

**A Report on the  
Conference on Integrity and Ethics  
organized by SCIT, IBM Corporation and Caux Initiatives for Business**

Integrity and Ethics are fundamental values espoused by all mankind from the beginning of time. A deviance from this was looked down upon and seen as undesirable. The age in which we live in however is witnessing a rather skewed understanding of success and misplaced, selfish, priorities that it has allowed itself to view the wrong as right. Albert Einstein speaking in this context once said, "Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value." Elaborating further on his understanding of the word, 'success' he went on to say, "One should guard against preaching to young people success in the customary form as the main aim in life. The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community."

With this as the backdrop, it was heartening when an educational institution like Symbiosis Centre for Information and Technology (SCIT) teamed up with a business giant, IBM Corporation and an organization that holds the philosophy that it is possible to do business ethically while still being profitable as the heart of all its programs – Caux Initiatives for Business (CIB) to organize a one-day Conference on Integrity and Ethics on July 26, 2014 in Pune, India. What was even more encouraging was the fact that the Auditorium at SCIT, Hinjewadi, Pune witnessed a rare conglomeration of around 200 people – professionals such as Industrialists, Corporate Managers, Academicians, Post-Graduate, Graduate Management and IT students, apart from others.



The major objective of the Conference was to inculcate a culture of integrity and ethics among the student community – those who are soon to enter work life. The focus of the event was to increase awareness on what constitutes

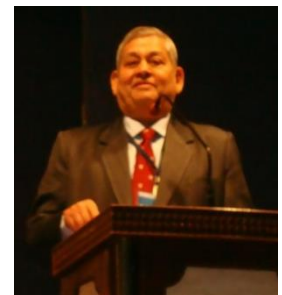
unethical behavior and the fine line between ethical and unethical behavior; to understand implications of unethical behavior on the individual as well as the company and highlight the sustainable business value that a company reaps from

having a reputation of an ethical & trusted brand for its clients and the community at large. Following sharing of experiences by individuals that had themselves led large institutions – business or education, the event saw delegates actively involved in discussions to debate on whether strong governance within a Corporation can insure a culture of integrity and ethics and how a platform for academicians and corporate executives could be created so as to work together towards the cause of spreading awareness on integrity & ethics in business.



After the traditional lighting of the lamp, the delegates were treated to an inspiring song sung by the SCIT students, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness..." While giving the Welcome Address, the Chancellor of Symbiosis International University and Padma Bhushan awardee, Dr. S. B. Mujumdar recalled how as a hostel Warden he witnessed the agony of an international student suffering from jaundice in his room, consuming little or no food. "This incident touched my heart," he said and decided to start Symbiosis which is based on the values of 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam', which means the world is one family. He spoke about the challenges and the dilemma of being an ethical organization and said that ethics is the spirit of the human being and society at large.

Mr. Kishore Chaukar, Chairman, Tata Business Support Services Ltd. in his Key-note Address recalled incidents from his professional life where he had to grapple with ethical dilemmas. He spoke of how he dealt with issues and stuck to the principles that guided him, come what may. "Ethics is an all pervading concept; it touches every aspect of human life," he said, reminiscing the illustrious life of JRD Tata. "There were various occasions he encountered cross-roads, yet each time he took the high ethical stance," Mr. Chaukar said of the man whose philosophy has helped mould the culture and values of the Tata group. Narrating an incident to illustrate his point, he spoke of when Mr. Tata decided to suffer a loss of Rs.20 crores in liquidation of a company valued at Rs.100 crores to ensure that justice was done to the employees losing their jobs. (A crore is equivalent to ten million.) Speaking of another incident in his career, Mr. Chaukar recalled how Mr. Godrej suffered a huge loss because he chose to do what was right instead of debating on who was right. Sharing the episode he said that Mr. Godrej decided to bear the loss caused by a wagon-load of cattle feed which was damaged by water leakage in the wagon. He took this decision even though transporting the feed to the destination was not his responsibility; he owed his client the trust in the brand he stated.



Prof. Deepak Phatak, Dept. of CSR, IIT Bombay in his speech spoke to the gathering about walking the talk when it comes to practicing ethics in one's daily life. "To be

ethical, sometimes you need to be different even to the extent of being branded as mad.” Prof. Phatak narrated an incident when a national Chess player and his friend travelled by public transport to the Chess Association office, though he was eligible for taxi travel. He did this because he felt that he would have done the same thing if it was his personal work. “This,” concluded the professor “was integrity to one’s own self.”



Ms. Desiree Giler Mann, Trust and Compliance Counsel for India/South Asia at IBM Corporation spoke at length about the best practices in her organization and how the IBM fraternity keeps integrity at the core of their values when conducting business. She said that in IBM, when a survey was conducted among the senior executives, 65% of them felt that ethics is the most important factor in achieving the organizational goal. Sharing her concern on the alarmingly high figures of unethical practices in industry as revealed by Transparency International, she stressed the importance of being ethical in a measurable and sustainable manner.



Speaking about the need for greater collaboration between industry and education, Dr. Rajani Gupte, Vice Chancellor of Symbiosis International University spoke of instances from her own career as an educationist and of the times when she was at crossroads with values on one hand and the issue on the other. Encouraging her listeners, she narrated how she tackled these situations. Dr. Gupte also talked about her association with Initiatives of Change (IofC), the parent body of CIB and how she was impressed by the training imparted by them.



The post-lunch session, saw Anil Chopra, VP (SAS SCM-PRL), Siemens Ltd. narrate how Siemens turned around when it decided to practice “absolute ethics” across the board. Impressing upon the audience that there is always a price to be paid, he spoke about the cost of being unethical. “Siemens AG (Globally) was staring at figures of approximately Rs.17000 crores in a particular year before they made zero-tolerance for unethical practices their mainstay policy.” Sharing of the challenges one faced in both the professional and personal fronts, he encouraged the delegates to keep the faith and the virtue of being good despite threats and hurdles one could come across while following the righteous path.



A short documentary of the story of a medium scale industry located in Belgaum, a town in north Karnataka, India served as an inspiration to all those present. T P Mukherjee, a senior management professional and the Convener of the CIB Pune Chapter while introducing the documentary urged the delegates saying, "After listening to the sharing of all Speakers, let us see a remarkable example of how a businessman who walked the talk." Listening to how the late Suresh Hundre of Polyhydron Industries made the turn-around decision to conduct his business ethically, the audience saw the steps he took to make his firm a 'temple of ethics'.

A short satire on how the "Character Bank of India" is getting bankrupt due to the unethical withdrawals was then showcased by the students of SCIT. The Conference also provided a unique opportunity for the delegates to network with each other and share common thoughts and ideas to one of the crucial problems faced around us.

There were various breakout sessions organized on topics like "Messaging and Communication Integrity", "Fair and Consistent Enforcement of Ethics Code", "Creating a Culture of Integrity" and "Careers in Ethics and Integrity" where the students, professors and the corporate leaders discussed case studies and shared their experiences. D. P. Singh, VP-HR, IBM India and South Asia; Lt. Col. Allan Burby (Retd.), GM, Tata Quality Management Services; Ajay Dua, Compliance Counsel, IBM; George Zacharia, Chief Learning Architect at Lchange Catalysts;



Ms. Anjali Gupta, Leader-Brand Systems, Digital Marketing & Strategy at IBM and T.P. Mukherjee, Convener, CIB Pune Chapter moderated each of the above clusters. At the end, a member of each group made a short presentation of their team's discussion thereby converging the lessons learned.

The Conference ended on a positive note with a heart touching song by the SCIT students' choir. The students were the key beneficiaries from such a discussion and a vote of thanks by Dr. Dhanya Pramod, Director SCIT emphasized just that at the end.

*Report put together by T P Mukherjee, CIB & Khusboo Srivastava, SCIT*