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Lars Mikkelaard-Jensen
IBM Danmark ApS
Nymøllevej 91
2800 Kgs. Lyngby

Emne: Pensionsfondsmøde

Mødet for nylig fremprovokerede forskellige reaktioner: forbavselse, vrede på andres vegne, men først og fremmest skuffelse over IBM's opførsel. Jeg har altid ment at IBM havde en etik, der sikrede en ordentlig behandling af kunder, såvel som ansatte og en anstændig opførsel over for samfundet. IBM har haft det princip at man tjente penge så tæt ved kunden som muligt, altså betalte skat i kundens land. Derfor måtte jeg tro, at Frank Aaen var på vildspor. Da man konstaterede i begyndelse af firserne, at IBM's 'handelsbalance' ikke var til Danmarks fordel, flyttede man en softwarefabrik fra Frankrig til Danmark. Man kan kun vurdere en organisations etik ud fra dens handlinger.

De ting, der kom frem på mødet, har fået mig til at mindes begivenheder, der fandt sted i Storbritannien i 1991. Robert Maxwell var forretningsmand i mediabranchen. Han døde i 1991 under mystiske omstændigheder og det viste sig at han havde taget penge fra pensionsfonden i et forsøg på at redde sit vaskende imperium.

Der er selvfølgelig forskel mellem IBM og Robert Maxwell. Maxwell begik en kriminell handling; det har IBM ikke gjort. IBM har tabt mange penge i 2008 i forbindelse med andres kriminelle handlinger. På den anden side, må konsekvenserne opleves af medarbejderne på samme måde. De har arbejdet, tjent til deres pension og opdager en dag at den kun er halvt så meget værd, som de havde god grund til at forvente.

I IBM's tilfælde er pensionstab et resultat af en administrativ beslutning – det sparer penge og det er ikke ulovligt. Jeg har svært ved at se, at beslutningen stemmer overens med IBM's etik. Tiderne ændrer sig, som du siger, men man ændrer ikke sin grundlæggende forretningsetik forhåbentlig.

Med venlig hilsen,



Barry N. C. Neville

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Subject: Pension meeting

The recent pension meeting provoked various reactions: surprise, indignation on behalf of others, but most of all disillusionment over IBM's behaviour. I have always considered that IBM's business ethics would ensure a fair treatment of customers and employees alike and responsible behaviour towards society at large. IBM has had the principle of earning a profit as close as possible to the customer, paying tax in the customer's country. I had to believe that Frank Aen was wrong in thinking otherwise. When it was apparent in the early eighties that IBM's 'balance of payments' was not in Denmark's favour, a software plant was moved from France to Denmark. One can only judge an organisation's ethics on the basis of its actions.

What came out at the meeting, has reminded me of events, which took place in Britain in 1991. Robert Maxwell was a media proprietor. He died under mysterious circumstances in 1991 and it became apparent that he had taken money from the pension fund in a vain effort to save his failing empire.

There are of course differences between IBM and Robert Maxwell. Maxwell committed a crime; IBM has not. IBM lost a great deal of money in 2008 as a result of others' criminal actions. On the other hand, the employees must experience the consequences in much the same way. They have worked to earn their pension and suddenly discover it is worth only half of what they had every reason to expect.

In IBM's case the loss of pension is a result of an administrative decision – it saves money and it is not illegal. I have difficulty in seeing the decision as being in harmony with IBM's business ethics. Times change, as you say, but hopefully not fundamental business ethics.

Yours sincerely,



Barry N. C. Neville