

## **Marketing Ethics in Russia**

Industrial plastics manufacturing is a trade which has gained increasing ground as a launch-pad for participation in the globalization of production and resource exchange. Riordan Manufacturing is a suitable example. Characterized as a leading firm in its field, and already boasting locations that while not numerous, are at least in settings that are quite distinct from one another, Riordan's production and contracting operations have already been subjected to cultural adaptations. However, in our consideration of its potential investment in a huge but somewhat under-developed economy such as Russia's, cultural considerations must be heavily influenced by ethical imperatives. Indeed, the challenging atmosphere which a foreign company may face in this emergent but still troubled economy suggests that the success of an operation may well be dependent upon the capacity of an organization to remain steadfast in a consistent and reliable value system. Therefore, as Riordan Manufacturing proceeds with its plans to begin marketing in Russia, and undertaking the necessary operational and facilities-based steps required by this process, it will be necessary to adhere to a distinct set of ethical conditions including; the provision of a product conforming to an accountably high standard of quality; the retention of legitimate accounting, the honoring of contracts and the general conformity to fair business practices; and the adherence to high standards of consistency in operational practices across international borders.

In a condition not specific to the cultural qualities of the new venue, Riordan must first abide a stringent code of production quality assurance. In fledgling retail markets, where standards may tend to be laxer with regard to the performance of products, it is still of crucial

importance that Riordan define itself according to the consistency of its plastics and plastics products. Where temptation in such settings may drive organizations to diminish their own production standards to meet the opportunity for lower overhead costs, in the long run this will reduce the organization's overall effectiveness at meeting its primary function. Short term profitability might well be sacrificed in comprising a marketing campaign which emphasizes the quality assurances that are part of the Riordan approach. This is a strategic quandary as well as an ethical one. Honesty in marketing serving as an overarching framework to our campaign, any claims that our products are of a superior quality to others available on the Russian market would need to be endorsed by real adherences to quality standards. This is, of course, all the more imperative where the design and production of plastics destined for medical equipment are concerned. Here, we must be conscientious of the impact that the presentation of the product and the actual performance of the product may have on the end user.

This simple but crucial step of quality assurance must be facilitating by an even larger ethical disposition toward an overall pursuit of legitimate business practices. Specific to the Russian market, the embattled economy there continues at present to be beset by illicitly acting and corruptive elements relating to politically malfeasant groups and even governmentally entrenched organized crime syndicates. This means that the opportunities for a corporate entity entering the market to engage in illegal activities will abound. It is imperative that Riordan consider the importance of its overall legitimacy as an operation as it determines its course in Russia. Here, where governmental pressure, insider trading and other forms of impropriety often are seen as normative and even necessary for survival, Riordan will appeal to a historically pertinent model of fair interaction with clients, investors, business partners and the laws

emergent from its country of origin, from its new site of operation and from any pertinent international governing bodies. Thus, as Riordan reaches out to potential clients throughout the Russian corporate community, it must find a balance in relating to these organizations and their needs while simultaneously retaining a system of ethical governance that is codified from within.

Finally, and of utmost importance in distinguishing Riordan from many of its peers that have engaged in globalization in this same manner, the organization must be prepared to enter the Russian market with the highest degree of respect for the labor rights, consumer rights and environmental rights of the people here. In a larger context, the very notion of globalization should draw in supplement a discussion on the subject of appropriate behaviors in the face of its propositions. Particularly, for foreign companies seeking to orient production operations in emerging markets, proper ethical tactics would account for the labor entitlements of those working in Russia to bring Riordan's products in the market. At the production level, Riordan's typically high standards of facility safety, worker competence and equitable wage rates must be maintained in Russia, even where specific laws may be lacking to prevent abuses in each of these above noted categories.

A consideration of the ethical responsibilities highlighted here demonstrates the key role of an organization such Riordan. Even as the opportunity for immediate success looms large, the long term prospects which may be gained by serving as a beacon for effective corporate citizenry in a setting where examples are sorely needed could be fully invaluable.