Our manager seems to have knuckled down to the business
“Hard Decision” is a title of Tiri for the Aga Khan Foundation Development Network Civil Society Project. It includes a series of other comic strip booklets that challenge the reader on the role of ethics and integrity as contributors to success in the conduct of business.

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Introduction

The Progress Ltd company provides electricity for the region and has been working there for several years. However, relations with the public have become strained. One of the reasons for this is that the price of electricity is high, even higher than in the capital city. In spite of this, Progress Ltd. is planning to introduce some mechanisms to control the use of electricity in order to reduce the amount of electricity being lost, and to increase its profits.

Characters

1) Mr. Nurmukhamedov - new manager of the company
2) Bakhtiar - an employee "Progress" Ltd
3) Mr. Yumashov and Mr. Mamadov - the two employees of the company
4) Fatima - Mr. Nurmukhamedov’s daughter
5) Karina - Mr. Nurmukhamedov’s wife
6) Mr. Adbullaev - the dean of the University
TWO EMPLOYEES OF THE PRIVATE POWER COMPANY “PROGRESS” ARE ENGAGED IN CONVERSATION LOOKING AT THE NEWLY APPOINTED MANAGER ENTERING THE OFFICE

MAMADOV TO YOUMASHOV

Who is that man?

This is our new manager

Hum, seems to be on the level

They say he is pretty keen on increasing efficiency and work supervision
It's about time some one set things straight in our company, otherwise the population soon will not trust us any more.

You are absolutely right. It is high priority!

If we are not careful we will lose the trust of the local population.

And why on earth do we keeping raising prices for electricity? Everyone knows how little people get paid in this region, and higher prices result in social outcry and an increase in local tension.
THE NEW MANAGER OF THE COMPANY NURMUKHAMEDOV MAKES A SPEECH AT THE STAFF MEETING

First thing in the morning we need to enhance work efficiency

ONE OF THE COWORKERS NAMED BAKHTIAR ASKS

One of the major causes of the high prices is high electricity losses

By all means not through putting up prices but rather through diminishing electricity losses

In what ways?
Mamadow another employee with unfeigned interest

I heard on the grapevine you are going to organize some trainings for the staff.

Quite right. What you have heard about are training courses on integrity so that our employees can learn to work responsibly, based on the feedback that they receive, and focusing on a sense of duty and accountability to the other staff.

Our manager seems to have knuckled down to the business.

Just take your time. It remains to be seen.
NURMUHAMADOV CONVERSING WITH HIS DAUGHTER FATIMA - A STUDENT AT THE LOCAL STATE UNIVERSITY

You know, daddy, today the dean of our faculty as soon as he learnt you were working for the Progress Power Company wished to see you

Sounds rather weird. Why in the world should he need me? Anyway, will see him tomorrow

SETTING AT UNIVERSITY IN THE ROOM OF ABDULLAEV, THE DEAN

May I come in?

Oh, come on in. Have a seat. What can I do for you?
I am Fatima's father. I understand that you wanted to see me on some matter.

Oh my, sure I did!

So, what did you want to see me about?

About your daughter - were you aware that she had very bad marks in key subjects?
Believe me, I didn't

To make things even worse. If she fails the exams in this term she is sure to drop out of University

What are you going to suggest?

I could sort things out with some teachers and rectify the situation, but on one condition
What sort of condition?

I know you are working with "Progress" power company. I have huge bills for electricity that I don't know how I will pay. I have a large family, you see.

Are you going to offer me a deal?

I would not call it a deal. It is rather sort of mutual support. While I am settling the issue on your daughter's marks you tell your guys to either stop the power meter or have it rewound.
I don’t know.....Gosh... What we are trying to do right now is fight the losses in the electricity supply, and try to restore consumers confidence in us.

Well, after this deal you will have restored my confidence in you!

All this will be very serious. I really need some time to mull it over.

Well, think it over, but don't chop and change for too long. Soon we have the session and I need to know how to behave.
CONVERSATION BETWEEN NURMUKHAMEDOV AND HIS WIFE KARINA

What's wrong with you, sweetheart? You look so depressed today.

You can say that again. Your daughter has messed up her term, and, as far as I can gather, has been lazy all along. The dean offers to give her good marks if we stop his electricity meter, to steal electricity.

So, go ahead and do as the Dean suggests - we can't allow her to be expelled from university.

Is that what you think?
So what you want to do? Do you want your daughter to quit the university?

But there must be other options too. Right? And besides, how shall I crack down on power losses if I start encouraging them myself?

Think big! Others do exactly like that!

Do you think we could cut down on or rather stop the reading of a power meter of one very respected man?

NEXT DAY NURMUZHAMEDOV INVITES ELECTRICIANS TO HIS ROOM...
You bet, boss! It's a piece of cake. Consider the thing done.

Do you remember I told you not to be over hasty in your judgement of Nurmkhamedov?

Why? What has happened?

Yesterday by chance I heard the electricians complaining about Nurmkhamedov. They said that he had told them to fake the meter reading of some important person.
That is no different from robbery!

You are right. And then he will write off the reading as an unavoidable loss of electricity.

I wonder how he thinks he is going to stop electricity losses when he tells the electricians to do things like this?

This proves that the bosses have double standards.
It really is a pity. Still I would like to see our company sticking to the better rules

Like what?

Like fairness and transparency
QUESTIONS

- What would/could you have done?

- What you would do if you were in Nurmukhamedov position?

- What component of Integrity did Nurmukhamedov violate, when he agreed to do what the dean asked him to do?