

Ethics and business practice

[Business](#)



One of the many challenges facing businesses today is how to harmonize their organization, work and professional ethics in line with the prevailing business practices and environment. Beckton Dickinson lies between a rock and a hard place. They would want to carry out their business activities strictly adhering to not only their organization's policies and ethics but also the stipulations by the US government that vehemently outlaw any form of corruption or bribery.

The US laws on international trade made it illegal for any multinational operating both at home or in foreign territories, to engage in any malpractice that seeks to influence a decision by any government, institution or individual. Many multinationals especially in Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa where there are no stringent laws on tendering, have been known to give kickbacks to influence the process. The individuals and the key decision makers behind tendering are also known to ask for gifts and kickbacks so that they would favor a specific company. These gifts or commissions may range from a small gift to a colossal amount of money.

Beckton Dickinson management team strives to maintain high standards that embrace fairness and honesty, and have designed a guide advocating for the same. They have issued clear guidelines to their employees detailing the company's expectations on the proper conduct and business practice both within the United States and globally. This guide touches on the issues ranging from political contribution to what is considered to be a gift. The employees have raised their reservations on these guidelines and would wish the amount in regard to what is acceptable in terms of gifts to be defined according to the regions involved.

Kickbacks and bribery as indicated in this report is not only a problem limited to any specific corporation, industry or government. It is a universal problem that equally requires global attention. It has permeated every aspect of business life and practice. An analyses of the problem would reveal that almost all the parties involved play a role in perpetrating the vice. The big corporations are in business and would want to under all cost secure the most profitable deals. Beckton Dickinson would in no doubt wish to expand its sales and maintain its marketleadershipposition in supplyinghealthsector appliances.

To keep its competitor a bay it might be forced to engage in malpractices to secure the contracts. The tendering individuals also may be asking for bribes as well as the government officials. This problem hence is not perpetrated by a single party but by almost all the players. World opinion of late seem to be tilting towards unanimity in the need to establish strict anti-corruption laws in the procurement departments. Bribery is a vice that leads to morals and societal degeneration. In condoning this vice the perpetrators are threatening the social good.

The principle of integrity, fairness and honesty are being threatened. It is imperative that steps be taken to curb this menace to ensure that fairness thrives. Small businesses are being threatened, as some of them cannot afford the bribes and kickbacks. There should be strict adherence to business ethics to level the playing field and ensure fair competition. Performance expectations gap is the gap that exists between what the society and shareholders expect the company to deliver in terms of performance and what it (company) actually delivers ([www. abrema. net](http://www.abrema.net)).

The shareholder and the state have insisted on the adherence to the stipulated laws as far as proper business ethics is concerned. The accountants and auditors of Beckton Dickinson are having it rough and are in a dilemma as far as accounting for the gifts and the kickbacks is concerned. The company has issued clear guidelines on the required business ethics. It is advocating for mandatory compliances on the side of the employees. The employees especially the personnel on the ground claim the situation is hostile and tends to lean more on bribery and kickbacks.

If you don't pay for the gifts, the rival companies will do it and clinch the tender. The company has not been able to harmonize its ethics to encompass all levels of its operations. There should be distinct guidelines in the different regions. Whereas some gifts may be considered ethical in for example the United States, in Japan it is a different story altogether. The company should not abet bribery in some countries while being strict in others. However the recent steps taken by the company is a positive indicator that even though the problem is serious, the organization is taking bold steps to curb it.

The top management has flown into the regional branches to train the personnel and emphasis on the companies stand as far as business ethics are concerned. The trend is not expected to change overnight. Gradually the company will achieve its key objective and instill discipline in this workforce. The situation though in the international scene will take long to change. The remedy to curbing this unethical practice requires a multifaceted approach, an approach that will encompass all the players involved. There are different approaches that can be taken in this.

Some scholars claim that the big corporations are to blame, having recognized a weakness especially in the developing countries systems of governance; they have been known to use all manners of strategies ranging from intimidation to bribery. Hence in ending those unethical practices, corporations have to be at the forefront. Self-regulation of these companies has to be emphasized, change must come from within rather than without (www. newstarget. com) compliance with the ethical guidelines by Beckton Dickinson is a step in the right direction and should be emulated by other players in the industry.

The key to unlocking this ethical deadlock however, many will agree, lies in the government structures and policies themselves. The United States for example issued the stipulations on business practices and ethics as far as bribery and kickbacks are concerned. This greatly reduced the cases as bribery as corporations can now be faced with legal actions upon contravention of the rules. It is upon the governments as the key decision makers, to streamline their procurement rules to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability. Legal redress should be provided to the aggrieved parties.

Although the corporations and the society have a role to play the governments hold the key and should be the one to initiate this change and ensure stiff penalties to the defaulters. Reference Dani Veracity, Bribery in medicine: how drug authorities, Big pharma pushers and other medical racket operations forfeit ethics for powers and profits. Last updated on January 10, 2006. Retrieved in 23/09/07 from <http://www. newstarget. com/016676. html>

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