

Does not paying tax represent a "lack of business integ...

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The [US has banned BP, temporarily](#), from bidding for Federal contracts as a result of its "lack of business integrity" following the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Given BP is paying the biggest fine in US history as a result of that no one can be that surprised, but it leads to another question for me, which is whether not paying tax can also be described as suggesting a "lack of business integrity" that might permit any government to not transact with those whose accounts suggest they are not paying what looks like a fair rate of tax.

I am, of course, inclined to think it is, and I suggest with good reason. A business deal is a two way transaction. The company benefits. The government pays, and hopefully gets value in exchange. But if the company is at the same time doing its best to undermine the revenue of the government out of which it is paid doesn't that show a "lack of business integrity"? In my experience business is very largely based on mutual trust. That mutual trust cannot exist when one party clearly so despises what the other stands for that it will seek to harm its well being by not paying what it owes it.

My suggestion is a simple one: if companies do not pay their tax then they should be denied governemtn business contracts.

And I confirm I am working on an indicator tool to suggest those who do, or do not, pay their tax, but it's not as simple as many people seem to think.