


vary in content and quality from company to company, and cover some or all of the following issues: the treatment of workers, consumer reliability, supply chain management, community impact, environmental impact, human rights commitments, health and safety, transparency and dealings with suppliers, and other issues. Some codes are monitored by external verifiers. In many cases these are large accounting firms such as Ernst & Young or PricewaterhouseCoopers™. This has led to the criticism that monitors will place the aims of the company, and not the environment or society, at the forefront when carrying out their assessment.

6

Many companies develop community projects in the vicinity of their sites, to offset negative impacts or 'give back' to the community and local workforce. Community investment covers a whole range of initiatives including: running health programmes, sponsoring schools, playgrounds or community centres, employee volunteering schemes, or signing a memorandum of understanding with communities affected by a company's impacts. GlaxoSmithKline, the pharmaceutical multinational, for example, supports a wide variety of health and education programmes in areas where it operates, ranging from training midwives in Vietnam to AIDS awareness outreach for Brazilian teenagers.

## 2.4 Management skills Time management

 1:24–1:28

1

**Margarita:** Have a seat, Robin.

**Robin:** Thanks.

**M:** I know you're busy, so I'll get straight to the point. We're expecting budget cuts, so I'd like you to look into ways of reducing our travel costs. The reason I'm asking you to do it is that you're the person who has to make the most business trips, so you know more about it than anyone else.

**R:** Well, that's probably true.

**M:** So, is that something you'd be prepared to take on?

2

**R:** When do you need my report?

**M:** Well, the absolute deadline would be the end of the year. But I'd like to move as quickly as possible, really. Think about how much time you'll need, and let me know what you decide. In any case, I suggest you give me an update every two weeks or so, OK?

3

**M:** That's great, Robin. So, I'll let Kim know you're handling the project, and I'll send out a memo to all the reps asking them to make time to talk to you.

**R:** Thanks, Margarita. What about the travel bureau, should we tell them?

**M:** No, I think we should leave them in the dark for the moment, don't you?

4

**M:** I'd appreciate it if you could treat this as confidential, at least for the time being.

**R:** Of course. No problem. But, erm, I'm just a little bit concerned about the workload. I'm still trying to clear the backlog from my trip to Brazil!

**M:** Yes, I realize that, and I certainly don't want to overload you. I thought I'd get Estelle to take over some of your paperwork for a few weeks. How does that sound?

5

**M:** As a first step, could you get back to me with proposals we can run past Human Resources? If they're happy, you can go ahead and draw up new procedures. Overall, we need to cut the travel budget by at least 15%. Are you comfortable with that?

**R:** Sure.

## 2.6 Case study Pixel Inc.

 1:29

**Caitlin:** I think everybody knows that Bill wants me to develop a strategy to improve our corporate image, so the main reason I called this meeting was just to try to get a handle on what's happening, and what you feel needs to change, OK? Unfortunately, Bill can't make it – he's busy in the lab.

**Ben:** Ha! The invisible man strikes again!

**Carla:** Let's try to be constructive, OK?

Maybe I can start. This is Carla, by the way. Don't get me wrong, Caitlin, I think a coherent image strategy is very valuable, but surely our first priority has to be getting everybody pulling in the same direction!

**B:** Ah, come on, Carla, get real! We're talking cash flow and supply chain here, not one of your touchy-feely, HR team-building programmes!

**Cai:** Sorry, hang on, is that Ben?

**B:** Yep.

**Cai:** Look, Ben, can we come to you next? Let's just let Carla have her say, all right?

**B:** OK, OK. Just trying to keep the meeting on track.

**Cai:** Carla?

**Car:** Thank you, Caitlin. I was just saying you can't have an effective image strategy when everybody is pursuing their own agenda. Right now there's just no team spirit; problems are always someone else's fault. I'm telling you, we can't seem to agree on anything! It's no surprise we can't keep our people – I already had three developers quit this year!

**Lena:** It might help if conditions were more in line with a high tech image. Those labs are like prison cells!

**Car:** Lena's absolutely right there, unfortunately – and it doesn't make hiring any easier, I can tell you!

**Cai:** OK. Thanks, Carla. Ben, let's hear what you have to say now.

**B:** Well, like I said, our cash flow problems really damaged our profile in the marketplace! We're not paying our suppliers, so they ain't too happy, and our customers know we're cash-starved, so they're literally squeezing us dry!

**L:** Yeah – and with the Chinese and the Indians slashing prices, it's no picnic! We're still increasing our volumes, but we're being forced to discount more and more.

**Cai:** This is Lena, right?

**L:** Yeah, sorry, Caitlin.

**Cai:** That's OK – Ben?

**B:** Yeah, Lena's team's having a hard time. I'm trying to take us upmarket, but to do that we need some serious money, and finance just keeps cutting our budget!

**Alex:** Now hold on a minute, Ben, that's not fair! Costs have to be kept under control!

**B:** Under control? My marketing budget is down 15% this year! You people in Palo Alto have *no idea* how difficult ...

**Cai:** Hang on, Ben, and um ...

**A:** Alex.

**Cai:** Alex. Sorry. Look, we're all in the same boat – let's just focus on the problems, OK?

**Car:** You see what I mean?

**Jerry:** Can I come in here, Caitlin? Jerry Woo.

**Cai:** Sure, go ahead, Jerry. You're over in Taiwan right now, is that right?

**J:** Yeah, I'm with our subcontractors here. I don't know how much you know about our chipsets? Our digital pixel technology provides far better resolution, contrast and colour than standard CCD cameras, so you'd think they'd be easy to sell, right? Unfortunately, Lena's people don't seem to be able to get their act together.

**L:** Jerry, it's not as simple as that ...

**J:** Just hear me out, OK? It's the same problem with marketing – lots of talk about added value, but in the end we're still discounting! So, I'm working day and night to supply enough product, and taking the blame when we can't deliver, but we're not making any profit! From where I stand, the answer is pretty obvious!

**B:** I can't believe I'm hearing this!

**L:** Caitlin, it's Lena again, can I just say something here?

**Cai:** Just a second. OK, Jerry, I hear what you're saying. Thanks for that.

**J:** Sure. Just my two cents.

**Cai:** Now, Lena?

**L:** Well, it's always easy to blame sales! OK, we have a good product, but it's *completely invisible*! The final customer doesn't have any idea what the chipset does, or who made it – so it's really tough to persuade manufacturers they're getting added value from using *our* technology rather than one of the big names. I'd like a lot more support from marketing – not just on things like the logo, the slogan, colour coding or the website, although they all could use serious updating: no, I'm talking about educating customers to demand high-quality chipsets in their digital cameras. That would really make our lives a heck of a lot easier!

**Cai:** Yes, I see what you mean, Lena. All right, can I bring Alex in? We haven't heard much from you yet, Alex, what's your take on all this?

**A:** If you set the cash flow problem aside for a moment, the figures aren't actually that bad. As long as we keep costs under control, which I've more or less managed to do up to now, we have excellent growth and we're still in the black. The real problem is just a general lack of direction. Nobody really knows what our medium- or long-term strategy is supposed to be. I mean, we haven't even got a corporate mission statement, let alone a business plan!

**Cai:** OK, thanks for that, what I think we need to do is ...