

Success Story

Ghana – Re-aligning Staff Mind-Set to Embrace the New Organisational Culture

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Corporate secretarial and administrative assistance to businesses

- Working with start-ups and well-established companies
- In operation since 2014
- Five part-time staff members

Fighting corruption with integrity

Having dealt with corruption problems in our company, I wanted to find out more about how to fight the issue. After seeing an advertisement about the Alliance for Integrity's corruption prevention training in the *Daily Graphic* newspaper, the idea of working on a company-wide compliance programme to provide guidelines for staff and clients in dealing with and reporting compliance breaches sparked my interest. Before collaborating with the Alliance for Integrity the handling of compliance issues was left to the discretion of employees. This created a lot of friction between the employees and our customers. Staff were caught in the usual Ghanaian confusion of not knowing where to draw the line between a gift, a bribe, and appreciation.

Compliance training to help define clear guidelines

I attended the Alliance for Integrity's corruption prevention training in 2018. The one-day session was focused on how to work together with government agencies in a professional manner but also with integrity. We developed a structured document with clear rules for dealing with compliance cases which had been a challenge for us before the training. It helped us set up the framework for an anti-corruption policy within our company which simultaneously improves our attractiveness to our clients.

Roadblocks to integrity

The primary obstacle to developing an anti-corruption policy was the initial resistance from our staff who saw the entire process as new and alien. They were used to working in a certain way and resented the process because they felt it was going to prevent them from taking up opportunities to make some extra income. It was challenging to break the status quo while trying to implement the new integrity policy. Our employees, our clients, and other stakeholders, all did not really understand what we were trying to achieve. It took a lot of sensitisation to educate them about what we as a company wanted to stand for.

A new set of rules to fight corruption

Through the "From Companies to Companies" corruption prevention training we developed a document that formalises the HH Nominees' zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption. Today, our employees know what to do and what not to do when working with government agencies and other private companies. The document clearly specifies the following main points:

- HH Nominees' definition of all common facets of corruption including bribery;
- Guidelines for handling grey areas or difficult situations;
- Consequences for the breach of policy guidelines.

Furthermore, HH Nominees has put in writing its commitment to act professionally, fairly and with integrity in all business dealings and relationships with both internal and external stakeholders.

Standing out doing the right thing

Today our staff are well trained and committed to taking a stance against facilitation payments. We make sure our work is efficient by getting results without bribery or gifts. While we understand that this is how people have done business for a very long time, we also know that changing our way of working is the way to go if we want to prosper as a private owned business with integrity. Our goal is to have our work stand out for all the good reasons and not be tainted by a bribe or a gift.

Working towards a corruption-free business environment

More compliance and integrity have enhanced the transparency in the company's dealings with our suppliers. Through the programme, I succeeded in emphasising the benefits of a corruption-free business environment for the individual, the business, and the country at large. Our staff is now equipped with the tools to deal with corruption, especially in the grey areas. We were able to implement all these goals thanks to the training materials and other online sources of the Alliance for Integrity.

While we have not yet assessed the overall impact of the integrity programme, it has helped streamline the company's approach to compliance. Today employees know how to refer to the guidelines to minimise case by case variations. We are now gathering data which will then be analysed to determine the extent to which compliance has contributed to the growth of the business.

Changing set patterns of behaviour

My advice to other companies is to re-align the mind-set of the employees to adapt and implement the new policies and the new organisational culture.

It is critical to reinforce what has been taught. The Alliance for Integrity helped us develop intensive orientation exercises outlining the fundamentals of anti-corruption policies. Everyone learnt what their boundaries are within which to work every day. We highlight this by displaying notices and posters at vantage points to serve as regular reminders to both staff and clients about the business culture.

A significant amount of training, such as the one from the Alliance for Integrity, and the reinforcement of rules are necessary to change set patterns of behaviour and to create a sustainable business environment with equal opportunities for all.

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