Introduction

It has often been said that Africa is the most corrupt continent in the world. In looking at different industries, the accusation is often made that the construction industry, of which surveying is a part, leans itself to be open to bribery, collusion and price fixing in a huge manner. The following quote supports this statement:

“The construction industry has been identified as the most corrupt sector in the world (Bowen quoting de Jong et al 2009).”

The purpose of this paper is not to make anyone aware of the problem, but rather to offer practical workable solutions in order to restore the integrity of, not only an industry, but rather of a nation.

Keywords

ethics, values, corruption, campaign

Surveying the landscape

At a recent Corruption Watch Conference in South Africa, the following challenge was raised:

“Up until 1994 South Africa had one common dominating enemy – apartheid. This common denominator has been replaced by corruption and greed, the so called “our time to eat” enemy. It is about time that civil societies unite and stand up against the evils of corruption that are busy stealing that which we have been fighting for all our lives.”

International – Corruption Index

Since 1995, Transparency International (TI) has published the annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranking countries "by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys. The CPI generally defines corruption as "the misuse of public power for private benefit".

A short extract from this “Corruption Index”, (see Table 1) reveals the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country rank, 2012</th>
<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>CPI 2012 Score</th>
<th>Change in rank since 2011</th>
<th>2011 rank</th>
<th>2008 rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Extract from the 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index.

National – the South African current situation

The following is clear on the position of South Africa:

- SA ranked 69th out of 182 countries
The South African construction industry

The following conclusion by Bowen (et al) in their study on corruption in the South African construction industry is relevant to this paper:

Concern for the extent and nature of corrupt activities in the construction industry in South Africa is evidenced by the survey findings. Corruption appears to be widely prevalent, most notably in the form of conflicts of interest, but substantially also in terms of tender rigging and collusive pricing. Government officials (generally acting in a quasi-client role) are thought to be the people most frequently involved, but no participant group in the construction procurement process is seen as entirely innocent. While the research here has focused upon the construction industry, solutions for combating corruption are unlikely to be industry specific. Nor will they be unidirectional. Top down approaches should address ethical standard and conduct....”

Ethics – in search of a solution

The solution to the corruption challenge is internal rather than external (it’s not on top - it’s inside – Cremora ad of the 1980’s). The problem is neither based on culture, ethnicity, gender, religion or even times of financial difficulty or affluence. The problem seems to lie within human nature itself.

Members of every religious grouping in South Africa would agree that the current moral state of the country is unacceptable. Even though people may differ on their religious views, there is common ground to take an approach based on ethics and values.

Unashamedly Ethical – sign up and raise the bar

Unashamedly Ethical is a campaign promoting ethics, values and clean living. We facilitate the forming of local Unashamedly Ethical communities all over the world. The founder and chairman is South African businessman Graham Power.

How the campaign works

The campaign is built upon three foundations, around which local communities form:

- A challenge to people to make a public commitment to “good values, ethics and clean living” by signing the relevant Unashamedly Ethical commitment form. We believe that the only way we can turn the tide on corruption and unclean living is if enough of us stand together against it – and this begins with “sweeping our own doorstep first”. People all over the world are accepting this challenge by signing the Unashamedly Ethical commitment form, which is available on our website (www.unashamedlyethical.com).
- An online directory of all signatories. If you would like to deal with businesses whose leaders have signed the Organizational Commitment form, you can search for these on our website. The online directory is a key tool for this global community of ethical leaders in the marketplace to use – and the more it is used, the greater the demand will grow for ethical companies.
- A presiding Ombudsman who holds all our signatories accountable, and who will review written complaints against any signatory. In this way every signatory of the campaign is publicly accountable for their ethical behaviour.

Unashamedly Ethical has a promotional DVD which explains the background of the organisation. This can be viewed online at: www.unashamedlyethical.com/Resources/default.asp

The Unashamedly Ethical commitment is included in your information pack, which you can find in your delegate bag.

Please fill in the individual form in your personal capacity. If you are the owner of your business, please also fill in the Business Organisational Form.

References


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