A test of ethics and professional skills

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THE RIGHT VALUES

THE Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) recently organised its ‘Walk the Talk’ treasure hunt, which brought together 84 participants from 21 higher-learning institutions and employer partners, putting their physical and mental skills to the test as they raced around the Klang Valley to solve puzzles on ethical thinking.

In the six-hour hunt, participants had to overcome six challenges that highlighted the content of ACCA’s Ethics and Professional Skills Module (EPSM), such as ethics and professionalism, personal effectiveness, innovation and scepticism, commercial awareness, leadership and teamwork, as well as communication and interpersonal skills.

At the end of each challenge, participants were given a clue before proceeding to the next. The first challenge involved solving an exciting rebus word puzzle on everyday phrases. The second tested their socialising skills as they ‘painted’ the Avenue K area opposite Petronas Twin Towers red by giving out hundreds of ACCA balloons and taking pictures with passers-by.

For the third challenge, ACCA students had to solve a crossword puzzle on shop names in Central Market. In pushing them to think outside the box, the fourth challenge literally involved opening a box that contained the next clue. It wasn’t so easy as it became a task in real news articles. For the fifth challenge, participants had to do a case study on ethics. For the last challenge, they had to accurately identify the fakes in real news articles.

At the end of the event, the teams had to combine the clues from all six stations.

A four-member team from Tun Kuk Abdul Rahman University College — Wong Fook Chin, Lee Yewang Yan, Isabelle Pong Wen Xin and Chai Chin Seng — emerged as the champion.

The winners received RM4,000 (champion), RM2,000 (runner-up) and RM1,000 (second runner-up) respectively, as well as trophies and certificates. They were also given a fee waiver to take the EPSM worth RM60 (RM320). Wong said another challenging task was the balloon giveaway.

“We had a taste of what the module was like in a fun way. It also made us understand how important teamwork was in accomplishing tasks, and how it’s important that we all play our roles, trusting each other’s capabilities at the same time.”

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“We had to work as a team and I am lucky to have one that is made up of members with different strengths and weaknesses to complement each other.”

“So, we really did capitalise on that. In the end, because of this team dynamics, no task was too difficult for us,” she said.

Pong and her friends are pursuing a Bachelor in Commerce degree. The team agreed that the fourth challenge was their most memorable. They had to stand at a distance and retrieve a box from the middle of a large circle.

She said their body parts were not allowed to touch the area inside the circle.

“One member had to support his friend’s weight as he retrieved the box, while the rest needed to pull him up after he grabbed it.”

Besides strength and balance, it also required mental work as they had to figure out how to achieve the objectives. They could not ‘test’ our proposed solutions and we even got penalised once for accidentally touching inside the circle.

“It was the hardest challenge, but it was the most fun,” she added.

The introduction of the module is in line with ACCA’s focus on shaping an efficacious accountant. Through this module, we can expand learning beyond technical capabilities.

“The interactive and experiential learning exemplified during the treasure hunt drives home the unequivocal need for critical thinking, ethical decision-making and upholding of integrity among accountants in a fun way,” Paramount Corporation Bhd group chief executive officer Jeffrey Chew shared his insight as a practising accountant and leader of organisations, emphasising the importance of ethics and professionalism at the workplace.

“Transparency, honesty, accountability and fair dealings are important traits, not just among accountants, but also the workforce in any organisation.

“In order to be an effective leader, one must have the ability to think, evaluate and act fairly. Leadership is about doing the right thing, even if it seems to be going against the tide. Hence, ethics play a vital role in steering the moral compass in challenging times.”

Chew previously served on ACCA Malaysia’s advisory committee and was a council member of the Asian Institute of Chartered Bankers.

He began his career at Pricewaterhouse-Coopers in 1987 before moving to the banking sector, in which he worked for 22 years.

He spent 12 years at Citibank before joining OCBC Bank, in which he was appointed a director and chief executive officer. The ACCA “Walk the Talk” treasure hunt provided an opportunity for participants from various higher-learning institutions and industry players to learn and network through fun and meaningful activities.