

# Earning Business Ethically and Responsibly

by Nancy Knowlton

It seems that one scandal after another is surfacing in the business world today. Perhaps this perception is due to the media, who are doing a very good job of getting the news out, and perhaps we're all a little more connected today and on top of breaking stories.

Whether the rise in business scandals is real or perceived, what hasn't changed is the need for the interactions between companies and their customers to be held to a high standard of integrity and according to established law. SMART takes these requirements very seriously and acts not just within the law but also within the spirit of the law. We think that it's important for our customers to appreciate what this means in terms of how we do business with them, both before and after the purchase.



## Being Clear about Products and Service

Simply put, we want to win business from our customers fairly and ethically. This means that we want to actively and positively position our company, our products and our service so that our prospects and customers can see and appreciate the advantages that selecting SMART offers. We want our customers to know that we can meet their needs and satisfy their requirements today and in the future.

This positioning involves telling the truth about everything that we offer. It means not exaggerating or lying about our company, products or services. We are clear about what we offer today and how that offering will change in the future.

The people who sell SMART products share our commitment to clear and honest positioning. We provide a variety of resources to the authorized independent resellers who sell our products globally to ensure that they accurately position SMART.

## Being Honest about Our Competitors

Doing business fairly and ethically also means not misrepresenting or lying about what our competitors do and do not offer. This point is important, because many situations are competitive, and prospects and customers often specifically ask for a direct comparison to the competition.

## No Illegal Payments

We will not make payments to people involved in the decision to either buy or to continue to buy our products. This includes payments that may be called consulting or advisory fees for participating in, say, advisory panels. Some employees of a district may wish to influence our future product development direction. We benefit from customer input and insight, but this interaction is on a no-fee basis.

## Limited Expense Reimbursements

There are occasions where it is appropriate to reimburse our customers for their reasonable travel costs. Teachers present their use of our products in our booth at trade shows, adding authenticity and real-world experiences. They also have an opportunity to spend time at the show and in the conference sessions. It works for both SMART and our customers, but there is no fee for this assistance beyond the reimbursement of travel costs.

## No Promises of Future Employment

We will not offer future employment to senior people who are involved in a purchase decision. There will be no direct or implied offer of future employment when the sales process is underway or within a reasonable period of time following the conclusion of that process.

## Modest Entertainment Expenses

While we can and do offer acts of hospitality, all such events are scaled to a level where no one would conclude that expenditures were over the top and unduly influenced the decisions of the buyers. We typically steer clear of golf outings and other acts of hospitality that cross the line into extravagance.

## Confirming our Behavior

Each year we go through a confirmation and reminder process as to how we do business with both our staff and our customers. We want our customers to be confident that we respect their purchasing process – a process that is above board and not subject to manipulation by a supplier.

Winning business is clearly something that we do well, with a global category share in interactive whiteboards approaching sixty percent. However, we are committed to doing so in a manner that is ethical and responsible and, therefore, ultimately sustainable.

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