

The State of Speak-Up Culture

ECI's most recent Global Business Ethics Survey® (GBES®) contains important data on the experiences of employees globally when it comes to speaking up. Tolerating retaliation can lead to devastating consequences, as employees remain silent in the face of unethical or even illegal practices. **Organizations have a responsibility to build strong ethical workplaces that provide a safe environment for employees to speak up.**

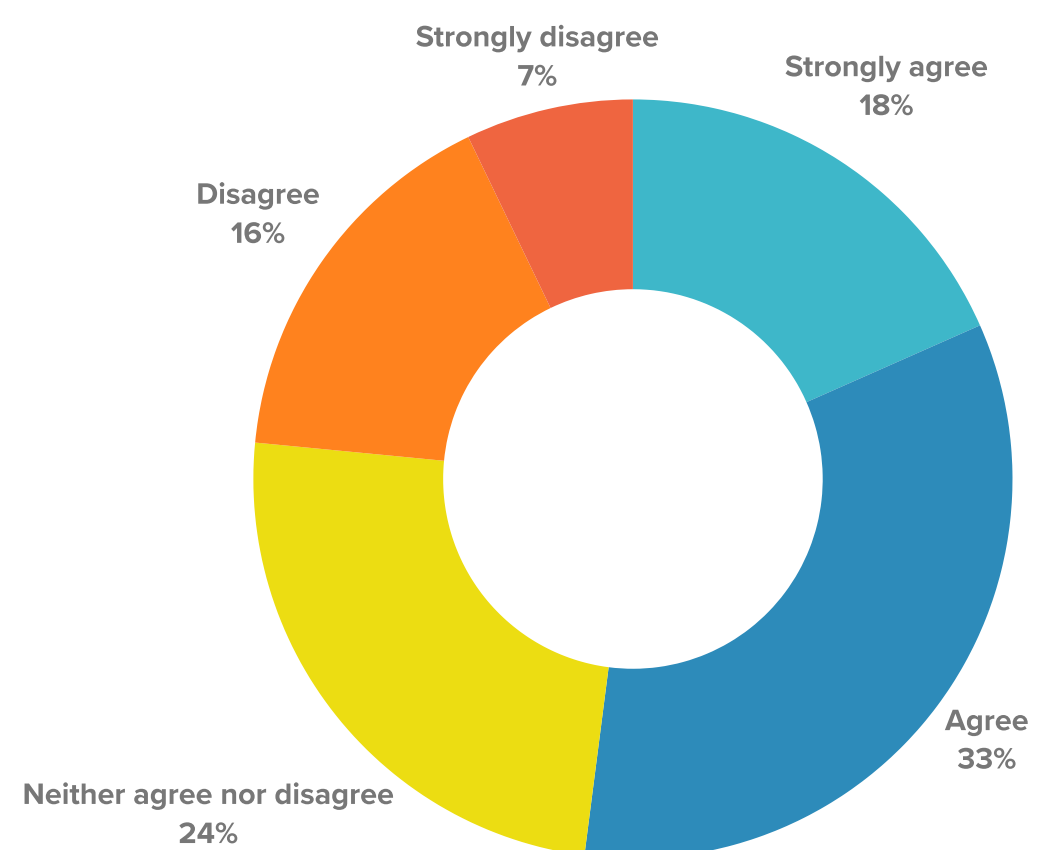
The threat of retaliation is a major barrier to the reporting of wrongdoing.

Misconduct of any kind is a risk, but unreported misconduct is one of the greatest threats to any organization, and all leaders should hope to prevent it. Without a safe environment that reinforces the value of speaking up, many would-be reporters could keep observed misconduct to themselves, putting the organization at risk.

Coaching top leadership on how to establish a reporting system that empowers whistleblowers, while actively combatting any potential retaliation, is a key aspect of a successful E&C program.

The most recent GBES data found that just over one half of employees globally feel that questioning the decisions of management will not be met with retaliation. While this is good news, savvy practitioners should consider the inverse of this statistic: nearly one half of employees globally believe that their organization will not protect them from retaliation when they question the decisions of management, or are neutral towards the state of retaliation in their organization. Based on this data, leaders everywhere should take a closer look at their company culture, and ask if there is more that should be done to create a psychologically safe workplace that encourages speaking up.

Employees in my organization can speak up without fear of retaliation.



→ **More than 50%**
of employees globally agreed that they can
speak up without fear of retaliation.*

*Note: data are based on the global median of 42 countries from the 2023 Global Business Ethics Survey® (GBES®).



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