You are the finance manager of a relatively new US based IT company with global presence that recently received an acquisition approach from a major global corporation. The CEO and CFO are pressing you and the team to develop more optimistic revenue forecasts, not supported by current performance. You have also been offered a number of shares. The numbers have to be completed for a meeting the following week. What do you do?

This dilemma comes from CIMA’s member CPD e-learning tool, which takes you through seven scenarios of global scope, loosely based on real events. As part of your lifelong learning, you get a chance to explore what the outcomes of your actions may be, and what it means to be ‘doing the right thing’.

Straightforward as it may seem at a glance, decisions we think are clear-cut in isolation become complex when issues of self-interest, relationships and intimidation are involved. CIMA’s ethical checklist helps guide members and students through such dilemmas.

In the year since its launch, the tool has been completed by over 800 individuals. Our feedback survey* found that 70% rated the tool as ‘excellent’. 67% said the tool made them think differently about how they would address ethical issues in the workplace.

‘The tool brought a world of knowledge in a few short scenarios, and has given me encouragement and made me a lot more positive in knowing that I can uphold my own personal ethical values, which are backed by a
professional body and legislation as a whole. That I don’t have to ‘go with the flow’ so to speak, but can choose a course of action that will uphold my ethical standing.’ Survey respondent

Playing an ethical role

At previous CIMA roundtables in Zambia and Malaysia, it was raised that although the ultimate responsibility of creating an ethical culture lies with the senior management team, management accountants play an important role. They are often listened to within the organisation to establish business models or recommend cost cuts. They also have an influential role in persuading the organisation to adopt safeguards to mitigate risk.

CIMA’s ‘Embedding ethical values’ guide to formulating an ethical code and embedding values further supports our members to create a sound ethical culture where they work.

If you do find yourself in a situation like the dilemma above, it is essential that you think through your actions carefully. Consider what the consequences might be to yourself and others, and what is required from you under the Code of Ethics and, of course, the law. Remember that the more practice you have, the better prepared you will be to approach ethical issues.

Access the CPD ethics e-learning tool

*Feedback survey completed by 77 of the 800+ who finished the tool

Useful links

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