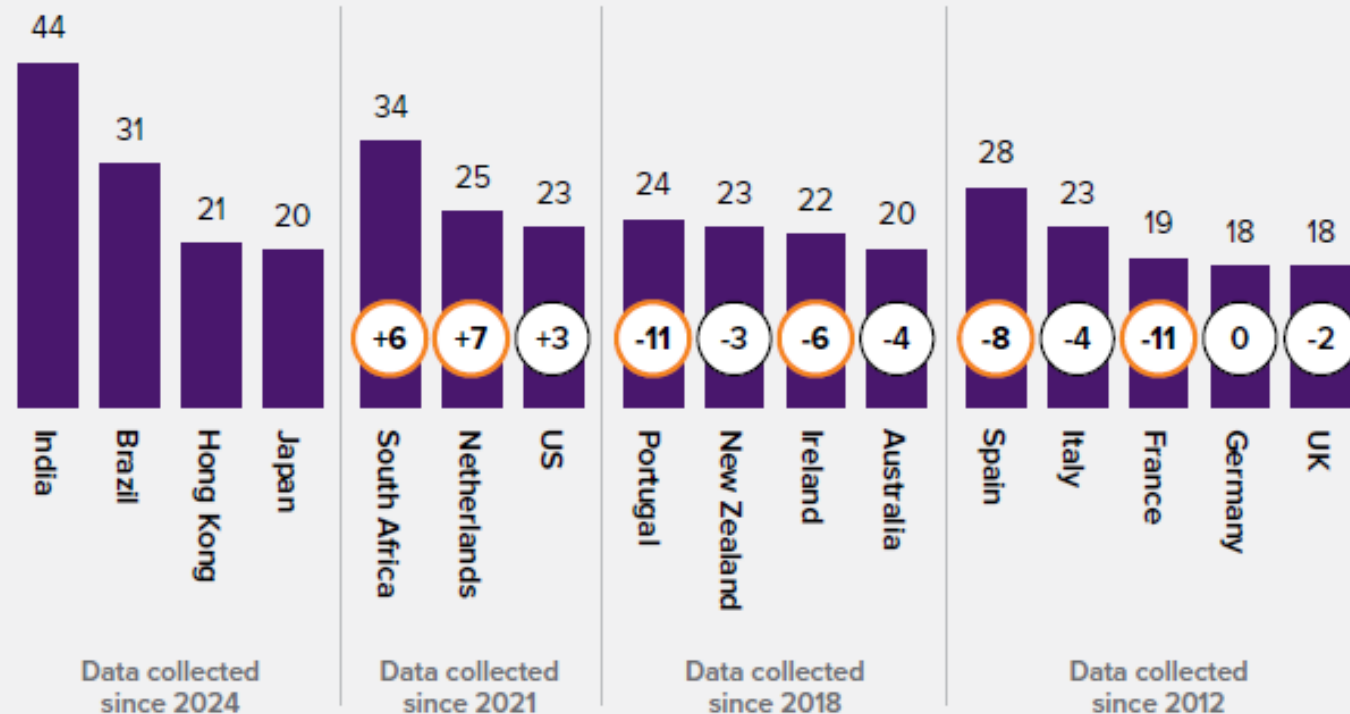
18%

2021 Global Average

Key Insights

Certain groups are more likely to have responded that they are aware of misconduct at work, including:

- **Younger employees aged 18-34** (33%) are more likely to be aware of misconduct compared to employees aged 35-54 (25%) and 55+ (15%)
- **Managers** (31%) are more likely compared to non-managers (20%)
- **In-office** (26%) and **hybrid** (25%) **employees** are more likely compared to remote workers (19%).



Statistically significant change over time



No statistically significant change over time

Whistleblowing is real

SA
2024
79%

SA
2021
67%

64%

2024 Global Average

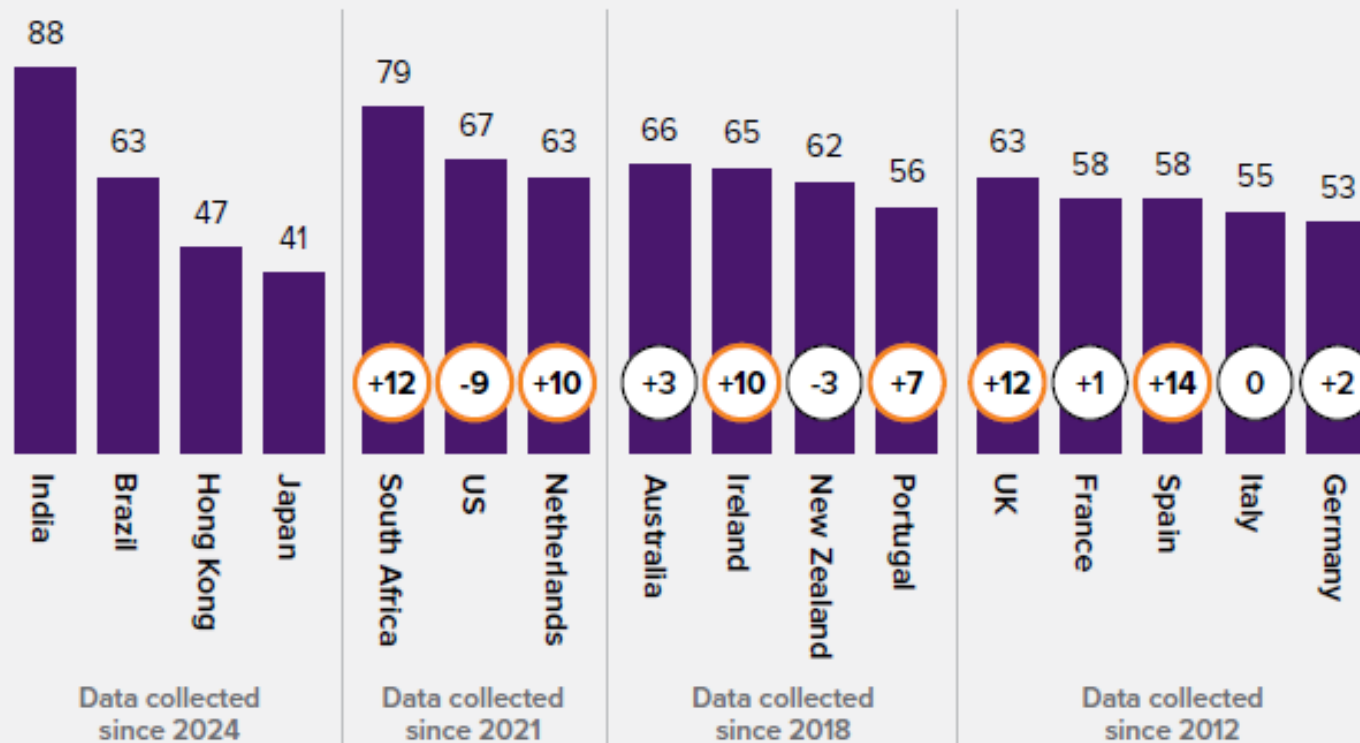
57%

2021 Global Average

Key insights

We found a trend that young people are increasingly likely to raise a concern when aware of misconduct. In our last study from 2021, 61% of young people that were aware of misconduct said that they had reported speaking up about it. This has risen in 2024: the proportion of young people raising concerns was 70% - significantly higher than those in the age brackets 35-54 (61%) and those aged 55+ (54%).

Did you raise or speak up about any of your concerns with management, another appropriate person, or through any other mechanism?



Statistically significant change over time



No statistically significant change over time

Reasons for not reporting

Which of the following, if any, influenced your decision not to raise or speak up about your concerns?

	2024 Global Average	Brazil	Australia	UK	Portugal	Ireland	Hong Kong	Italy	Germany	US	South Africa	France	New Zealand	Spain	Japan	Netherlands	India
I did not believe that corrective action would be taken	34%	44%	43%	42%	41%	40%	40%	37%	35%	35%	30%	28%	28%	28%	23%	23%	17%
I felt I might jeopardise my job	34%	47%	35%	40%	36%	38%	31%	26%	22%	43%	60%	33%	34%	33%	23%	18%	17%
I did not want to be seen as a troublemaker by management	26%	26%	35%	31%	21%	42%	35%	16%	22%	25%	32%	28%	28%	35%	9%	16%	17%
I felt it might alienate myself from my colleagues	21%	12%	35%	29%	7%	29%	24%	11%	38%	27%	25%	21%	22%	20%	15%	11%	14%
I felt it was none of my business	20%	25%	20%	23%	17%	25%	20%	11%	10%	22%	19%	18%	28%	28%	17%	28%	11%
I thought that they already knew about it	16%	19%	18%	10%	11%	8%	17%	24%	13%	18%	9%	19%	14%	10%	10%	25%	31%
I didn't think it was a serious issue at the time	13%	7%	10%	8%	6%	17%	19%	8%	17%	8%	15%	4%	17%	13%	16%	18%	26%
I did not know who to contact	11%	12%	10%	17%	10%	17%	10%	13%	12%	12%	6%	9%	10%	9%	8%	7%	14%
I thought it would be raised by someone else	9%	20%	6%	6%	10%	6%	5%	3%	10%	14%	15%	11%	9%	6%	9%	7%	9%
I thought that it was common practice	9%	4%	6%	8%	4%	6%	12%	15%	8%	12%	6%	11%	7%	10%	9%	14%	23%
Other	6%	6%	8%	17%	6%	8%	4%	-	5%	10%	6%	5%	10%	5%	6%	11%	-
Prefer not to say	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%	6%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	5%	6%	2%	-

60% - job loss

32% - troublemaker

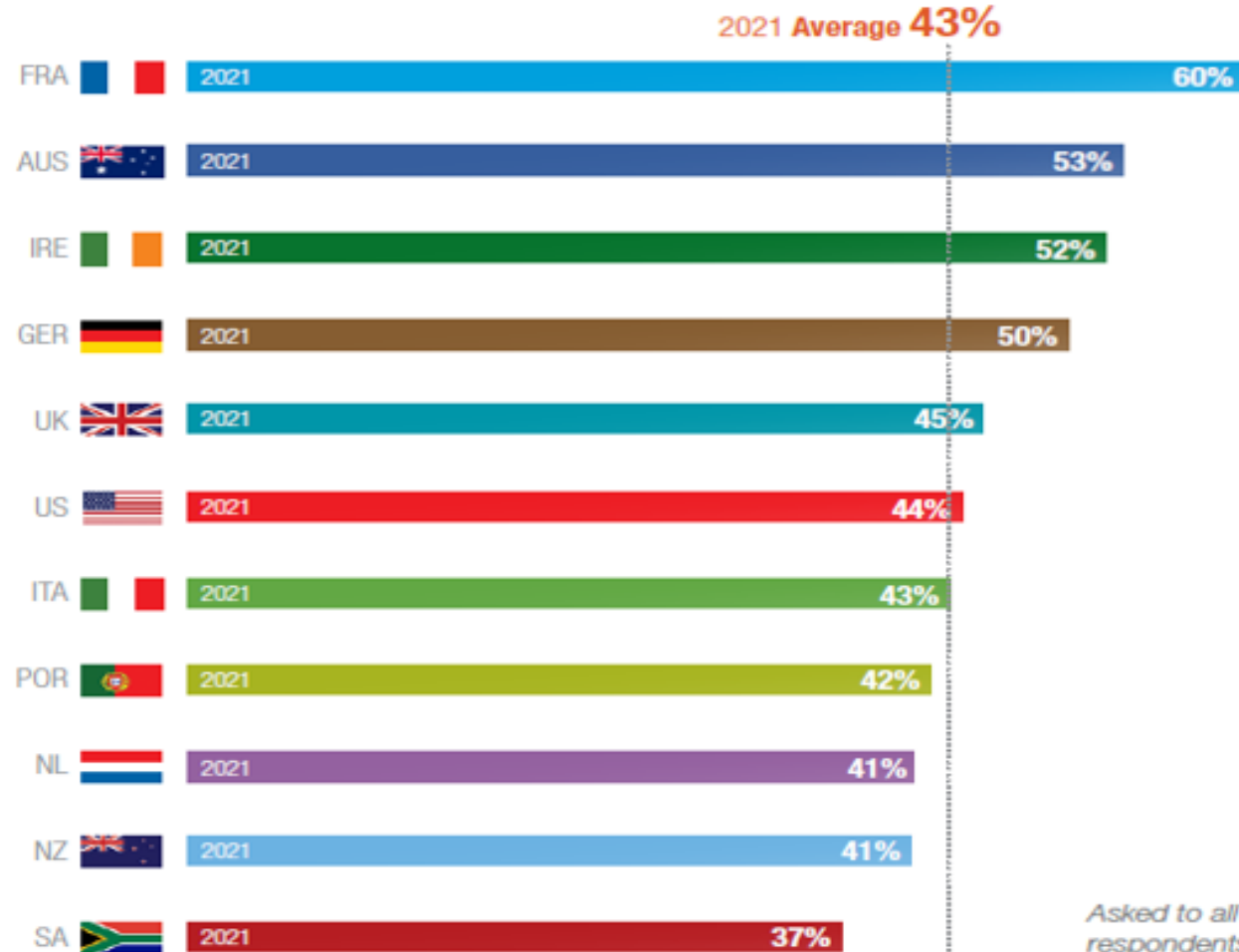
30% - no action

Yet ...

Q8

After raising or speaking up about your concerns, did you experience any personal disadvantage or any form of retaliation for doing so?

Percentage of respondents who said yes.



2021: SA
37%

2024 SA:
48%

2024 Average: 46%

IBE, 2021

Importance of WB systems

- **Combat fraud**
 - Encouraging people to speak up and expose wrongdoing is a major factor in fighting fraud, corruption and unethical behaviour.
 - The mere presence of a whistleblowing system may be enough to deter people.
- The core of the scandal involved the unlawful deposit of municipal funds into VBS, with bribes paid to officials to secure these investments. As the fraud unfolded, VBS was liquidated, leaving numerous municipalities grappling with significant financial losses.
- At least 20 municipalities in Limpopo, Northwest and Gauteng lost nearly **R1.6 billion** after illegally investing with the bank. In Limpopo alone, about 11 municipalities invested money to the value of **R12 billion** with the bank.
- At least seven mayors across the province have since been fired by the Limpopo Provincial Government over their involvement in the VBS bank scandal.
- At least **five** whistleblowers



Importance of WB systems

- **Avoid reputational damage**
 - When an issue is raised through internal channels, it allows company to address it appropriately and discreetly.
 - More crucially, an anonymous system helps someone who doesn't feel safe or confident sharing information with their employer to come forward.
 - Prevent further harm to stakeholders, minimise reputational and financial damage.

"The positive side of having blown the whistle is that you are
a positive tool in the story of stopping fraud
or whatever you discovered"

Fuchs and Groenewald (2018 - 2019)

Importance of WB systems

Prevent issues escalating

- Whistleblowing provides an opportunity to catch problems early on.
- When the information is shared directly with the dedicated team, the company can deal with the concern immediately, before it escalates.

Reduce losses

- Company can prevent it (corruption, fraud, theft) from happening again.
- Avoid painful losses which are damaging for everyone, from employees to clients and suppliers.

Importance of WB systems

Raise awareness

- Without whistleblowers, we may be unaware of illegal or unethical conduct in company.
- The information they pass on, no matter the degree of severity or the nature of it, can raise awareness of issues and concerns.
- With such knowledge in hand, a company can learn, grow and flourish.
- Proper whistleblowing system essential to managing breaches in a quick and constructive way.

Create an open, ethical culture

- A company that actively encourages employees/members to report concerns and supports them if they do so, will gain more trust.
- An open and honest culture usually creates better working relationships and dedication resulting in higher productivity.

Why whistleblowing matters

Basically: for organisations, whistleblowing contributes to:

- stronger ethical culture,
- better risk management,
- improved governance,
- stakeholder trust, and
- early detection of misconduct.

The Board's role in adopting ISO 37002

- ISO 37002 is not merely an operational standard;
 - it is fundamentally linked to organisational ethics, accountability, transparency, and stakeholder trust.
- A board should therefore ensure that the whistleblowing framework is strategically embedded, properly governed, and aligned with the organisation's values, risk management, and legal obligations.

The Board's role in adopting ISO 37002

- Boards should:
 - Provide ethical leadership & tone at the top
 - Approve and oversee the whistleblowing framework
 - Ensure independence and adequate resourcing
 - Oversee protection against retaliation
 - Monitor effectiveness and receive reporting
 - Ensure organisational learning and continuous improvement
 - Align ISO 37002 with Governance and ESG Responsibilities
 - Lead by example

The Board's role in adopting ISO 37002

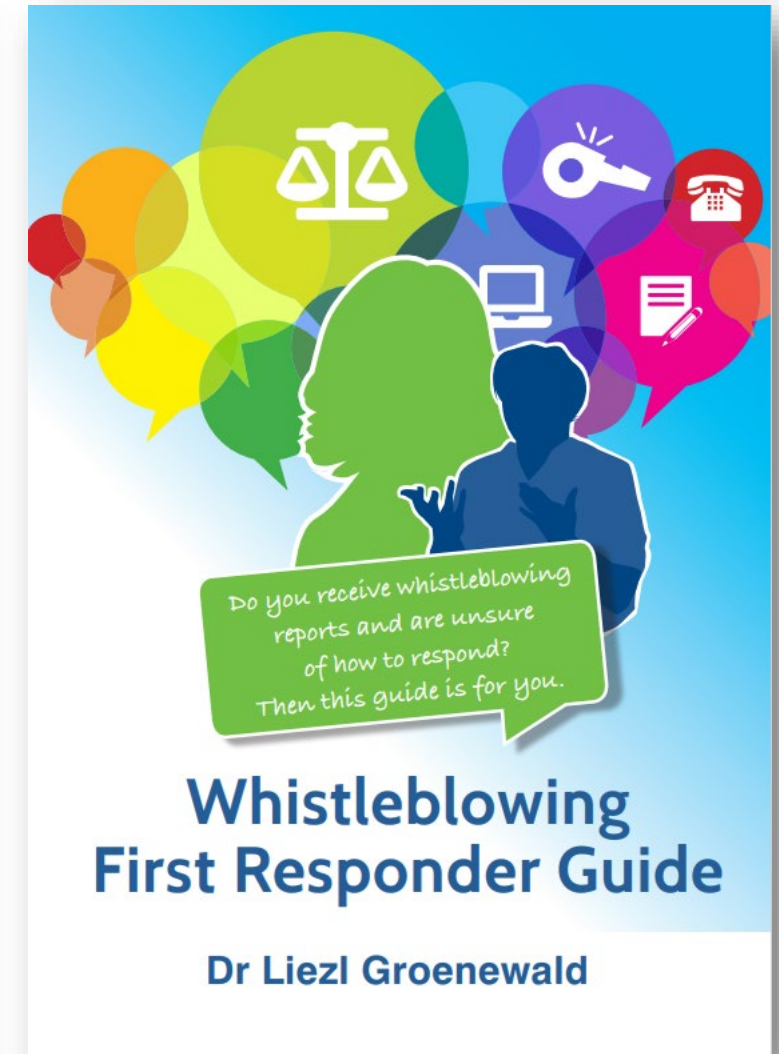
- The board's role in adopting ISO 37002 is **not** operational management of disclosures
- Rather governance oversight, ethical leadership, accountability, and assurance
- Ensure that the whistleblowing framework is *trusted, independent, properly resourced, and embedded* within the organisation's **ethical culture and governance structures**.

Effective ISO 37002 implementation signals that the organisation is committed not only to detecting wrongdoing, but also to protecting those who speak up in the public and organisational interest.

- “The world needs whistleblowers. No democracy can survive without people who act when they see something going on that is wrong.”
 - Johann van Loggerenberg (SARS whistleblower)

Helpful resources – organisations & individuals

www.tei.org.za



Help for whistleblowers

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