

## Reporting with Integrity

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The ICAEW has produced a report called '[Reporting with Integrity](#)'. In the press note the ICAEW says:

*Building consensus amongst market participants on the meaning of integrity and how to promote it will help reduce the likelihood of business scandals, reputational damage and loss of confidence in markets. This is the focus of a new report published for consultation today by the ICAEW*

*[The report] argues that a lack of integrity, amongst businesses and those who oversee them, can also be a significant problem in achieving economic growth, especially in developing markets.*

The last point is typical. The implication is patronising and clear: this is someone else's problem, but we must sort it out. That's not true. This is our problem, and we exported it.

The following comments from Robert Hodgkinson, executive director technical at the ICAEW make clear just how much this is our problem:

*In today's business world, great importance is attached to the role of integrity, how it influences corporate behaviour and enhances trust. Yet paradoxically, whilst we talk about it a lot within the business community, there's no clear and accepted understanding of what it means in practice. (My emphasis added)*

If you can find consensus amongst market participants about what integrity means then you can promote individual and organisational behaviour more effectively. More importantly, if you look beyond business behaviour to broader economic issues, instilling integrity into a market is an important factor in driving economic growth.

So having admitted that accountants don't know what integrity is he still wades on with his patronising belief that:

*As you look around the world, there are a number of countries that struggle with this*

and where a clearer understanding of what integrity means in a business context will be of huge value.

Let me help him by listing the countries that have some problems with this. They are the UK and all the other countries found on the latest list of tax havens from the [IMF](#). *It's the lack of integrity in these countries which are the key suppliers of corruption services where the problem lies. And at the core of this issue are the accountants who drive this market.*

*The ICAEW is right. Accountants don't know what integrity is. But they should look a lot closer to home than they are for the source of the problem.*

*PS See also what [Dennis Howlett](#) has to say on this - and read the comments on his blog.*