



TOOLKIT FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

ON ETHICAL AND TRANSPARENT
BUSINESS PRACTICE

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Many Christians have a vision to be involved in the marketplace and to do business in a Godly manner according to God's principles.

Honesty, integrity and transparency are key aspects of Christian values that are reflected in businesses today where good governance prevails.

Christians are keen to make all societies free of the injustice and inequality that comes hand-in-hand with corruption. But how can Christians actively protect the people and markets that are part of their businesses?

This kit is designed to help business owners, company directors and CEOs take practical steps to run their enterprise in an ethical and transparent way.

If we are a light for integrity we can:

- + improve the communities we work in by ensuring the integrity of markets;
- + improve the access to products and services at a fair price;
- + ensure that local businesses have the same access to opportunities that larger more economically powerful multi-nationals have;
- + improve the quality and range of public services;
- + increase access to justice for all;
- + make poor families more economically secure;
- + make sure that the resources of charities go further
- + and most importantly, we can put God's righteous standards at the heart of our society

“When you take a stand about a matter of justice, or when you refuse to be part of an unethical deal, you are engaged in mission – the mission of establishing God's kingdom where you work.”

From *Transform Your Work Life*, by Graham Power with Dion Forster

The Costs of Corruption to Your Business

Corruption is a significant obstacle to economic development. It can hamper companies that want to do “good” business, and can have social and personal costs as well.

For business people corruption can:

- + reduce your ability to access services and win contracts
- + take away resources that could be used to make your business stronger
- + undermine your company's reputation
- + put your company at risk of criminal prosecution

Corruption also imposes risks on our communities. It removes economic and educational opportunity, prevents access to justice and healthcare and destroys lives. It hurts the most vulnerable and fuels distrust in the law and police.

“Corruption is damaging to equity and fairness, to economic performance and the welfare of society. It is not a victimless crime; it is theft.”

Paul Bachelor and Steve Osei-Mensah, *Salt and Light: Christians' role in Combating Corruption*, a paper presented to the Third Lausanne Congress 2010.



Corruption is a way of life for the average Malaysian. It was no exception for Mr Tam Wah Fiong who has run his printing business in Kuala Lumpur for over 20 years. In 1997 Mr Tam became a Christian. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and God's word, he stopped corruption in his business within a year.

But there was a cost. He lost customers who expected bribes in exchange for contracts and incurred more expenses complying fully with rules and regulations.

In the long-term, systems were put in place to advance quality, service and cost efficiency, which in time attracted a new customer set, including multinational companies.

Mr Tam says, “Taking a zero-corruption stand honors God and attracts new clients as it guarantees clean dealing.”

Wherever business operates, Christian business leaders need to know about the dangers of corruption and how to deal with them.

Watch the 2011 winner of the International Anti-Corruption video competition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXHBXiwcArM>

Finding a Solution

Clearly, corruption is a global problem with devastating consequences that deserves our immediate attention. But as Christians, we want to be part of the good news story that shows how integrity and ethical behaviour can bring economic, social and spiritual benefits to our communities.

What the Bible says about Integrity

The Bible understands that corruption springs from the sin of greed and ambition and putting money before God. Our minds and our consciences are prone to corrupt thoughts (Titus 1:15); corrupt thoughts give rise to corrupt speech (Prov. 19:28; James 3:6) and corrupt actions.

This is a wider view of corruption than a strictly legal view but helps us to see the moral imperative as well as motivation to act within the law.

In a biblical context corruption has been endemic among humankind ever since the Fall (Gen 6:11–12; Ps 14:1–3). Corrupt gain buys power. The prophet Micah warns his people, “Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire – they all conspire together.” Micah 7:3.

Taking part in corrupt practices is to sacrifice our connection with God for the gain of a transient material benefit.

We should support honest practices recognizing that while God is the ultimate bringer of justice He wants us to spread Godly values and right living. Many Christians are slow to embrace the idea that God is really concerned about “honest scales and balances.”¹ But the struggle for integrity is far more than a political or social idea. It’s also about the virtue which elevates a nation.²

We want Christians to “shine a light” so we can solve these problems, and help to establish God’s values and hope. We have the power to act against corruption and secrecy and when people see our good works, they will glorify our Father in heaven (Matt 5:16).

By proclaiming justice and defending the cause of the poorest, we want to see God’s blessings released and restored for all (Jeremiah 22:16).

Business leaders can promote honest dealings in pricing, procurement and taxes so that enterprises of all sizes have the opportunity to prosper. In many contexts, business people are in the position to be able to refuse to pay bribes and coordinated action could have a real impact.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:23–24.

We can all be part of the solution

Business leaders can overcome cynicism and a culture of self-interest if we each take action. We are not overlooking the risks to your business profitability and we are not naive about business practice – we simply want the best.

“We need to see a collaboration between Christian businessmen and the Church so that both can work for a stable society based on integrity. We need ‘Daniels’ in leadership in public office and that would open streams for successful implementation of the ideas in these resources.”

Hon Emmanuel Ibeshi, former Nigerian Member of Parliament, Haggai Institute, Hawaii, USA.

¹ Proverbs 16:11

² Proverbs 13:34 This idea is taken from *Ethical Leadership and Freedom from Hunger*, a paper by Rev Joel Edwards, 2011.

5 Practical Things You Can Do

Make a public commitment to integrity

Include integrity as one of your core values

Add doing business with integrity to your mission statement

Sign an online pact if your country has one. See <http://cism.my/cismv2/> from Malaysia as an example, or the Unashamedly Ethical Business Commitment, <http://www.unashamedlyethical.com/CommitmentForm/?form=Business>



Michelle Harding was MD of a plastic pipe company in South Africa. Her company was part of a crooked cartel that had been fixing prices and rigging bids for decades. When she heard a talk at an Unashamedly Ethical meeting, she realized she wanted her business to change.

She arranged a breakfast meeting with members of the cartel, told them she would no longer participate in corruption and challenged them to help her clean up the industry. That was a turning point.

Michelle Harding also testified to the Competition Tribunal. In 2012, the Tribunal commended Harding for facing up to what it called “an industry dominated for decades by illicit cartel practices. She made it too difficult for them to continue operating in the way they did.”

Have clear policies

Ensure you have an anti-corruption policy and that procedures to monitor and enforce it are active and effective. Your policies might cover:

- + Bribes
- + Political contributions
- + Sponsorships and gifts that might help you gain business
- + Facilitation payments
- + Hospitality and expenses

Engage with suppliers, agents and distributors so they join you in driving the integrity agenda

The guidelines should be specific, with stated values eg “the maximum allowed cost of a meal is US\$20 per head”, and with a clear signoff process for charitable donations and sponsorships.

Train your staff on the guidelines and repeat the training every two years. New staff should have the guidelines included in their induction.

Know Your Corruption Risks

This commitment means you should risk assess your business for corruption

- + Do you operate in a historically corrupt geography?
- + Is your industry known for paying or receiving bribes?
- + Do you have relationships with third parties that are opaque in terms of payments?
- + Do you deal with foreign officials such as politicians?
- + Have you included fraud or corruption on your risk register?

You may not have clear solutions to all of the risks but an assessment will help to make your public

commitment workable. Use the free Transparency International SET tool at http://archive.transparency.org/publications/publications/toolkits/ti_set for a comprehensive risk assessment tool.

Put Your Values into Action

You could establish an integrity pact, a simple document agreeing to act with integrity, submit accurate invoices and not collude with other suppliers to price-fix. You could ask your main suppliers to sign on to the Pact.

You could have a statement of ethical business practice to distribute to all your suppliers and customers explaining the business ethics that you aim to maintain. This may help to deter corruption approaches.

Have an email address and phone number so that employees and clients can report concerns.

The email and phone number should be published on your website and intranet, and posted round your premises so both staff and external parties can report incidents.

Support staff to resist corrupt approaches and encourage them to raise concerns with management. Appoint a member of staff as the Integrity Officer to handle queries and issues and deal with incidents appropriately or you can outsource this work to a specialist consulting service.

Have your Integrity Officer conduct regular audits on staff in key areas like Procurement, Finance or Sales to check awareness and ensure that they are keeping to the principles.

Pass on information about corrupt practices to police and/or government – if there is a good process.

“Integrity offers the single largest opportunity for improvements in sustainable and equitable development worldwide.”

Integrity Action

Walk the talk.

People will watch to see if you mean what you say. Make sure you set the standard by your words and deeds, even when it costs you. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” This may take your relationship with God to new levels as you trust him to carry you through.

Ask people to pray for you so that you can be strong in keeping to your principles, and are protected from malicious talk or accusations.

Talk to others in your business networks about your policies and encourage them to do the same.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,”
Philippians 2:3

NOW....Find Out More

Engage with a business integrity group like Transparency International, Global Watch or Integrity Action to see how they can help you, get involved in a group like Unashamedly Ethical or Business as Mission (BAM).

Bachelor and Osei-Mensah refer to the example of Daniel when they speak of the need for people of faith to have the highest standards:

“Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in the conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent” (Daniel 6:3–4).

As Christians we would do well to remind ourselves regularly of Daniel’s example and to imitate his intense prayer life for wisdom in complex business, political and cultural situations to discern God’s will.

We should pray also for the same Holy Spirit’s power to take our stand, however painful, in obedience to the Lord. Daniel’s faith was not without cost. Many whistle-blowers in today’s world also show great courage and we should pray for their fortitude.

There is much helpful material to assist small and medium enterprises counter bribery. Take the time to go through some of the resources below, and pass them on to others in your organisation. Each resource is clear, informed and practical and has been written by highly respected groups.

- a. the Transparency International website has many tools at <http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/tools/>

The Business Principles for Countering Bribery (in English) is useful for companies dealing with the challenge and risks posed by bribery.

Their Adequate Procedures checklist and ‘Doing business without bribery’ handbook offer useful suggestions.
- b. The Business Anti Corruption Portal (www.business-anti-corruption.com) offers recommendations and resources on how to ensure a top level commitment, how to conduct a corruption risk assessment for your business, suggestions on codes of conduct, and implementation strategies.
- c. There is an excellent online training module produced by the Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption centre (GIACC) (giacentre.org). Available in five languages, it is designed for senior and middle management and takes 60–120 minutes to complete. It covers the risks of corruption, different types of corruption, some practical ethical dilemmas and guiding principles to reduce the risk of corruption.
- d. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) (www.iccwbo.org) has a training tool (in six languages) called RESIST, which gives practical advice on how to prevent or respond to corrupt demands in 22 different scenarios.

“Johan Sebastian Bach used the organ as an instrument to create beautiful music to the glory of God and for us to enjoy. Businesses are also instruments. They should serve people, align with God’s purposes, be good stewards of the planet and make a profit.”

Mats Tunehag, Business as Mission

This toolkit is produced as part of the global campaign to shine a light on corruption.

We are encouraging churches and individuals across the world to take part in actions that will declare God’s values and bring hope of effective change in tackling greed and poor governance.



Micah Challenge →



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