

Post Event Report : “Ethics in the Workplace”

Panel Discussion Event

11th October 2011 at Accenture, London EC3M 3BD

Report By:

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Introduction

Spinlondon Network Limited conducted an interactive Workshop on **Ethics in Business** in August 2010, which was very successful. A year later in August 2011, on popular demand, Spinlondon organised a Round-Table discussion on the subject of Ethics which eventually led to planning and conducting a Panel Discussion event on Ethics in the Workplace.

This short report highlights some key points from an exciting and thought provoking discussion that took place on the evening of **11th of October 2011** in **London** at the Accenture offices on the topic of **Ethics in the Workplace**. The diverse panel consisted of representatives from Reed Smith, Diverse Ethics, Institute of Business Ethics, Accenture and Centre for Social Brilliance and a very participative and enthusiastic audience.



Testimonial

“I had a very engaging time discussing business ethics with the panellists and attendees. I am always impressed by how deeply our people care about ethics and values in the workplace, and I think we all know that without integrity and values, we have no business. I found it quite interesting how several panellists noted that more and more, new employees are looking for an ethical organization to join ... I think that in the coming war for talent, the values posture of the company will be a key differentiator which sets the successful apart.”

Jay Mumford
Director, Office of Ethics & Compliance, Accenture



Ethics in the Workplace

This event provided an opportunity to discuss the relevance of ethics in the modern professions. We examined various aspects of Ethics in the workplace from its meaning and history, through to the different forms that it now presents itself in modern society, and why they are still needed.

The impact of the UK Bribery Act that came into force on July 1, 2011 was discussed at length. This act is one of the strictest and most comprehensive anticorruption laws in the world and is making employees in organisations more accountable for their actions.

The practitioners inspired the audience with their visions for the future and also shared some profound and simple ideas and thoughts on how we can engage in ethical decision making and understand the impact of our decisions on the business. Many ideas were offered on what the next generation leaders can do to raise awareness of this topic.

The event provided an opportunity for networking among the participants whilst raising awareness of a simple yet complex subject.

What is Ethics?



Ethics, a term frequently used to mean integrity, honesty, openness, transparency and following one's conscience has always been part of most organisational cultures and been embedded in the form of values in day to day business actions. However with employees becoming more socially conscious and the external environment demanding more stringent and open behaviours and conduct from companies, many businesses now have a lead function to drive and influence ethical codes of conduct throughout their organisations.

Role of Ethics in Today's Business

As Ethics is becoming the conscience of organisations, a new level of consciousness is emerging where the wellbeing of employees, the stakeholders, communities and the planet is becoming equally important as maximizing profits. Organisations are developing ethical codes of conduct to enable their employees to develop higher ethical standards in their day to day business life and activities. To develop these personal ethical standards, *“It is important to have dialogues about ethical situations at all levels of an organisation and provide opportunities for ethical processes to become clearer as they can also help in resolving any conflicts between personal and organisational ethics”* says **Dr Atul Shah of Diverse Ethics**.

With so many companies falling short of ethical standards, such as Enron, News Corp and others, a stringent anti-corruption law came into force in the UK on July 1, 2011, called the UK Bribery Act which creates accountability for any type of bribery at all levels of an organisation. And yes, bribery is only one form of an ethical misconduct, but it provides a great framework for companies to tighten their procedures and look at their organisational culture at a deeper level and re-create anew. It is inevitable that as companies review and re-align themselves to higher ethical standards, their decision making processes and performance measures will need to take into account long term considerations rather than short term business benefits. The culture of profit at any cost is surely fading!

Doing Ethical Things Vs Doing Things Ethically?

Global Citizenship, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Business Ethics have often been interlinked with each other and used synonymously in some cases. However **Simon Webley of the Institute of Business Ethics** says that *“There is a real distinction between CSR and Ethics. It is between ‘Doing Ethical Things’ vs. ‘Doing Things ethically’”*

He mentioned that organisations can be engaged in socially responsible initiatives (doing ethical things), but may not necessarily be ethical in their business processes (doing things ethically). To do things ethically, it is important to apply the ethical values of integrity, honesty, openness and transparency to the day to day aspects of doing business, whether internally in the company or externally in society.

“Ethics begins where the law ends” says **Simon** and highlights that legal aspects have a clear guideline of being right or wrong but the land of ethics requires us to discern the grey areas of personal and organisational conscience and make decisions based on our innate wisdom and a complete understanding of the situation.

Doing Things Ethically took the discussion to the area of disparity in top management pay and bonuses in failing businesses. **Atul Shah of Diverse Ethics** said that *“the greed in organisations at top management levels needs to be addressed and having a diverse board will ensure a shift from a group think perspective. He also said that when one connects to their conscience, one is connected to the universal understanding of what is right for humanity.”*

Ethical Decision Making

Many organisations are creating processes that enable ethical decision making when employees are faced with ethical dilemmas in line with the ethical codes and values of the organisation. **Ethics and Compliance Lead at Accenture, Patrick Rowe** highlighted how *“these codes of ethics align all employees to a common set of principles”*.

Making ethical decisions requires both an external review of circumstances of organizational values, cultural variations and a scan of our internal landscape of our conscience and values that together provide us with a guidance system.

Jeremy Glover, Partner at Reed Smith, talked about a famous scenario where *an automotive company made a decision to continue selling cars that they knew were going to risk people’s lives*. In some companies the choice of profit at any cost is still a reality...even though it can be an ethically costly one!

Bob Paton, Senior Executive at Accenture, highlighted a situation where he had to make a decision to follow some legal procedures in cultivating a land for farming organically which he was initially not aware of and had to make an ethical choice around it.

The discussion also explored the spectrum of ethical decision making from using company stationary for personal use to choosing suppliers that we like but do not fit company criteria. **Simon** said that *“we are ethical or we are not...there is no middle ground”*. So does this mean that we cannot use any company stationary or make personal calls on company phones? I think there is still an evolving awareness personally and within a company as to what is right in any given moment, considering the relationship and values one shares with the company and what feels right to one’s conscience.

Future of Ethics in the Workplace

Jay Mumford of Accenture, talked about how *“the company is always striving towards higher inspirational codes of conduct and behaviour”*. These higher codes of conduct enable businesses to engage ethically at all levels and ensure the wellbeing of their employees, the society at large and the environment. Not an easy task, unless we move societal and environmental engagement right at the core of any business! And the creations of any business support the societal and environmental needs and the profit created will have a conscience!

The Host : Accent on Vegetarianism – Vegetarian Interest Group

VIG, ran within Accenture UK, is far from the usual ‘meet and eat’ type of social events. In its third year of operation now, the group has broken boundaries on imaginations that tag themselves with vegetarian stereotypes. VIG has provided environmental, musical, spiritual and emotional dimension to its cause, thus taking a holistic approach to a rather disciplinarian routine.

The group aims at raising awareness on lifestyle options and their impact on health and environment. And it’s not just preaching, but educating, practicing and adopting such holistic lifestyle which lends VIG a pragmatic appeal.

The group is open to everyone, and being vegetarian is not a prerequisite. We hope to encourage a diverse group of people including vegetarians, vegans and meat eaters towards realizing the benefits of healthy lifestyle and enhancing their own personal potential.

For further information please contact UK-Vegetarian-Interest-Group-Info@accenture.com or call Vinay Gulati on +44 207 844 8333



**Vegetarian Interest Group
Sponsor**

Bob Paton

Senior Executive, Accenture

The Panel Members

Manisha Dahad



Manisha is a social visionary, speaker and consultant with a unique ability of unleashing the untapped potential and brilliance of individuals, communities and businesses. She has always worked in innovative ways within organisations and communities bringing new social and business ideas to fruition. From engaging in large transformational programmes as a Management Consultant with IBM and working with telecom companies like O2, T-Mobile and Cable & Wireless, to designing and delivering social leadership programmes for corporate organisations such as Kroll and Colliers CRE in partnership with Save the Children and other charities, she weaves a core thread of social consciousness and integrity and ethicalness in each initiative. Manisha also has an MBA from London Business School.

Jeremy Glover



Jeremy Glover is a partner at Reed Smith LLP. Reed Smith is one of the 15 largest law firms in the world. Jeremy heads up the UK employee benefits and corporate governance practice and advises companies from start ups to multinationals. Jeremy has worked for Big 4 consultancies and has an MBA from CASS Business School. Jeremy lectures often on corporate governance, employee incentives, corporate social responsibility and the interaction of law, finance, strategy, human resources and best practice.

"I was honoured to take part in the Ethics in the Workplace discussion. The audience was obviously engaged with the subject and we could have continued the discussion for many more hours. It would be interesting to see if anyone attending had any thoughts on how best to implement an ethics policy in an organisation, particularly a global organisation". Jeremy Glover, Partner at Reed Smith

Bob Paton



Bob is a Senior Executive in the UKDC and has worked for Accenture for 19 years and during this time he has specialised in the seamless implementation of IT systems and the management of large scale system delivery.

Prior to Accenture he was a Civil Servant for 20 years, for 15 of those years he worked in IT, again working in major system implementation and delivery.

The Panel Members

Patrick Rowe



Patrick Rowe is an Associate General Counsel for Accenture UK and Ireland. He joined Accenture in 1995 and qualified in Australia in 1987. In his current role Patrick is the Ethics and Compliance lead for the UK business. This involves driving local implementation of global compliance plans and advising on ethics related matters.

“It was a great event with good participation and engagement.” Patrick Rowe, Associate General Counsel Accenture

Dr. Atul K. Shah



Dr. Atul Keshavji Shah is a creative social inventor and entrepreneur with distinguished skills in business and media. Atul is CEO and founder of the internet portal diverseethics.com. Atul is also a qualified Chartered Accountant having trained with KPMG and has worked for various charities and public institutions. He was Lecturer at the University of Bristol, University of Maryland – USA, and University of Essex. He is the founding editor for the distinguished Jain Spirit international magazine. Atul is a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio 4, BBC World Service and BBC Asian Network. He is author of '[Celebrating Diversity - How to enjoy, respect and benefit from Great Coloured Britain](#)'. Presently, he is Vice-Chairman of the National Council of Faiths & Beliefs in Further Education and a secondee to the Board of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

“Many thanks for organising a very interesting event yesterday – the feedback seemed to be very positive. You worked very hard and hats off to you and Kavita.” Atul Shah, CEO, Diverse Ethics

Simon Webley



Simon has been Research Director at the Institute of Business Ethics in London since 1998. The Institute is a not-for-profit organisation based in London which helps organisation in many countries develop and implement business ethics programmes. Simon has published numerous studies on all aspects of business ethics, the most recent being: Religion in the Workplace (2011). He has lectured and written on the subject in many countries. Simon is a member of the ICC's Commission on Corporate Responsibility and Anti-corruption and the BSI's Anti Bribery Standard Panel.

“I thought the Discussion was very successful. Two things stood out for me:

The desire expressed from those in the audience to work for an organisation that encouraged an Open Culture where core values like integrity were taken seriously and staff were encouraged to ‘speak up’ when they were unhappy about something.

And, the appreciation by many of the way corporate CR activity is too often ‘doing ethical things’ rather than ‘doing things ethically’ One is not a substitute for the other!”

Our Partners



Centre for Social Brilliance www.socialbrilliance.org

The Centre for Social Brilliance is an Innovation Nexus that facilitates the creation of new social frameworks that unleashes the brilliance of people and creates vibrant societies around the world. It brings together a collective of social visionaries, entrepreneurs, socially aware businesses & community organisations and provides Social Brilliance Training, Consultancy, Events and Conferences that over time will create innovative social initiatives that make people's businesses, communities & organisations successful and vibrant.



Indo European Business Forum <http://www.iebf.org.uk/>

The Indo European Business Forum is an independent impartial body actively promoting two way flows of trade, investment in India and EU member countries. The Indo European Business Forum is a non-profit generating privately funded non-governmental organization. The aim is to encourage, nurture and promote bilateral business, mutual understanding and friendly relationships between industrial, service and business communities of India and Europe.

Organiser : Spinlondon



Spinlondon Network Limited is a non-profit organisation, which provides an open & independent forum to promote and accelerate sustainable excellence.

The mission of Spinlondon is to provide a conducive environment:

- to promote innovators in professional services industry
- To facilitate networking among the members
- To provide a channel for information sharing
- To create a platform for promoting best practices
- A testing platform for new ideas



For any further information about Spinlondon, please contact:

Program Concept and Chair:



Vinay Gulati

Vinay has worked in innovative ways within large corporates, social entrepreneurial organisations and communities bringing new ideas to fruition. In the last 15 years, his work has focused on improving business performance and productivity, organizational maturity and process capability whilst ensuring policy compliance. He is currently working for Accenture, leading the Delivery Innovation and Industrialisation Program for their Delivery Centres in UK.

He is the founder and chairman for not-for-profit Spinlondon Network Ltd. He has a passion for supporting local charities. He has worked with schools on voluntary educational projects for children. Trained by Al Gore (ex-vice-president of USA), as a volunteer for the climate project (www.tcp.org) he is helping drive the environmental and global climate agenda. He graduated from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur with a Bachelor's of Technology degree in Computer Science and Engineering.

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