



3. Everyday Integrity Tips

TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO

As we continue our journey on building trust, we will stay on the topic of integrity another week and consider ways to guard our integrity. As integrity tests are a moving target it is important we find principles to protect and guide us. I will start with a video chat I had with Augustus, a person I have observed for over 20 years and someone who possesses tremendous personal integrity.

Having a few personal accountability partners offers guardrails that keep us from straying **OFF** the road of integrity. Let us intentionally use good accountability partners.

Marketing and Sales on normal days can be a minefield for anyone's integrity. But, with today's uncertainty the test is greater. I decided to check how a dear friend Ozzy handles this challenge every day. Like Ozzy many of us handle such challenges with the wisdom and strength we get from our relationship with God. Giving gifts to customers is a universal business practice used to build customer relationships. The ethical question that arises is "When does a gift become a bribe?" It's a difficult issue with a lot of grey areas.

Let me share a true story. The college I work at has clear codes of conduct for gifts. Faculty are not supposed to accept any gifts from students - period. We can accept gifts from customer's only if the value is less than 100 riyals. Once, a Bank which is a customer of ours, invited me and two colleagues for the launch of a new online service. All guests at the event were welcomed with a gift bag - a normal practice at such events. Usually, small gifts with the company's logo are given.

Being inquisitive by nature, I peeked into my gift bag and was stunned to see it had the latest iPad - way above the 100-riyal threshold. As it would be rude to return the gift at the event, we took the iPads with us and the next morning deposited it in the office of our VP Finance, with the intention of returning it to the bank.

The Bank was very upset with the College's policy and told us "Listen this is just a gift. What's all this fuss about? Are you implying we have other intentions?" Finally, I came up with a solution acceptable to the Bank and the college. At the next graduation ceremony, the top three students were awarded an iPad each with the bank being listed as the sponsor.

When I narrate this incident to my Business Ethics students most think we had taken an extreme position. But, I believe, and tell them it is always better to err on the side of caution in matters of integrity. Paul reminds about this when he says, "So, if you think you are standing, watch out that you don't fall. (1 Cor 10:12)

Let's build fences of accountability, honesty and codes of conduct in our personal and professional life and finish our race with both integrity and honor. And may God be our protector.

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