

# Innovating your Corporate Governance Training



**Richard Jones**  
*Vice President  
Investor Relations and Corporate Communications  
Indorama Ventures Public Company Limited*

One of the difficult things about teaching corporate governance is keeping the audience's attention on the subject, which can often be dry or appear far away from the lives of ordinary employees. Some may feel they are not involved in corruption or unethical actions and so do not need to be there. Very often in the private sector the feeling is that if you are not doing business with the government, then there is little chance of becoming involved in corruption. However, the problem people face today is to understand that there are many things we think are a norm and therefore cannot be avoided. We try to inform them that these are grey areas that should be thought about and if possible avoided in innovative ways.

One method that we have tried to illustrate this is the "disturbing question" method where we ask the audience to raise their hands if they think of themselves as mass murderers or serial killers. This usually elicits some smiles and embarrassed confusion (no one ever admits to this thank goodness). Then we explain that every day they all walk on the pavement or on the grass, and inevitably, insects such as ants are crushed beneath their feet. They are actually killing living creatures whenever they walk anywhere but they just don't think about it. Similarly, they might not think twice about taking paperclips from their desk home for their personal documents.

To try to bring a lot of these things to life,

Indorama Ventures Corporate Communications Department, which incorporates the Corporate Governance Section, has started to make its own training videos using our communications staff as actors. Are they good actors? Well, we aren't sending their names to the Academy for consideration at the next Oscars yet, but they have succeeded at one thing. The team has successfully made moving illustrations of activities that people were not aware of as unethical so that they understand why, for example, insider trading is a risky business. And guess what? The audience surveys tell us it is their favorite part of the seminar because not only do they enjoy seeing people they know on the big screen but the issues become much clearer when they see them acted out.

As a global company, we make the videos in English first and dub them into Thai for the local audience. This gives them an old-fashioned "temple fair" appeal where the lips don't quite match the words. However, the message is the same. We also put foreign subtitles at the bottom so we can show them in China or elsewhere as required. While we do have a decent amateur video camera and microphones, people are making films on iPhones these days so it isn't that hard. To date we have three films that are used in CG seminars. One video is on insider trading, another on conflicts of interest and the third on the use of company information. We are making two more on sexual harassment. The hardest part is

the script as it has to illustrate the issue well and offer a moral or ethical question for the audience to answer. Usually, this is posed as "What would you do?" Often there follows a lively debate about what individuals would do in a similar situation and we find they really do understand the key issues.

Another innovative way of teaching people the need for corporate governance has been to play the game Jenga. You might have seen this bar game where you pull bricks out of a tower and the person who makes the tower collapse is the loser. In our game, the top three layers of the tower represent the company's revenue and the other layers are the corporate governance policies and regulations. We get each member of the audience to pull out one of the CG bricks in order to add to the revenue. We loudly encourage them to remove the corporate governance bricks ("Come on, destroy the environment, break those laws! Make more revenue!") and add them to the layer at the top of the tower. When the tower collapses it is easy to see that removing CG rules and regulations will initially build revenue but eventually leads to the collapse of the company. Using imagination to bring home the CG message is vitally important these days as the young generation is thirsty for knowledge that is imparted in a modern, innovative way while the older generation has reached their threshold of boring old lectures.