

1 **Saying “no” to corruption makes** 2 **commercial as well as ethical sense**

3 *Original at [http://www.economist.com/business-](http://www.economist.com/business-finance/displaystory.cfm?story_id=16005114&source=features_box_main)*
4 *[finance/displaystory.cfm?story_id=16005114&source=features_box_main](http://www.economist.com/business-finance/displaystory.cfm?story_id=16005114&source=features_box_main)*

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6 The ethical case against corruption is too obvious to need spelling out. But
7 many companies still believe that, in this respect at least, there is a
8 regrettable tension between the dictates of ethics and the logic of
9 business. Bribery is the price that you must pay to enter some of the
10 world’s most difficult markets (the “when in Rome” argument). Bribery
11 can also speed up the otherwise glacial pace of bureaucracy (the “efficient
12 grease” hypothesis). The chances of being caught are said to be small
13 while the rewards for bending the rules can be big and immediate.

14 But do you really have to behave like a Roman to thrive in Rome? Plenty
15 of Western firms have prospered in emerging markets without getting
16 their hands dirty. IKEA has gone to great lengths to fight corruption in
17 Russia, including threatening to halt its expansion in the country, firing
18 managers who pay bribes and buying generators to get around officials
19 holding up grid connections

20 What is more, “grease” need not be that efficient. Companies that pay
21 bribes actually end up spending more time negotiating with bureaucrats.
22 The prospect of a pay-off gives officials an incentive to haggle over
23 regulations. Corruption inevitably begets ever more corruption: bribe-
24 takers keep returning to the trough and bribe-givers open themselves up
25 to blackmail.

26 Even the greasiest-palmed places are in fact ambivalent about corruption:
27 they invariably have laws against it and frequently produce politicians who
28 campaign against it. Multinationals should help bolster the rules of the
29 game rather than adjust to keep pace with the most unscrupulous players.
30 The phrase “doing well by doing good” is one of the most irritating parts
31 of the corporate social responsibility mantra. But when it comes to
32 corruption, it might just fit the bill.

Questions

- 1) What are the two theories used to justify corruption given by the article? Are these theories based on ethics?
- 2) 'When in Rome' (line 10) is a part of a well known idiom. Which one? Could you explain the meaning of this idiom with your own words?
- 3) Throughout the text, there are many synonyms (word having roughly the same meaning) for the word *corruption*? Find them.
- 4) Why might the use of corruption be ineffective according to the text?
- 5) Why did IKEA use (diesel) generators in Russia? (See vocabulary sections for explanation of 'hold up')?
- 6) 'Corporate social responsibility' (line 31) is a term describing the behaviour of companies: these are supposed to act in a responsible way towards society. Given this background, could you explain the meaning of 'doing well by doing good'?
- 7) 'it might just fit the bill' (line 32) – paraphrase this chunk of text with your own words.
- 8) What is the general view of the article on corruption? Do you agree with it? Why, why not?

Vocabulary

spell out (line 6) – to explain something explicitly, so that the meaning is unmistakable

bend the rules (line 13) – to modify or relax (restrictions, regulations, etc.) temporarily or in certain circumstances

hold up (line 19) – to hinder; delay

keep pace (line 29) – to stay even with others, as in a contest

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, or <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček:

