

Prevention through Sensitization, Training and Change

Effective anti-corruption activities require transparent organization and transparent work processes. Equally important, however, is the sensitization of the employees who must recognize critical situations and conflicts of interest as such and must have an array of possible responses at their disposal. Ideally, these employees will act on the basis of a value system based on as broad a consensus as possible — a consensus that, in turn, is based on the realization that corruption is anti-social and harms the entire society.

In accordance with this finding, is not sufficient to inform the employees of a public authority in a formal way (through circular letters and similar documents that must be signed) about legal regulations or instructions on how to do their jobs. Instead, they must be strongly made aware of anti-corruption issues through training sessions in which it is just as important to sensitize the participants as it is to convey information. Sensitization includes not only the consideration of ethical questions but also the examination of issues involving organizational culture and personnel management.

The dbb academy pursues an inductive approach. Starting from the empirical observations of the participants, critical situations and processes are observed and discussed. In addition, the participants are divided into small groups in which they are put into "dilemma situations" and have to arrive at an agreement on how to proceed. In the process, different views, value criteria and priorities will clash. That forces the "players" to discuss the situations they are confronting, and the discussions generate new perspectives for the participants and an internalization of the issue.

The more the participants convince each other and arrive at a shared criterion for judging what they see, the more likely it is that they will have to consider the question of whether the existing organizational and personnel structures, as well as the relevant legal regulations (which should be reviewed with regard to specific cases), are adequate and effective in dealing with the matters under discussion. Furthermore, an analysis of the work processes in the participants' own work areas can generate practical tips on how these structures could be improved. In many cases, these practical tips have to do with increasing transparency and adapting existing organizational and personnel tools.

The proposals worked out in this "bottom up" manner are practice-related and relevant to practice. By their very nature, they lead to increased acceptance among employees, can be integrated into existing organizational structures, and are compatible with existing personnel development tools. Accordingly, their implementation leads to better prospects for the struggle against corruption.