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Special Tribute - Ethics Award for David Sherwin the Office Depot whistleblower

Posted At : 01 January 2010 22:59 | Posted By : Peter Frost
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Special Tribute Ethics Award for David Sherwin

Outstanding tenacity on behalf of independent dealers...worldwide



1 Jan 10

David Sherwin the official **Office Depot** whistleblower was fired by the bigbox giant in April 2008 for "workplace misconduct" according to BSD chief **Steve Schmidt**. Actually, David vented his displeasure in an email to CEO **Steve Odland** about the fraudulent and systematic overcharging of his Florida state customers.

Every independent dealer should recognise David's terrific contribution and achievements.

David worked as a high performing senior account manager for Depot for 11 years. Since his stressful exit David has worked tirelessly in pursuit of all the widespread examples fraudulent overcharging in state and local government agencies and particularly the conspiratorial relationship between Depot and its largest customer US Communities (\$600-700m annually)

David has worked under tremendous pressure from Depot's campaigns of denial and counterattack, constant discreditation, and physical and mental threats. His tenacity, determination and precision in putting forward his legal claims has been admirable.

It is almost 2 years since he left Depot and every independent dealer in the US, UK and Europe should applaud and acknowledge his diligent efforts. In that time he has exposed all their dodgy and fraudulent behaviour and brought them to justice in 11 state and federal courts.

Yes we know the ODgate Scandal is boring and seems like a personal vendetta, but it is the biggest OP story since Staples opened its first superstore in 1986. Remember Depot have won contracts through 'bait and switch' tactics, fraudulently changed prices, volumes, falsified audit reports, engineered the Epsilon scam in California; entered into collusion with customers for huge kickback commissions.

Through David's outstanding contribution Depot have been exposed and damaged almost beyond repair under current management. Sales are down \$3Bn in 2 years and the share price has fallen fom \$40+ down to \$6. The beneficiaries: independent dealers and Staples.

Diane Griffin of Radstons (Hercules, CA) too deserves special commendation for her efforts in exposin Depot's fraudulent actions in California. Earlier this year her tireless work proved that City of Berkeley had been overcharged by £289,000 by Depot, who reluctantly repaid the City.

Diane herself reviewed 2009 as follows: "I am sitting here reading through the City and County of San Francisco Audit and thinking back on what an amazing year this has been Depot-wise... At the end of 2008, "we" were struggling for traction against the US Communities gorilla. We, as Independents, had won some hard-fought battles in the state contract arena (Georgia, Nebraska, N Carolina & California). Who would have imagined 6 Attorney Generals, multiple Federal Departments and the bombshell Wells Filing holding Odland personally responsible that came out of the SEC just recently?"

"I look back on how the Depot demise has developed over the past 12 months and I am cognizant that little would have come of our efforts without the constant involvement, commitment, expertise and guidance of David Sherwin.

"I am positive (having met him a few times and working with him closely on a near-daily basis), that there is not a more committed or decent person focused on exposing the truth surrounding the US Communities abuses and Depot's involvement in same. While the public servants (auditors, purchasing professionals, superintendents, council members, mayors, etc.) are making strides on behalf of their respective taxpayers – it is David who is responsible for their success."

"I do not think there is an Independent in the United States (and maybe by association in Europe as well) who has not grown their business (and some quite significantly) because of his tireless efforts at exposing Depot's fraudulent activities."

We echo Diane's sentiments entirely. The OP industry should stand up and salute his terrific contribution and achievements.