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# PRE-EMPTING THE PRESS & THE PROSECUTOR.

Growing commercial pressures suggest that human rights obligations can no longer be relegated down the corporate agenda. Significant reputational damage and costly legal action, fuelled by evidence collected by the NGO community, will increasingly follow as soft law hardens. Particularly vulnerable are those with global supply chains, where KYS is becoming as important as KYC.

The large proportion of FTSE 100 companies implicated in press reports of human rights abuses over recent years might share Warren Buffett's view that 'We can afford to lose money – even a lot of money. But we can't afford to lose reputation – even a shred of reputation'.

There is now a high level of investor interest in non-financial data, and according to Goldman Sachs, investors might be using ESG

disclosure scores 'as a proxy for management quality'. From its inception in June 2007 through 2014 the GS SUSTAIN Focus List has outperformed the MSCI All Country World Index by 36%.

At the same time, many in-house legal services, media departments and risk and governance teams need help to stay abreast of the growing plethora of legal issues, let alone ensure that their operational colleagues understand the risks, have appropriate pre-emptive plans in place, and can act swiftly and effectively when the inevitable surprises strike.



## COLLABORATIVE THINKING. COLLECTIVE ACTION.

Well informed employees are the most valuable means of anticipating sensitive human rights issues. They are also in the best position to develop and maintain a practical means of staying alert and reporting. But they must be helped to see through the eyes of the prosecutor and press, and appreciate the cost of human suffering and reputational damage.

Our customised workshops are a 'real time stress test', designed for people throughout the organisation not only to improve understanding, but also to inspire and enable pre-emptive planning and action.

They are designed to avoid creating yet another bureaucratic burden, because participants discover for themselves how to incorporate best human rights practice into their 'business as usual'.

Leading barristers present relevant case studies and guide the conversation about whether the company's internal processes and culture are fit to avert, and also absorb, inevitable shocks related to human rights abuse. The discussion is conducted in no nonsense terms to cut to the chase, and clarify rather than confuse.

For more information, please contact [workshops@beechwood.net](mailto:workshops@beechwood.net).





Libraries have filled with material on human rights guidelines and law since the Magna Carta was agreed by King John of England in 1215. Lord Denning, regarded as 'the people's judge', described it as 'the greatest constitutional document of all times – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot'.

The shelves are also filling with successfully prosecuted cases against businesses around the world. But particularly concerning is the increasing number of well-advised high profile media campaigns that accuse global companies of complicity in human rights abuse. Recent examples include: a cell phone manufacturer incorporating in its components minerals from illegal mines that exploit child labour, a toy manufacturer agreeing to sell through service stations of an oil company accused of pollution and other human rights violations, and a search engine censoring key words and phrases at the request of the Chinese Government.

# EXPERTISE. EXPERIENCE. STRATEGY. COLLABORATION.

Through our alliances, we blend perspectives from key actors with a deep first-hand knowledge of the relevant practical and technical issues. We are also able to stay abreast of the rapidly changing landscape through our extensive informal and formal networks.



**Doughty Street Chambers** is a cutting-edge set, renowned for and committed to defending freedom and civil liberties, with an international profile across its wide range of practice in criminal law, civil law, administrative and public law, international law and human rights.



**Mazars**, an international professional services firm, launched The UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework in February 2015, together with Shift. Their specialist team offers a wide range of human rights consulting and assurance services, including a proprietary methodology that won an IAB global award for audit innovation.



**Trubshaw Cumberlande** offers a variety of social risk assessment, due diligence, and project management services to companies operating in frontier economies, to help clients understand on-the-ground realities and manage community relations.



**Beechwood International** is a London-based strategy consultancy that brings together disparate groups to address difficult problems. Its associates combine subject matter expertise and first-hand practical experience with a strategic perspective and a unique workshop-based collaborative capability called **TEAMWIN**.

