

# Developing and implementing a strategic approach to ethics



## Introduction

Vodafone is a leading mobile phone business which values ethics. Being ethical is 'doing the right thing'. Vodafone tries to 'do the right thing' in all its dealings.

## Aims

Vodafone has a responsibility to staff, customers, shareholders and society. Its research shows that all groups care about ethics. People stick with firms they trust. They want them to act with ethics in mind. Any firm that didn't care about ethics would not be concerned about how its products affected society. It would just aim for short term profits. An ethical firm takes a longer term view. This may reduce profits in the short term. For instance, when Vodafone first made chat rooms safer it lost a lot of users. In the long term it was the right thing to do.

## Values

Vodafone's core values are linked to:

## Customers

- ▶ Responsible marketing.
- ▶ Open and honest communication.
- ▶ Protection.



## People

- ▶ Hiring and keeping the best.
- ▶ Making sure they improve.
- ▶ Making sure they are involved and motivated.

## Results

- ▶ Setting clear goals.
- ▶ Concentrating on reaching them.
- ▶ Giving staff rewards.

## The world

- ▶ Giving to charities.
- ▶ Reducing environmental impact.
- ▶ Listening to concerns.



## External factors

Ethics guides Vodafone when it responds to change. **SLEPT** is a tool which can be used:

- ▶ **S**ocial. Changes in society. Young people are at risk because they are easy to contact. There are concerns about phone theft and adult content.
- ▶ **L**egal. Changes in the law. For instance not using phones whilst driving.
- ▶ **E**conomic. For instance, levels of growth may lead to higher sales.
- ▶ **P**olitical. Many of the same concerns as the social ones.
- ▶ **T**echnological. Bluetooth can now be used to send unwanted texts. This practice can cause distress. A wide range of content is now offered which brings an extra need to protect young people.

## Ethical responses

Vodafone's research showed that parents do not know what content is on mobile phones. They said that it was vital to restrict access to adult content. In July 2004 Vodafone UK and others launched a joint Code of Practice. This blocks access to adult content to under-18s. Parents can also filter Internet access. In 2004, Vodafone was the first to bring in a bar to block access to all content rated as 18. This was 'the right thing to do'. It also works to reduce spam messages and combat mobile phone crime.

## Conclusion

Ethics are at the heart of the business. Growth has brought change. The response of Vodafone will be guided by ethics.