

Executive Summary

This survey on the subject of “Accepting Corporate Gifts” was conducted online and made available to 4,000 of our subscribers. Responses were gathered from participants across 11 industries and 4 different organization types, of which including local companies (55.6%), government organizations or statutory boards (11.1%), foreign Asia-Pacific companies (16.7%) and foreign Multinational companies (MNC) (16.7%). Participants also belonged to companies of varying sizes, ranging from less than 50 to more than 1,000 employees. As such, responses were better spread-out and well-balanced.

In the corporate world, gifts of a diverse nature (e.g. from calendars and diaries imprinted with companies’ logos to gift vouchers and sponsorship for company Dinner and Dance) are a usual gesture to thank clients and customers of a certain organization in appreciation of their support.

This survey aims to explore the different practices in a range of companies from different industries and organization types regarding accepting corporate gifts, as well as assessing the views of participants towards the types of corporate gifts that can be accepted before crossing the boundaries of business ethics and code of conduct.

Currently, industry standards regarding the sending and accepting of corporate gifts are absent. Therefore, this survey, congregating various practices and views from a diverse range of companies, can serve to inform our subscribers who are interested in the existing practices and risks involved in accepting corporate gifts while drafting written policies on this matter of subject commonly brought up.

As most companies have a written policy in place to govern the act of accepting corporate gifts according to the respondents, responses collected generally reflect a conservative and cautious stance towards accepting corporate gifts. However, respondents were also ready to point out the risks that accompany with the acceptance of corporate gifts and the groups of personnel most vulnerable to such risks.

The key findings of the survey are as below:

- 75% of the respondents suggested that the basis of whether to accept corporate gifts from the company’s suppliers and clients depends on the gift type, while the remaining 25% gave a definite answer regardless of the circumstance.
- All of the respondents agreed that gift items such as calendars and diaries imprinted with the company’s logo can be accepted generally.
- None of the respondents think that cash gifts may be accepted; in fact, more than 87% of respondents indicated that cash gifts are strictly not acceptable.
- More than half of the respondents indicated that gifts that translate to high monetary value (e.g. sponsorship for dinner and dance, travel tickets etc.) are strictly not acceptable.

- The typical practice in accepting corporate gifts of all companies (based on the respondents) constitutes of the declaration of the gift, whether written (by means of a gift declaration form) or verbal, thus involving the HR Department in the process.
- Close to 90% of the respondents indicated that accepting corporate gifts may impact negatively on the company through mainly affecting business decisions as well as presenting conflict of interests and leading to bias judgments, usually towards the particular suppliers who send corporate gifts to their clients.
- There are a range of practices and control measures in dealing with corporate gifts, whether received or sent, with the 2 most common practices being auctioning gift items or giving them away as lucky draw prizes, and passing a company's code of practice in sending and receiving corporate gifts.
- 75% of the companies do have a written policy in accepting corporate gifts to govern this act, while the remaining 25% indicated that they are intending to create a policy regarding sending and accepting corporate gifts in the near future.
- Majority of the respondents think that the purchasing personnel, sales and marketing personnel and management staff are the 3 most vulnerable groups of staff to breaching the code of conduct.

The scope of the survey is set in the context of Singapore and since most respondents belong to local companies, thus this survey mainly reflects local practices of accepting corporate gifts. Personal opinions of the participants towards accepting corporate gifts are also integrated, apart from standard company procedures and policies.

In conclusion, this survey serves as a review assessment for companies on the act of accepting and dealing with corporate gifts received to prevent crossing ethical boundaries. At the same time, companies that have yet to create a written policy may take the survey findings into consideration as a reference for a start.